

JNA News Release

Japanese Nursing Association

5-8-2 Jingu-mae, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-0001, JAPAN Tel: +81-3-5778-8559 Fax: +81-3-5778-5602

<http://www.nurse.or.jp/jna/english/>

Message from JNA President Suga Sakamoto



It is almost 2 years since I have taken office as President. Since I assumed this post, I have consistently maintained that we have to put “emphasis on the clinical field,” value the thoughts of nurse managers and staff, and make JNA an organization that can actually relate to the clinical field. Japan experienced a change of regime last year, but the government movement toward the reform of social security and health care continue to progress. JNA carries on with making policy proposals as a professional association to meet the expectations of the public, and also to contribute to the satisfaction of its members. We will work hard with passion as the nurses take lead in supporting Japan, which facing a super-aged society.

Two years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11th, 2011, but reconstruction activities in the affected areas are still under way. JNA keeps on supporting the reconstruction. In the disaster session of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) 25th Quadrennial Congress held this May, JNA has the opportunity to talk about our efforts and its preparations for the future. JNA would like to share our experience with nurses in the world, and be of some help to them in preparing for disasters that are occurring all over the world. ■

Guidelines on Night Shift and Shift Work for Nurses

After the court accepted claims for working person’s compensation for two nurses in October 2008, one (a 24-year-old nurse) acknowledged as “karoshi” (death from overwork), and the other (a 25-year-old nurse) as an official casualty, JNA conducted an “ad hoc survey on the actual situation of overtime work, night shift and shift work.” Based on the results, it became clear that more than 60% of nurses working in hospitals “worked in shifts,” and that 2.5% of the nurses who “worked in shifts” had



“more than 60 hours of overtime.” In other words, approximately 20 thousand nurses in Japan are likely to be working under similar conditions as those of the case that was recognized by the court as an official casualty, or for the same working hours reaching a dangerous level at risk for karoshi*. JNA has been approaching nurses and making requests to the government to improve the working conditions and environment of nurses.

(Please refer to JNA News Release Vol. 2 & Vol. 5 <http://www.nurse.or.jp/jna/english/news/index.html>)

***Dangerous level at risk for karoshi** means working in rotating shifts (two-shifts, irregular two-shifts, three-shifts, or irregular three-shifts), and also working more than 60 hours overtime, or working under similar conditions as those pointed out by the court as harsh working conditions leading to karoshi.

On March 7th, we officially announced the “Guidelines on Night Shift and Shift Work for Nurses” which is JNA’s own guidelines that we have been working on, as one of JNA’s activities to improve the working conditions of nurses.

To protect the lives and health of patients and provide safe care, nurses themselves must work safely and in good health. Recent knowledge on labor science reveals that the burden of night shifts and shift work in general not only increases health risks for the nurses,

but may also increase the risk of medical accidents. Based on the basic understanding that “the safety and health of the nurses protect the safety and health of the patients,” this guideline was created as a tool to “reduce the burden of the night shift and shift work and manage the risks,” reflecting the actual situation of clinical settings and evidence of labor science. JNA hope these standards are utilized as check items, as well as an indicator or target for improvement, in line with the situation of each institution. ■

**Standards for organizing shift schedules
in the JNA “Guidelines on Night Shift and Shift Work for Nurses”**

Item	Standard
1) Time between shifts	Provide 11 hours or longer time between shifts.
2) Total hours spent at work	Total hours spent at work are up to 13 hours.
3) Number of night shifts	Night shifts should basically be within 8 times a month in a system of 3 shifts per day. If using another shift systems, the number should adjust to the work hours.
4) Number of consecutive night shifts	Up to 2 consecutive night shifts.
5) Number of consecutive working days	Up to 5 days.
6) Time allocated for breaks	Provide 1 hour or more in the middle of a night shift, and a period according to the length and load of the shift during a day shift.
7) Naps during night shifts	Provide an uninterrupted nap time in the middle of the night shift.
8) Rest following a night shift (including days off)	Provide a rest period of 48 hours or more after 2 consecutive night shifts. A rest period of 24 hours or more is desirable after 1 night shift.
9) Consecutive days off on weekends	Consecutive days off over Saturday and Sunday without preceding following night shift should be ensured at least once a month.
10) Direction of rotation	The roster to be forward rotating.
11) Start of the morning shift	Avoid starting the morning shift before 7 AM.

Report on the “2012 Survey on the Demand and Supply of Hospital Nurses”

JNA conducted the “2012 Survey on the Demand and Supply of Hospital Nurses” in October 2012. This survey was conducted to understand the trend of demand and supply and the work situation of nurses working in hospitals on a nationwide scale. It has been conducted annually since 1995,

targeting hospital nursing managers all over the country. This year, in addition to the focus on the turnover rate and the salary of nurses, the survey included the actual conditions of night shifts and efforts made to reduce the burden of night shifts. The following is a summary of the results.

☀ Turnover Rate of Nurses

This year's survey indicated that the turnover rate in fiscal year 2011 was 10.9% of full-time nurses, and 7.5% of newly graduated nurses. Both turnover rates have been decreasing over the last 4 years, but still tend to be high in hospitals where the burden of night shifts is heavy.

☀ Working Hours in Night Shifts

The trend of working hours of night shifts has not changed much since the last survey in 2010.

The hours that a nurse work on night shifts per month was 72 hours or less in 68.1%, but, on the other hand, a nurse who worked on night shifts for longer than 72 hours per month amount to 31.9%, and those who worked on night shifts for longer than 80 hours per month increased to 17.3%.

☀ Efforts to Reduce the Burden of Night Shifts

In response to the survey of 11 items involved in reducing the burden of the night shifts based on the JNA's "Standards for organizing the shift schedules," the number of items for which more than 70% of the

hospitals answered that they had "already addressed" it, was 6 out of the 11 factors. To name a few from the top, "break during night shifts" was addressed by 84.8%, "limit consecutive working days" by 78.7%, and "set a limit to the number of night shifts per month (only hospitals with a three-shift system)" by 76.6%. Only a few of the hospitals had specific standards set for hours and numbers that actually met the standards of the JNA guideline, and the highest was "limit the number of consecutive night shifts" by 49.0%.

☀ Efforts to Manage Working Hours

For efforts toward managing the working hours to improve the long working hours of nurses, more than half of the hospitals answered "already implemented" as below; "increase nurse aids" was applied by 64.6%, "adjust workloads so that no overtime will be necessary" by 60.6% , and "promote the task-sharing among nurses and other professions" by 60.5%. ■

News Topics in Japan

Reports from the "Internal project team to promote 'quality of employment' of nurses and other personnel" are made public

On February 6, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) has been pursuing to reinforce efforts to secure working conditions and an environment for health care personnel such as nurses and doctors with an "internal project team to promote 'quality of employment' of nurses and other personnel" since last October. The basic policies and specific plans after the year 2013 were compiled and made public. Included in the report are efforts made by each health care institution, aimed to construct a self-management system to promote "quality of employment" to systematically improve the whole working environment. For this system, we will create a realistic guideline that each health care institution can follow to implement the PDCA cycle. Efforts are also made by the government working in close coordination with related organizations, including JNA.

<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/houdou/2r9852000002uzu7.html> (in Japanese)

Nursing in Japan

Q. Is there a limit to overtime work?

According to Article 32 of the Labor Standards Act, working hours are stipulated as 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week, excluding rest periods. To have workers work longer than these limits, a labour-management agreement (“36 agreement”) must be concluded. However, even if the “36 agreement” is concluded, the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare has placed a limit on the hours that one may work overtime. The agreement therefore has to be concluded within the limits of the “36 agreement” (Table 1). There is also a special requirement concerning overtime work of those who are raising children or providing nursing care for their family members, and the limit is 24 hours a month and 150 hours a year.

[Limit of Overtime Hours Placed by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare]

Period	General Workers	Worker Under the One-Year Variable Working Hours System
1 week	15 hours	14 hours
2 weeks	27 hours	25 hours
4 weeks	43 hours	40 hours
1 month	45 hours	42 hours
2 months	81 hours	75 hours
3 months	120 hours	110 hours
1 year	360 hours	320 hours

***Variable Working Hours System:** The Labor Standards Act regulates working hours as 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week, but this system allows overtime work to exceed the statutory working hours on a certain day or week, if it is within the limits of the weekly statutory working hours when averaged out in a given time frame. This system is suitable for work places with workloads that fluctuate within a month or a year, or work places with rotating shifts.

JNA supports Girl Child Education Fund, the initiative of Florence Nightingale International Foundation.

