

**REPORT OF
FACT-FINDING SURVEY ON
HOSPITAL NURSING**

Japanese Nursing Association
Survey & Research Section
Development & Promotion
Department

OUTLINE OF SURVEY

PURPOSE OF SURVEY

This survey was conducted to investigate the actual situation and the issues of hospital nursing administration, and also the working conditions of hospital nursing personnel. The findings of the survey are to be used as the basic data upon which the JNA develops its position and action plans concerning the hospital nursing administration and its problem areas. The data also serve as the justifying reasons for nurses groups to negotiate with the appropriate authorities for better working conditions of nursing personnel. The findings will be widely disseminated and the nursing administrators can utilize the data as the resource material to improve the practice of nursing in their workplace.

The questionnaires were sent to 4,400 hospitals with which the members of JNA worked as of August 1987. The directors of nursing or the nurses in the highest administrative position were asked to fill in the questionnaires as of October 1987, and to return them to JNA. The valid replies were 2,671 (60.2%).

FINDINGS OF SURVEY

1. Staffing of Nursing Personnel

1) Staffing in Ward

The nursing personnel (qualified and unqualified) in general hospitals surveyed were composed of: nurse 68.1%, assistant nurse 20.3%, nurse aid and other untrained worker 11.6%.

The ratio of nursing personnel to inpatients in general hospitals is 1 : 2.16 for ward nursing personnel and 1 : 2.44 for ward qualified nurse. In psychiatric hospitals these ratios are 1 : 3.19 and 1 : 3.75 and in geriatric hospitals 1 : 2.96 and 1 : 4.45 respectively.

2) Staffing in Outpatient Department

In outpatient departments of general hospitals, 19.5% of the qualified nurses are employed on part-time or temporary basis. This percentage is higher than that obtained in hospital ward.

In outpatient departments of general hospitals, one qualified nurse (PHN, midwife, nurse or assistant nurse) takes care of 26.7 outpatients on an average per day.

3) Staffing in Special Unit

The number of nursing personal per dialysis bed is 0.51. In 397 hospitals out of all hospitals surveyed, 2.6 technologists are assigned to a dialysis unit on an average per hospital.

The number of qualified nurses assigned to one operating table is 2.4. In hospitals where ICU is established as an independent unit, 2.4 qualified nurses are assigned to one ICU bed.

676 hospitals report that they provide visiting nursing service, and this represents 24.8% of all general hospitals surveyed. In 16% of these hospitals, visiting nursing service is provided by nursing personnel specifically assigned to this duty. In other hospitals, the nursing personnel working in wards or in outpatient departments visit patients at their homes.

4) Staffing for Night Duty

355 hospitals report that they employ nursing personnel who work only on night shift. Most of these hospitals are of small or medium size or private hospitals that have difficulties in acquiring adequate personnel who work on night shift.

5) Other Ward Workers

24.8% of all hospitals surveyed employ ward clerks, and the most of these hospitals are university hospitals. Messengers are employed in 20.6% of the hospitals, in larger hospitals in particular. Some ward clerks and messengers are sent from agencies or they are the employees of contracted service providers.

2. Night Duty

In 73.4% of the hospitals, the nursing personnel work on three shifts and 8.1% of the hospitals employ irregular three shifts. 8.8% of the hospitals have special night duty rotation. In the former two types of shifts, a nursing team composed of more than three personnel is assigned to evening shift in 40.3% of the hospitals and for night shift in 34.6% of the hospitals. A ward nurse works 8.6 days on evening and night shifts on an average per month.

3. Nursing Practice in Hospitals

1) Patient Care

“Functional nursing combined with team nursing” is employed in all wards by nearly half of the

hospitals surveyed, and “team nursing” by 14–16% of the hospitals. There is an increasing interest in “primary nursing”, and 7% of the hospitals report adoption of primary nursing in some of their wards.

2) Case Conference

Ward case conferences are “regularly held as a rule in all wards” by 46.2% of the hospitals surveyed. Case conferences in 76.9% of such hospitals are held multi-disciplinarily. In over 70% of the hospitals, physicians join ward case conferences.

3) Nursing Procedures

56.6% of the hospitals studied have their own established procedures on nursing service.

4) Pre-operative Visit from Operating Room

31.1% of the hospitals that have operating rooms provide pre-operative visits for all the patients expecting operation.

5) Summaries of Care on Discharged Patients

32.4% of the hospitals prepare summaries of nursing care records on all the discharged patients.

6) Health Counselling

22.7% of the hospitals provide health counselling service for individual client by nursing personnel.

4. Non-nursing Job Performed by Other Workers

Some marginal jobs to nursing have been transferred to other health workers, thus enabling nurses to devote more of their time to direct nursing care. Nurse aids deliver materials and medicines, and pharmacologists wrap medicines in dose. These arrangements have been in 30–40% of the hospitals surveyed.

5. Working Conditions

1) Work Hour

An average weekly work hour per hospital employee is 42 hours 40 minutes, and 42 hours 21 minutes per nursing personnel. An average weekly work hour per employee of all industries is 41 hours 42 minutes.

2) Leave

The majority of hospitals provide annual leave with pay 20 days as the maximum. On an average, a nursing personnel consumes only 11.3 days of her/his paid annual leave.

3) Maternal Protection

In 1986, 6.2% of full-time nursing personnel delivered babies. 68.8% of the hospitals surveyed adopt child-rearing leave system, and approximately half of the nursing personnel who delivered babies took this leave for an average of 6.3 month.

6. Health Programme for Hospital Employees

Hepatitis B antigen test is conducted by 96.1% of the hospitals surveyed as a part of the HB hospital infection control programme. The hospitals that have established Infection Control Committee and the Guidelines for Infection Control remains only half of all the hospitals, and those that give vaccination against HB accounts for 58.8% of all hospitals, and those that conduct patient test for antibodies is only 61.0%. Immuno gamma globulin is administered to employees by 68.4% of the hospitals and the expense is covered by the workman's accident compensation insurance and the hospital budget.

7. Legal Liabilities of Nursing Personnel

In case a nursing personnel should be held legally liable for his/her fault in practicing nursing, 29.6% of the hospitals surveyed "help her/him seeking lawyer's service and pay his fee", 28% of the hospitals "pay indemnities or composition", and 29.2% of the hospitals contract insurance for compensation for damages or take other appropriate measures to provide for contingencies. 32.4% of the hospitals have no provisions for unexpected accidents.

8. Status of Nursing Department in Hospital Administration

In 88.2% of the hospitals, the departments of nursing report directly to the directors of hospitals, and so do the departments of hospital administration and of medicine.

The department of nursing submits or is requested to submit estimated appropriations for nursing books and periodicals (66.9% of the hospitals) to be included in the annual hospital budget. The average amount appropriated in 1987 for nursing books and periodicals per hospital was 23,200 yen (1,757 yen per nursing personnel) and for education and research, 109,500 yen per hospital (7,949 yen per nursing personnel).

9. Continuing Education

Most of the hospitals provide in-service education. Courses are frequently offered on orientation for new employees (76.8%), lectures on the latest information and knowledge of medicine and nursing (70.7%) and on interpersonal relations (57.3%).

In 1986, 91.0% of the hospitals offered opportunities to nursing personnel to participate in some kinds of training programmes organized outside the hospitals. In 1944 hospitals that provided nursing personnel training opportunities longer than three days, 81.8% of the participants attended courses of 3 to 6 days. 6.2% of the participants attended courses that lasted longer than a month.

10. Priorities Suggested by Nursing Administrators

Nursing administrators listed the following items as the priorities that they would like to place emphasis on : education (42.2% of the nursing administrators inquired), improvement of nursing practice (21.0%) and recruitment to fill vacancies in nursing posts (15.2%).

They regard “review and improvement of bedside care” (31.4% of the administrators) and “assessment of review of nursing service” (31.4%) as the most urgent issues in order to effect improvement of nursing service.

With regard to the working conditions of nursing personnel, the nursing administrators consider night duty is the most critical problem (41.9%), followed by pay issues (28.2%) and work hours (1.8%).

11. Characteristics of Directors of Nursing

Average age of the directors of nursing is 52.6, and most of the directors are in their fifties. The average age of directors tends to increase as the size of the hospitals increases. Of the hospitals with 900 beds and more, the average age of the nursing director is 56.7.

Average length of service as the director of nursing is 7.6 years, and 5.6 years in terms of the length of service in the current position.