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Module: Problem Solving and Decision Making

Code: BWSW4004

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Introduction

This study will use a recognised problem-solving tool and techniques to analyse the issue of understaffing in a hospital environment and offer potential remedies. I work as a health care assistant in an NHS hospital's acute dialysis unit. It has frequently been an everyday occurrence. Due to a lack of manpower, the staff on duty frequently faces an increased burden. Since dialysis is a specialised field, it might be challenging to find coverage from regular healthcare providers without dialysis experience. Because of this, even though jobs are frequently outsourced to agencies, the unit is left to operate with little staff.

Problem definition

Shortage of staff in NHS hospital

The NHS consistently has staffing shortages in all areas. The NHS is on the verge of collapse, according to a report by the NHS Support Federation (NHS Support Federation, 2022). Staff turnover is primarily caused by a lack of job satisfaction, and the issues with hiring and keeping staff are only becoming worse.

(Don Berwick, 2013) argues that the NHS needs to hire the proper amount of people with the right mix of training, experience, and qualifications in order to protect patients. Numerous studies have found a link between increased rates of falls and fatalities and low nurse staffing levels.

The PESTEL and Fishbone analyses will both be used in this report.

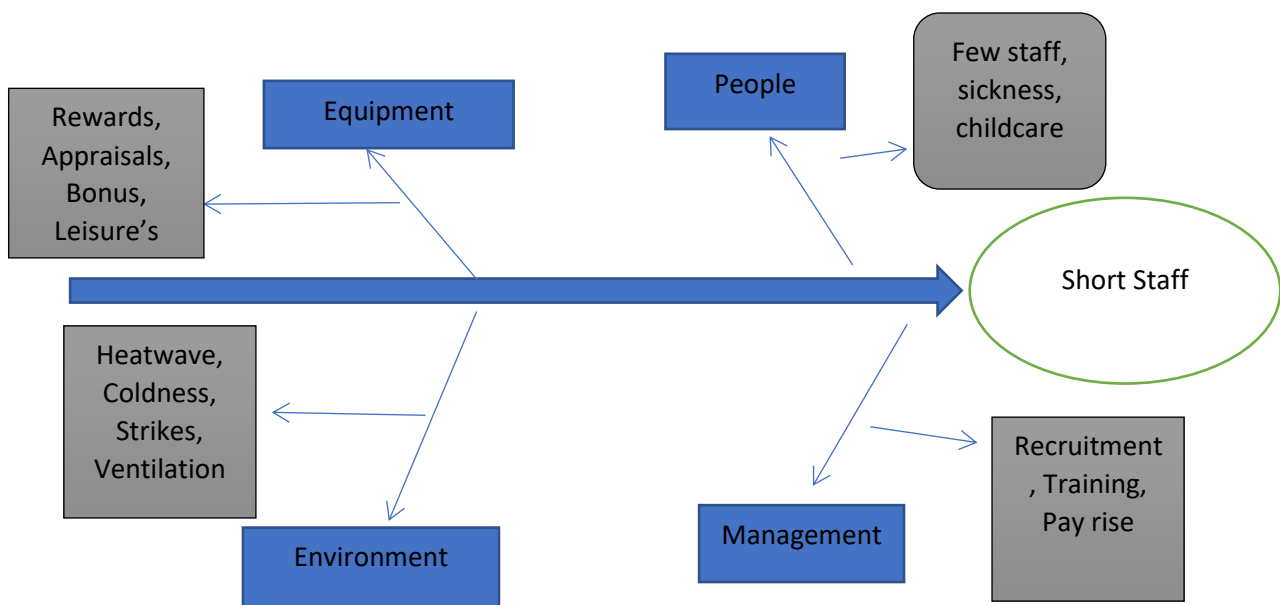
The PESTLE Analysis by Stratechi, (2022)

Political	Economic	Sociological	Technology	Legal	Environmental
Employ more Staff	Increase Staff Ration	Make staff feel valued	Blood Pressure Monitors	Mental Capacity Act 2005	Hot Summer Weather
Policy on right to work	Pay above leaving wage	Mix Ethnicity	Mobile Computers	Health & Safety at work Act 1974	Pollution on air quality
Reduce Income Tax on Worker	Increase overtime pay/benefits	Mix Gender	X rays, Dialysis Machines	Care Act 2014	Covid 19 infection

Fishbone Analysis

The first person to illustrate a problem's root cause using a visual diagram—commonly referred to as the "fishbone diagram" because it resembles a fish's

backbone and ribs in the 1950s—was a Japanese professor named Kaurou Ishikawa. Since then, it has developed into a crucial diagnostic tool for root cause analysis problem analysis and problem illustration (Galley, 2012), and it is helpful in diagnosing service improvement projects. Because it provides retrospective evaluations of accidents, the fishbone analysis is frequently utilised in the health sector to enhance safety and quality as well as to reduce adverse events (Pearson, 2005).



- **Discussion**

The effects of understaffing on all parties involved (health care workers, Patients, Professionals and Regulators)

Most of the time, nursing staff members are directly impacted when they are overworked due to inadequate staffing. Their physical and emotional wellness is impacted when they are deprived of food, water, or bathroom access for extended periods of time (RCN, 2017).

- **Falls**

Nursing must be detail oriented. When under pressure, nurses miss details more frequently than when they are not. Despite the presence of several others, the nurse is the final line of defence in hospitals. When nurses are exhausted from yet another shift with insufficient staff, this fail safe can malfunction, and medication mistakes can be lethal.

- **Medication Errors**

Detail-oriented nursing is crucial. Nurses are more prone to miss details when under pressure than when they are not. The nurse is the last line of defence in hospitals, despite multiple others. This fail safe can malfunction when nurses are worn out from yet another shift with insufficient staff, and medication errors can be fatal.

- **Bed Sores**

Patients who are immobile must be moved at present intervals throughout the day to prevent bed sores from developing. Because other staff members are typically busy, nurses commonly turn patients by themselves, which is a definite way to injure one's back. At least two staff members are required to turn a patient. Another challenging decision for the caring nurse: put her own safety in danger or put patients at risk of a bed sore

- **Patient (Dis)satisfaction**

Customer opinions directly affect a facility's capacity to entice and retain patients. The longer patients wait for pain medication or examinations, the more likely they are to have a bad hospital experience. As a result, the way a hospital treats its patients determines its true financial potential (Nurse Grid, 2022).

Managers and nurses must work together to determine the appropriate staffing numbers. It has been shown that adding more Registered Nurse (RN) hours to a unit will reduce the relative risk of unfavourable patient outcomes like bleeding and infections. Reduced medical errors are also essential from a financial aspect, argues (RNAction, 2022).

According to a devastating new research, continuous understaffing regularly endangers the safety of NHS patients.

In the letter, MPs accuse the Government of lacking a convincing plan to turn things around, claiming that the health service is currently experiencing its "biggest workforce crisis in its history."

The Health and Social Care Committee, which is bipartisan, discovered that from March 2015 to March 2016, there were over 700 fewer full-time general practitioners.

Maternity services are also believed to be under "unsustainable pressure," and according to research from the Nuffield Trust, the NHS is lacking 12,000 hospital doctors and more than 50,000 nurses and midwives in England alone.

In both routine and emergency care, "the NHS continues to be understaffed, posing a severe risk to staff and patient safety," they claimed. Patients with more serious illnesses who present later also spend more money.

But the absence of any workable alternatives is what many on the front lines find to be the worst let-down.

According to the research, "many in an exhausted workforce are considering quitting - and if they depart, pressure will build even more on their colleagues" because of the millions of days the NHS loses owing to staff sickness brought on by anxiety, stress, and depression.

The absence of flexible scheduling alternatives and easy access to hot meals and beverages throughout shifts were lamented in the report.

The Government "refuses" to make workforce planning data public, according to MPs, so it is impossible to assess whether enough people are being trained.

We currently face the worst workforce crisis in the history of the NHS and social care, and we still don't know how many more doctors, nurses, and other professionals we'll need, according to Tory MP and chair of the Health and Social Care Committee Jeremy Hunt.

According to the research, the NHS is experiencing a staffing crisis.

The research noted that in some places, more needed to be done about social care worker remuneration to keep people from leaving.

Legislations

The Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act, the first piece of legislation in the UK to specify standards for safe staffing across both health and social care services, was signed into law in June 2019.

The Nursing Staffing Levels (Wales) Act 2016 was a pioneering piece of legislation in the United Kingdom. For all patients to receive compassionate treatment, health boards must supply a sufficient number of nurses. The ideal staffing ratio for adult medical and surgical wards and children's wards is specified in Section 25B. RCN Wales is still pushing for the expansion of section 25B to new facilities, especially community nursing and care facilities and inpatient units for mental health.

Analysis

Successful decision making involves making the right choices in order to achieve your goals.



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Steps for making a good decision

Find the issue; list pertinent information; select alternatives; Consider the data, weigh your options, make a choice, act, and then consider the effects of your choice.

Shortage of Staff

The requirements of patients are evolving, as is the nature of ward activity. Many inpatients have complicated demands that frequently result from many long-term diseases, and they are typically sicker than they used to be. Hospitals struggle with a scarcity of registered nurses as well as a high turnover rate. This study offers recent data from studies supported by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), including investigations on the required staffing levels, the support workforce, and how care is organised on the wards. The lessons learned from hospitals may be helpful to decision-makers in community and social care, even if few research studies have examined the comparable pressures that exist there.

With the correct assistance, shared decision-making may become a common practise, according to Natalie, but it does require a change in mindsets at all levels (no date).

Recommendations/ Alternative Solutions

There are several different alternatives to short staffing, including PMI and the Burke-Litwin change model.

The Burke-Litwin change Model

A cause-and-effect link must be clearly defined and established in order to employ the Burke Litwin Model of Organizational Change. The paradigm is predicated on 12 organisational components that control organisational transformation.

The concept was created in the 1960s by W. Warner Burke and George H. Litwin and takes its name from two organisational transformation consultants.

It is a helpful change management tool to have a deeper understanding of all organisational components and see them through the lens of change.

Many times, the numerous factors are not given enough consideration, which can cause a change to have detrimental effects on both the organisation and the people.

The change model also illustrates how the different elements are related to one another and influence one another. It is a "open system theory" that bases modifications on extraneous variables (Mulder, 2018).

External Factors

- Qualifications
- Permits to Work
- Transportation Law
- Pay scales and Bands

Strategic Factors

- Days of recruitment
- Days of recruitment
- Employee motivation programmes
- Referral programmes
- Referral schemes
- Employ individuals both domestically and abroad
- Pay increase

Operational Factors

- Unions
- Entitlements to annual, sick, caregiver, and study leaves
- Off-duty inquiries

Individuals

- Worker input
- Rewarded outcomes
- Respect employees for who they are
- Intimacy and esteem

PMI

PMI is a tool for critical thinking, decision-making, and brainstorming that is used to start a discussion regarding the advantages, disadvantages, and implications of a certain idea or notion. It gives teachers a useful tool to use when facilitating

discussions in the classroom regarding difficult choices, problems, or circumstances and encourages students to consider ideas and concepts from several angles. Dr. Edward de Bono, who also invented the Six Thinking Hats NSW Education, developed (2020).

PMI on resolving short staffing

What's good +	What's bad -	What's interesting ?
• Job fulfilment • Lower infection rates • Reduce patient falls risk • Decreasing Mortality rates • Staff workload is reduced	• Expensive for the company • Even using a rota, allocation may not be simple.	• Workers will look forward to getting to work. • Patient treatment will be excellent. • The number of illness records will decrease
5	-2	3

As may be seen in the PMI Decision making tool's calculations above. If the problem of understaffing in the NHS is resolved, both employees and patients will benefit.

Conclusion

According to Danny Mortimer, CEO of NHS Employers, a division of the NHS Confederation, the study "underscores the enormity of the workforce challenge currently affecting both the NHS and social care."

One of the biggest obstacles to the economy's recovery and the restoration of accessible, high-quality healthcare, he claimed, is this issue.

According to him, it poses "one of the biggest obstacles to the economy's recovery and the restoration of accessible, high-quality healthcare for everybody."

Additionally, there are worries that the medical workforce would go on strike.

Patricia Marquis, the director of the Royal College of Nursing in England, agreed that persistent understaffing "in all care settings" posed a serious threat to the security of both employees and patients.

Because it "is intolerable that some NHS nurses are struggling to feed their families, pay their rent, and travel to work," she urged for prompt political action as well as a salary increase.

'We are growing the health and social care workforce, with over 4,000 more doctors, 9,600 more nurses, and over 1,400 more doctors in general practise compared to March 2019', a Department of Health and Social Care spokesperson stated.

We are continuing to work toward our aim of hiring 50,000 additional nurses by 2024, in addition to conducting a £95 million recruitment drive for maternity services and committing £500 million to develop our valued social care workforce, notably through training opportunities and new career routes.

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