

Factors Associated with Nursing Teamwork among Nurses at University Teaching and Referral Hospital

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Abstract

Introduction: For patients to receive the best health care possible, nurses must understand the role of each team member. Nurses serve as a bridge between doctors, patients and the hospital among their roles and thus effective teamwork and collaboration is mandatory for better service delivery to patients.

Objective: This study aimed to determine the level, common occurring elements of nursing teamwork and factors that influence nursing teamwork among nurses at the University Teaching and Referral Hospital of Kigali in Rwanda.

Materials and Methods: The study was cross-sectional descriptive and correlation design. This study utilized complete coverage method to obtain participants where nurses who met inclusion criteria and consented for participation were included in the study. The researcher used Nursing Teamwork survey (NTS) questionnaires for data collection. The data were analysed using SPSS version 26.0.

Results: Majority of the nurses, 58.70% perceive that the level of nursing teamwork was moderate. The top five elements were during break staff rarely takes extra time, team rarely ignores the error of team member instead of having discussion, there is planning to deal with sudden workload, oncoming staff do not complain of uncompleted work by previous shifts and instead of cooperating to attain entire team outcomes, and teammates focus on their individual task. Marital status and years of experience were statistically associated with the level of nursing teamwork.

Discussion: Nursing teamwork was perceived as moderate. This study highlighted the top five never occurring nursing teamwork elements and finally it showed marital status, and years of experience were statistically associate with the level of nursing teamwork.

Recommendation: The future study should look at the association between nursing communication and nursing teamwork. The administration of the study setting should focus on the never occurring elements highlighted by this study to improve nursing teamwork at the setting.

Keywords: Thinking; Teaching; Diagnostic Process; Nursing Diagnosis; Nursing

Introduction

Patient care is top priority in nursing profession. For patients to receive the best health care possible, nurses must understand the role of each team member. Nurses serve as a bridge between doctors, patients and the hospital administration among their roles and thus effective teamwork and collaboration should be mandatory for better service delivery to patients. The World Health Organization [1] in its Multi-Professional Patient Safety Curriculum Guide, acknowledges that “effective team work in healthcare delivery can have an immediate and positive impact on patient safety”. Effective performance of any organization is basically enhanced by employee’s teamwork. Therefore, prioritizing teamwork by organizations is essential aspect of offering competent, problem solving, and employee’s creativity enhancement through collaboration [2]. It has been also reported that teamwork had a significant effect on employees performance [2].

In nursing profession, nursing teamwork has a greater impact on quality of work, services and patients’ outcomes. It was also described that nursing teamwork affected patients satisfaction, job satisfaction and in improved practice and patient outcomes [3,4]. In a study, where nursing teamwork was stronger, the was less nursing care activities missed, however, the concept of nursing team was fond to be poorly understood though it is critical in providing safe and quality nursing care [5]. In health care, nursing team is taken as the backbone of the services provided to inpatient where team members recognize what others can, will, or want to do so that they can assist each other [6]. A study conducted in London acute care hospital by Anderson., *et al.* in 2019 found that more than 50% of the participants perceived nursing teamwork as good [7].

In the study conducted by Sassakos in 2011 found negative perception of staffing can be reduced by effective teamwork, therefore if nursing teamwork is improved, nursing unit conducive working environment is also improved [8]. To facilitate the team, consideration of nursing skills and ability should be emphasized during patients’ assignment, and this should also be considered on various education and experience when assigning nursing roles by assigning nurses reasonable and manageable patients basing on their acuity [9]. This also levels up nurses job satisfaction [10].

A study conducted by Estryn-Bahar., *et al.* found that one of the factors contributing to nursing turnover was a perceived poor teamwork [11]. In the study conducted by Lochon in Canada, Northern Ontario, (The North Bay Regional Health Centre) assessed the level of nursing teamwork, found intensive care unit had high levels of nursing teamwork with mean scores of 127.7, whereas surgical unit had the lowest mean scores of 107.5 indicating lower-level nursing teamwork [12]. This study also showed that if team members are aware and understand the goals, roles, and expectations of their teammates characterize the effective nursing team, however, effective team occurs only if each team members monitor the action of their teammate [12].

Nurses interact with many healthcare professionals both in their team and in other departments. It is therefore important for each team member to understand their key roles to achieve greater collaboration. Each member must understand their role and expectations to achieve the team goals. In the study that explored the factors associated with nursing teamwork, found that age and inpatient care unit had an association. The role experience was also associated with nursing teamwork [13].

Methods

Study setting and data collection

This research was conducted at the University Teaching and Referral Hospital of Kigali in Rwanda, also known on its French name as “Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Kigali” (CHUK) from October to December 2021.

This study adopted Nursing teamwork survey developed by Kalisch., *et al.* who repeatedly tested its psychometric properties and switability to gather the data from participants [14,15]. Nursing teamwork survey (NTS) was mainly invented to assess the perception of teamwork among nursing staff. NTS had three parts. The first part had nurse related factors, the second part had institutional related factors and the third part 33 elements of nursing teamwork. The responses for NTS were [1] Never occurred to 5 = Always occurred. Therefore 1 and 2 was regarded as never occurred, 3 as sometimes and 4, 5 was regarded as always occurred [16].

Ethical consideration

Before starting data collection, the researcher sought clearance from the Institution Ethical Review board at Mount Kenya University (MKU-IERB). The researcher submitted this copy from MKU ethical clearance to CHUK-ethical review committees and was granted the permission to conduct the research. Therefore, the research acquired an informed consent from the participants. The researcher followed all guidelines and protocols as stipulated in the ethical approvals.

Specific objectives

1. To determine the level of nursing teamwork among nurses at University Teaching and Referral Hospital of Kigali.
2. To assess the most common elements of nursing teamwork among nurses working at University Teaching and Referral Hospital of Kigali.
3. To determine the nurse related factors that contributing of nursing teamwork among nurses at University Teaching and Referral Hospital of Kigali.
4. To determine the institutional related factors that contributing of nursing teamwork among nurses at University Teaching and Referral Hospital of Kigali.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The study included nurses who had six months and above working experience in the clinical setting in the selected hospital units. Nurses providing direct care to inpatients in selected hospital units and nurses in administrative positions and it excluded nurses who were on their leave in the period of data collection.

Statistical analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS version 26.0. The analysis was comprised of descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were frequency distributions, and mode. Inferential statistics included Pearson chi-square test for independence (X^2) to describe relationship between independent and dependent variables at the significance level of ($P \leq 0.05$).

Results

The nursing teamwork elements were analyzed to find the level of nursing teamwork. They were ranked on Likert scale where never occurred and rarely occurred were combined and become low level, sometimes occurred was considered as moderate level and finally, the elements which were frequently and always occurred was recorded as high level of nursing teamwork.

The research findings revealed that majority of the nurses, 58.70% perceived the level of nursing teamwork as moderate. A very low percentage of nurses, 3.26% were of the view that the level of nursing teamwork was low whereas 38.04% perceived the level of nursing teamwork as high.

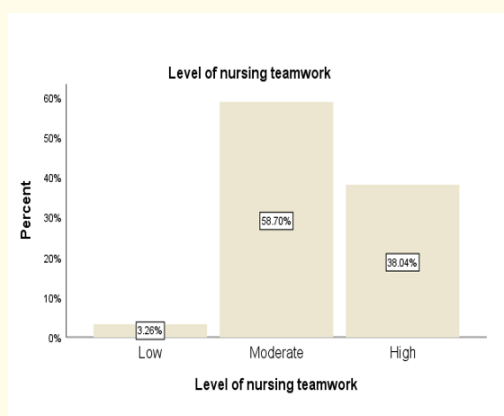


Figure 1: Level of nursing teamwork.

Common occurring elements of nursing teamwork

In this study various variables of nursing teamwork was examined to determine the frequency in which they occur. That is, how often certain aspects of nursing teamwork occurred among the studied nurses. The goal was to determine which aspects of nursing teamwork occurred most frequently.

Never occurred and rarely occurred were collapsed to never occurred, sometimes was analyzed as it was and frequently and always occurred were collapsed to always occurred. The findings showed the top ten most always occurring elements of nursing team work and were: team members recognize their task throughout the shift, 72.1%), the nurses comprehend each other’s duties, 62.7%, the end of shift report contains all the needed information for continuity of patient care, 61.2%, team members understand that their commitment inspire others, 60.7%, in-charge team leader monitors the progress of the team, 60.7%, team members understand that working as a team results in quality job accomplishment, 57.7%, ideas and information is shared readily among team members, 57.2%, there is some sense of respect among team members, 53.7%, in charge team leader balances the workload fairly among the team, 52.7% and if there was clear communication among team members, 48.8%.

The researcher also sought to find out the elements of nursing teamwork that have never occurred and the top five were during break staff rarely takes extra time, 47.3%, team rarely ignores the error of team member instead of having discussion, 42.8%, there is plan to deal with sudden workload, 39.3%, oncoming staff do not complain of uncompleted work by previous shifts, 37.8% and instead of cooperating to attain entire team outcomes, teammates focus on their individual task as it can be seen in table 1.

Elements of nursing teamwork	Never occurred		Sometimes Occurred		Always Occurred	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Team rarely ignores the errors of team member instead of having discussion	86	42.8	83	41.3	32	15.9
Oncoming staff do not complain of uncompleted work by previous shift	76	37.8	67	33.3	58	28.9
During break staff rarely takes extra time	95	47.3	62	30.8	44	21.9
Team welcomes criticism on area of improvement	52	25.9	57	28.4	92	45.8
Teammates with stronger personalities dominate decisions	74	36.8	72	35.8	55	27.4
When conflicts arise, most team members deal with them instead of avoiding them	66	32.8	69	34.3	66	32.8
There is frequent and non-judgmental feedback from the team	59	29.4	75	37.3	67	33.3
Instead of cooperating to attain entire team outcome, teammates focus on their individual task	74	36.8	56	27.9	71	35.3
Clear communication among team members	41	20.4	62	30.8	98	48.8
Ideas and information shared readily among team members	43	21.4	43	21.4	115	57.2
Passing information clearly as it was intended to team members	36	17.9	70	34.8	95	47.3
Teammate seek and provide constructive feedback	48	23.9	60	29.9	93	46.3
When staff is absent, their task are fairly distributed among the remaining members	65	32.3	46	22.9	90	44.8
Teammates trust each other	51	25.4	69	34.3	81	40.3
Team members engage in professional development to develop themselves and adopt new methods of practice	65	32.3	56	27.9	80	39.8
In charge team leader monitor progress of team	25	12.4	54	26.9	122	60.7
There is plan to deal with sudden workload increase	79	39.3	38	18.9	84	41.8

In charge team leader balance, the workload fairly among team	31	15.4	64	31.8	106	52.7
In-charge/team leader provides clear and relevant directions on what is needed	52	25.9	54	26.9	95	47.3
When teammate need support, members recognize that before being asked	57	28.4	53	26.4	91	45.3
When team member is lagging behind in work, team members can realize it	32	15.9	85	42.3	84	41.8
In heavy workload scenario, team members cooperate to get the work done	32	15.9	85	42.3	84	41.8
In the team nurses monitor each other without lagging in their individual task	55	27.4	53	26.4	93	46.3
Regardless of workload, team members attend to another patient's inquiries when colleagues are busy/overloaded	38	18.9	60	29.9	103	51.2
In-charge team member is willing to support team members throughout the shift	43	21.4	54	26.9	104	51.7
Team members recognize their task throughout the shift	26	12.9	30	14.9	145	72.1
Team members understand that their commitment inspire others	27	13.4	52	25.9	122	60.7
Team members understand that working as a team result in quality job accomplishment	45	22.4	40	19.9	116	57.7
The end of shift reports contains all the needed information for continuity of patient care	28	13.9	50	24.9	123	61.2
There is sense of respect among team members	40	19.9	53	26.4	108	53.7
Team members recognize strengths and weakness of their members and work with them frequently	32	15.9	65	32.3	104	51.7
There is comprehension of each other duties among team members	32	15.9	43	21.4	126	62.7

Table 1: Frequency distribution of nursing teamwork.

Relationship between nursing teamwork and nurse related factors

Analysis was done to find out if there exist any relationship between nursing teamwork and nurse related factors. The nurse related factors were grouped into two: 1. Demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, level of education and experience in profession and in the current unit) and 2. Nurse satisfaction (satisfied with orientation, satisfied with position, satisfied with salary, satisfied with incentives, satisfied with being a nurse, and satisfied with in service training). The analysis was accomplished by running cross-tabulation and chi-square analysis to determine if there existed any relationship. The first demographic data was age. Majority of nurses in all age groups had moderate level of nursing teamwork. 39.2% of nurses in the age bracket of 21 - 30 years had high level of nursing teamwork with slight difference compared to the rest of the age groups. The association between age and level of nursing teamwork from the chi-square crosstabulation was not statistically significant, that is there was not enough evidence to suggest that there exists a relationship between the two variables.

The second demographic data was gender. 62.7% of male nurses and 56.0% of female nurses had moderate level of nursing teamwork. Majority of the nurses 46.2% of the female gender had high level of nursing teamwork compared to their male counterparts. Despite these results, the chi-square results revealed that the relationship was not significant, thus there was not enough evidence to say that the level of nursing teamwork was statistically influenced by gender.

The third demographic data to be examined was marital status. 56.1% of nurses who are married, 64.7% of nurses who are single and 72.7% of nurses who were not married (widowed, divorced) had moderate level of nursing teamwork. Majority of the nurses who were married 42.4% had high level of nursing teamwork compared to their counterparts. The chi-square analysis revealed that the association between marital status and level of nursing teamwork was statistically significant.

The fourth demographic data was the level of education. 55.6% of nurses who had a Diploma, A1 and 62.4% of nurses who had a Bachelor Degree had moderate level of nursing teamwork. 42.4% of nurses who had a Diploma, A1 had high level of nursing teamwork compared to those with a bachelor’s degree. The relationship between level of education and nursing teamwork was not statistically significant.

The fifth demographic data to be examined was experience in the nursing profession. From table 2, 60.0% of nurses with more than 10 years’ experience, 57.1% of nurses with experience of between 0 - 5 years and 56.9% of nurses with experience between 5 - 10 years had moderate level of nursing teamwork. Nurses with more than 10 years’ experience in the nursing profession slightly had higher level of nursing teamwork compared to the rest. The association between years of experience in the nursing profession and level of nursing teamwork was not statistically significant. The sixth demographic data was experience in the current unit. From the analysis, majority of the nurses in each category had moderate level of nursing teamwork. The nurses who had served in the current unit for a period of between 5 - 10 years had the highest level of nursing teamwork compared to their counterparts. The association between experience in the current unit and level of nursing teamwork was statistically significant.

Nurse related factors	Level of nursing team work						χ ²	P-value
	Low		Moderate		High			
	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Age								
21-30 years	3	5.9	28	54.9	20	39.2	1.69	0.792
31-40 years	2	2.4	51	60.0	32	37.6		
41-50 years	1	2.1	29	60.4	18	37.5		
Gender								
Male	4	5.3	47	62.7	24	32.0	3.22	0.200
Female	2	1.8	61	56.0	46	46.2		
Marital status								
Married	2	1.4	78	56.1	59	42.4	9.57	0.048*
Single	3	8.8	22	64.7	9	26.5		
Not married (widow, divorced)	1	9.1	8	72.7	2	18.2		
Education level								
Diploma, A1	2	2.0	55	55.6	42	42.4	2.45	0.293
Bachelor’s degree	4	4.7	53	62.4	28	32.9		
Experience in nursing profession								
0-5 years	1	4.8	12	57.1	8	38.1	4.36	0.359
5-10 years	4	6.9	33	56.9	21	36.2		
>10 years	1	1.0	63	60.0	41	39.0		
Experience in the current unit								
0-5 years	2	2.9	47	67.1	21	30.0	11.03	0.026*
5-10 years	4	5.7	31	44.3	35	50.0		
10-20 years	0	0.0	30	68.2	14	31.8		

Table 2: Relationship between nurse demographic characteristics and level of nursing teamwork.

The second approach was to examine the nurse related factors in regard to their satisfaction status of various metric variables that were being examined. The first metric variable to be examined was satisfaction with orientation. 55.6% of the nurses who were satisfied with orientation and 67.3% who were dissatisfied with orientation had moderate level of nursing teamwork. Majority of the nurses who were satisfied with orientation 42.2% had high level of nursing teamwork compared to those who were dissatisfied with orientation. However, the association between satisfaction with orientation and level of nursing teamwork was not statistically significant. The second variable examined was nurse satisfaction with their position. 57.7% of nurses who were satisfied with their position and 68.8% of the nurses who were dissatisfied with their position had moderate level of nursing teamwork. 39.9% of nurses who were satisfied with their position had high level of nursing teamwork compared to those who were dissatisfied with their position. The association between satisfaction with position and level of nursing teamwork was statistically significant. The third variable in the analysis was nurse satisfaction with salary. 59.0% of the nurses who are satisfied with their salary and 57.1% who are dissatisfied had moderate level of nursing teamwork. On examining the association between nursing satisfaction with salary and level of nursing teamwork, the findings revealed that there was no statistically significant association between the two. Finally, satisfaction with incentives was a significant factor. 49.0% of those who were satisfied with incentives had high level of nursing teamwork compared to those who were dissatisfied. Nurse satisfaction within service training and satisfaction with being a nurse were not statistically significant. Table 3 summarized the results.

Nurse satisfaction	Level of nursing team work						χ^2	P-value
	Low		Moderate		High			
	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Satisfied with orientation							4.86	0.088
Yes	3	2.2	75	55.6	57	42.2		
No	3	6.1	33	67.3	13	26.5		
Satisfied with position							6.60	0.037*
Yes	4	2.4	97	57.7	67	39.9		
No	2	12.5	11	68.8	3	18.8		
Satisfied with salary							0.037	0.982
Yes	5	3.2	92	59.0	59	37.8		
No	1	3.6	16	57.1	11	39.3		
Satisfied with incentives							12.09	0.002*
Yes	2	2.0	50	49.0	50	49.0		
No	4	4.9	58	70.7	20	24.4		
Satisfied with being a nurse							2.66	0.264
Yes	6	3.5	99	57.2	68	39.3		
No	0	0.0	9	81.8	2	18.2		
Satisfied with in service training							1.38	0.564
Yes	3	2.3	78	60.0	49	37.7		

Table 3: Relationship between satisfaction status of the studied nurses and level of nursing teamwork.

Relationship between nursing teamwork and institution related factors

Relationship between unit related factors and level of nursing teamwork was examined by running cross-tabulation and chi-square analysis. From the table 4, level of ward staffing, level of bed capacity and call for additional shift are statistically significant. This implies

that there was association between these variables and level of nursing teamwork at the hospital. Size of ward when admitting patients, size of ward when performing procedures and frequency of when the workload was heavy were not statistically significant which implies that there was no statistically significant relationship between these variables and levels of nursing teamwork at the hospital.

Institutional related factors	Level of nursing team work						χ^2	P-value
	Low		Moderate		High			
	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Departmental ward staffing								
Never inadequate	1	1.7	42	71.2	16	27.1	11.03	0.026*
Sometimes inadequate	0	0.0	30	61.2	19	38.8		
Always inadequate	5	6.6	36	47.4	35	46.1		
Level of bed capacity								
Never inadequate	1	2.1	22	45.8	25	52.1	15.71	0.003*
Sometimes inadequate	3	6.5	36	78.3	7	15.2		
Always inadequate	2	2.2	50	55.6	38	42.2		
Size of ward when admitting patients								
Never inadequate	4	6.3	32	50.0	28	43.8	7.58	0.108
Sometimes inadequate	2	6.1	20	60.6	11	33.3		
Always inadequate	0	0.0	56	64.4	31	35.6		
Ward size when performing procedures								
Never inadequate	1	2.2	24	52.2	21	45.7	1.93	0.749
Sometimes inadequate	2	4.8	26	61.9	14	33.3		
Always inadequate	3	3.1	58	60.4	35	36.5		
Call for additional shift								
Never occurred	6	5.8	61	58.7	37	35.6	10.15	0.038*
Sometimes occurred	0	0.0	26	72.2	10	27.8		
Always occurred	0	0.0	41	47.7	23	52.3		
Workload heavy								
Never occurred	2	5.4	22	59.5	13	35.1	6.1	0.192
Sometimes occurred	1	2.3	32	72.7	11	25.0		
Always occurred	3	2.9	54	52.4	46	44.7		

Table 4: Relationship between the unit related factors and level of nursing teamwork.

Discussions

The study established that majority of the nurses perceive the level of nursing teamwork as moderate. From this study findings the level of nursing teamwork at the hospital was described as being moderate, the findings were not agreeing with the study conducted by Lochon in Canada (The North Bay Regional Health Centre), which revealed that the level of nursing teamwork was from high to lower across the studied institution [12]. This level of nursing teamwork can be explained by the fact that majority of the nurses responded that the various elements of nursing teamwork that were being assessed have sometimes occurred and always occurred. Moreover, this can also be explained by the fact that from the analysis of nurse related factors on their satisfaction levels, majority of the nurses were satisfied with the services at the hospital, and are contented with their salary, position and they have no intention of leaving the institution.

The common occurring elements of nursing teamwork by the studied nurses were established by doing frequency analysis and determining the mode from the frequencies. From the study the top 10 common occurring elements of nursing teamwork are: team members recognize their task throughout the shift, the nurses comprehend each other's duties, the end of shift report contains all the needed information for continuity of patient care, team members understand that their commitment inspire others, in-charge team leader monitors the progress of the team, team members understand that working as a team results in quality job accomplishment, ideas and information is shared readily among team members, there is some sense of respect among team members, in-charge team leader balances the workload fairly among the team and there is clear communication among team members. However, from the literature search no studies that had elaborated on the frequency of occurrence of elements of nursing teamwork.

Conclusion

On the basis of study findings, showed that the level of nursing teamwork was perceived as moderate and the study highlighted the common occurring nursing elements of nursing teamwork and the factors that were associated with the level of nursing teamwork at study setting.

Recommendations

This study recommends that further research should study the association between nursing communication and nursing teamwork.

The study setting administration should focus on the never occurring elements of nursing teamwork to strengthen nursing teamwork at the hospital and improve quality of care.

Availability of Data and Materials

The datasets used and analyzed during the current study are available from the principal or corresponding author on reasonable request through Mount Kenya University. This article is a part of the whole thesis.

Competing Interests

Authors declare no competing interest regarding this particular study.

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Authors' Contributions

Mr. Faustin Ntezimana designed and implemented the study.

Dr. Nilufa Jivraj, PhD and Dr. Dominic Mogere, PhD. were supervisors and responsible for efficiency and effective implementation of the study.

All authors critically and scientifically reviewed the manuscript and approved its final copy for publication.

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