GOVERNMENT CHIEF NURSING OFFICERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF BARRIERS TO USING RESEARCH ON STAFFING

KEY MESSAGES

- Even a single source of international nursing research results — such as an electronic newsletter or a web site — can increase knowledge transfer and improve the use of evidence in decision-making for nurse staffing.
- Summaries of all research reports on nurse staffing should be readily available in one place, with clear information on where to find more information.
- The people who work with chief nursing officers should be educated about important research findings on nurse staffing.

The following is a summary of an article by M. Baernholdt and N. M. Lang, published in International Nursing Review in 2007.

Even though they are living in an information age, nurses are still struggling to access information to improve evidence-informed practice, says a new study on barriers to using research on nurse staffing.

According to “Government chief nursing officers’ perceptions of barriers to using research on staffing,” the top barrier to implementing research findings on nurse staffing is the fact that it can’t be found in one place. Surveying nursing stakeholders from 110 countries, the authors found nursing research is in dire need of new ways to help put international research into practice.

Access to research

The transfer of research to individual practices and delivery systems can be quite slow and often fails, which is why there is a reported need for a "one-stop shop" to access nursing research. Developing a web site or a newsletter — something that would become renowned as a single source of research into nurse staffing — is perhaps a first step in promoting the use of research.

The chief nursing officers and other high-ranking policy makers surveyed identified that having summaries of available research, accompanied by information on how to get full reports, would go one step further in increasing the usability of evidence. The people who work alongside chief nursing officers — people such as administrators and physicians — also need to be more informed of the research findings on nurse staffing. This knowledge transfer and exchange can be done through collaborating with organizations such as the World Health Organization, the International Council of Nurses and the World Health Professions Alliance.

Barriers to putting research into action

Identifying the main barriers to implementing research findings should help chief nursing officers figure out how to minimize them and move
forward with putting research results into action, according to this report.

Besides the need for a "one-stop shop" to house and disseminate nursing research, there are other barriers that make it hard to put findings into practice. For example, the respondents from both rich and poor countries identified that research reports about adequate nurse staffing aren't published fast enough, and research studies about nurse staffing need to be replicated more often and in different environments.

Other barriers included the perception that research findings were insufficient, that the facilities where nurses work are "inadequate for implementation," that the findings simply don't apply to their countries and that the amount of available research is problematic.

**Differences between income groups**

Nursing stakeholders from both low-income and high-income countries felt there could be more support from colleagues within their organizations when it comes to implementing research findings on adequate nurse staffing. However, stakeholders in low-income countries wanted increased backing from their organizations’ administrators, while stakeholders from higher-income countries wanted to see more interest from other professionals, such as physicians.

Adequate nurse staffing is an ongoing challenge faced by many nurses and nurse decision makers around the world. To overcome this challenge, nursing stakeholders need to have access to timely research and best practices to help inform their decision-making.

**Reference**