

For Immediate Release



AUB study warns that the nursing workforce is in crisis: 2 in 3 nurses want to leave their jobs

Beirut, Lebanon- 07/05/2012 -More than two in three nurses would like to leave their jobs and around one in three would like to leave their profession, a reflection of the serious levels of job dissatisfaction among nursing professionals, something which they mainly attribute to low salaries and work overload, according to a new national study released by an AUB research team.

A six-year research program consisting of several studies spearheaded by Fadi El-Jardali, associate professor of health management and policy, with a team from the Faculty of Health Sciences, in collaboration with the Rafic Hariri School of Nursing, has documented startling evidence about the nursing workforce. Findings from the nurse migration study show that at least one in five Lebanese nurses who receive a bachelor's degree intend to migrate within two years of graduation. The main reasons for migration included: having to work different shifts rather than having a stable schedule; having a high workload; understaffing; lack of autonomy; and a poor work environment. For many of these nurses, career advancement is the primary reason for migration.

For years, policymakers and health providers have been concerned with issues faced by the nursing profession, a profession that struggles with: shortages, low satisfaction rates, poor work environment, lack of financial and nonfinancial incentives, gender inequities, marginalization, poor planning, weak and outdated curricula, and few opportunities for advancement.

Given that nurses provide over 90 percent of direct patient care making shortages in this workforce a devastating obstacle to health provision, the existing shortage of nurses poses a threat to health outcomes.

In another study conducted in 69 hospitals by the six-year research program, 1793 nurses were surveyed, and the study found that 67.5 percent of them intend to leave their current jobs; while 37.5 percent want to leave the country and 63.3 percent want to leave the hospital. Around 30 percent of nurses who intend to leave want to leave the profession. Nurses are least satisfied with salary and benefits, balance between family and work life, and professional opportunities. Satisfaction levels were also significantly associated with greater intent to leave. Poor work environment, particularly working conditions, organizational support and career development was cited as the main challenge by nurses.

Nursing directors in 76 hospitals also reported many reasons nurses want to leave their jobs. The most significant of these are: poor salary, long shifts and long working hours, better opportunities abroad, high workloads, and marriage since nurses tend to quit work to care of

their children. The typical duration of service ranges from one to three years. Nursing directors suggested using strategies such as raising salaries, developing career advancement programs, offering financial rewards and incentives, and introducing flexible scheduling, to retain nurses.

A national study on nurses working in underserved rural areas in Lebanon (North, Bekaa and South), showed that more than 90 percent had technical, non-university degrees, particularly those working in Primary Health Care facilities. Around 50 percent of them had less than five years of professional nursing experience and only 35.1 percent of the 857 nurses intend to stay working in underserved areas. Only 30.8 percent reported that they would choose nursing as a profession if they could choose their career all over again.

“Nurses are the foundation of health care delivery in Lebanon,” said El-Jardali. “Overwhelming evidence points to the need to take immediate action to remedy the alarming issues faced by the nursing workforce. This is the time to advocate for evidence-informed nursing policies to improve the work environment for nurses and the healthcare system in general.”

ENDS

For more information please contact:

Maha Al-Azar, Associate Director for Media Relations, ma110@aub.edu.lb, 01-75 96 85

Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 600 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,000 students. AUB currently offers more than 100 programs leading to the bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full service 420-bed hospital.

Stay up to date on AUB news and events. Follow us on:

Website: www.aub.edu.lb

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/aub.edu.lb>

Twitter: http://twitter.com/AUB_Lebanon