Optimizing Job Demands in Aged Care: Helping Nurses Cope with Challenges

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Background

• Nurse psychological health
• Nurse turnover
• Job challenges
  • Challenging job demands with potential to facilitate personal growth
  • Challenge-related stress
  • Felt challenge (i.e. “perceptions” of job challenges)
• Aim
  To examine the differential impacts of challenge-related stress and felt challenge on turnover and psychological health
Theoretical Underpinnings (1)

• **Job Demand-Control-Support model** (Johnson & Hall, 1988; Karasek, 1979)

High Job Demands + Bad Boss + CRAZY coworkers = Low coping resources = Poor Psychological Health
Theoretical Underpinnings (2)

- **Transactional Model of Stress and Coping** (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)

  - Perceptions of job demands
  - Evaluations of available resources
  - Responses to stressful events
Hypotheses

H1: Challenge-related stress would be negatively associated with turnover

H2: Felt challenge would be negatively associated with turnover

H3: Challenge-related stress would be positively associated with poorer psychological health

H4: Felt challenge would be positively associated with poorer psychological health

H5: An increase in skill discretion, decision authority, co-worker support and supervisor support would be associated with a reduction in the level of challenge-related stress
Data Source and Sample

Data source
- Nurses and Midwives e-cohort Study
- Baseline: 1st April 2006 - 31st March 2008
- Survey 2: 30th August 2008 - 26th September 2009

Full Australian sample size
Baseline: N=5579

Analytic sample
- 254 Australian nurses who reported working in residential aged care at baseline
- 239 met inclusion criteria
Measures and Instruments

- Turnover
- Psychological Health
- Challenge-related Stress
- Felt Challenge
- Coping Resources
  - Skill Discretion
  - Decision Authority
  - Co-worker Support
  - Supervisor Support
- Control variables
  - Individual characteristics: Age, Highest Qualification, Currently Undertaking Study
  - Workforce characteristics: Annual Salary, Average Working Hours Per Week, Doing Shift Work, Size of Work Group, Facility Ownership
Analytical Strategy

- **Missing data analysis:** multiple imputation by chained equations

- **Descriptive statistics**

- **Hierarchical logistic and linear regression analyses**
Findings: Predictor of Turnover

• H1: Challenge-related stress would be negatively associated with turnover

• H2: Felt challenge would be negatively associated with turnover

• Lower level of turnover appeared to be related to a greater sense of job challenges, but not the level of stress caused by job challenges.
Findings: Predictor of Psychological health

• H3: Challenge-related stress would be positively associated with poorer psychological health

• H4: Felt challenge would be positively associated with poorer psychological health

• Poorer Psychological Health was predicted by a higher level of Challenge-related Stress, but not by a sense of job challenges
Findings: Stress and Resources

• H5: An increase in skill discretion, decision authority, co-worker support and supervisor support would be associated with a reduction in the level of challenge-related stress

• A collective increase in coping resources was related to a decrease in the level of stress caused by job challenges

• Challenge-related Stress was significantly and negatively associated with Supervisor Support, but not with Skill Discretion, Decision Authority and Co-worker Support.
Implications
Conclusions

• Job design of aged care nursing should promote positive challenging aspects.

• Targeted interventions are required to reduce the stress associated with the job challenges.

• Supervisor support is a particularly valuable resource to manage stress related to job challenges.
Acknowledgement

Thank you