Abstract

Challenges and Barriers in Developing the Division of Labour between Nurses in a Finnish Acute Hospital

Paivi Lavander, RN, MHSc, Doctoral Student
Research Unit of Nursing Science and Health Management, Faculty of Medicine, University of Oulu, Finland
Senior Nursing Officer, Oulu University Hospital, the Northern Ostrobothnia District, Finland

Leena Turkki, RN, PhD, Docent
Professor, Head of Health Management, Research Unit of Nursing Science and Health Management, Faculty of Medicine, University of Oulu, Finland

Marjo Suhonen, RN, PhD, Docent
University lecturer, Research Unit of Nursing Science and Health Management, Faculty of Medicine, University of Oulu. Medical Research Group Oulu, Finland

Merja Merilainen, RN, PhD
Senior Nursing Officer, Oulu University Hospital, the Northern Ostrobothnia District, Finland. Medical Research Group Oulu, Finland

Correspondence: Paivi Lavander, Oulu University Hospital, BOX 20, 90029 OYS, Finland.
E-mail: paivi.lavander@ppshp.fi

Abstract

Background: Ageing populations with high demands for healthcare require changes in nursing work. The right division of labour is one of the solutions contributing to efficiency, productivity and quality in healthcare.

Objective: To determine challenges and barriers related to the development of division of labour between practical nurses and registered nurses.

Methodology: This qualitative study reports as a part of a larger study of nurses (n=260), perceptions of challenges and barriers in developing the division of labour in one hospital district in Finland. The data was derived from an open-ended question and analysed by inductive content analysis.

Results: The results showed that challenges and barriers in developing the division of labour were related to the individuals’ experiences and know-how and organisational factors. The most common factors in all groups were attitudes and prejudices, concern about competence and the limits and ambiguity of division of labour.

Conclusions: The results were surprisingly similar in all groups (registered nurses, practical nurses, nurse managers). To improve productivity and quality in healthcare, we need uniform guidelines for wards, clear job descriptions, a culture of mutual respect, understanding of each group’s role, information about practical nurses’ education and continuous communication. Most of these issues are linked to management and its challenges.

Key words: division of labour, practical nurse, registered nurse, nurse manager