Leaver profiles and the role of precipitating events in leaving intensive care –
A Qualitative Analysis of voluntary turnover of former ICU nurses from public hospitals in Austria

Tanja Lesnik & Birgit Moser-Plautz
University of Klagenfurt, Austria

5 – 7 June 2024 – Bucharest, Romania
Politehnica University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania
Introduction & Study objectives

A healthcare system without nursing staff is inconceivable
- Shortage of highly specialised intensive care nurses poses a significant problem
- Reduced nurse-to-patient ratio possesses adverse outcomes on patient safety and the quality of delivered care (Chau et al., 2015; Milstein & Schreyoegg, 2020; WHO, 2000)

- One main contributing factor to the nursing shortage in intensive care units are precipitating events -> “shocks” which enhance voluntary turnover (Holtom et al. 2005)

Study objective
The study aims to
(1) analyse the origin and role of shocks in the decision to leave and the impact of the interplay of individual reactions to shocks on leaving and
(2) develop various leaver profiles.
Methods

Qualitative interview study

- 25 former ICU nurses
- Purposive sampling and snowballing technique
- Semi-structured interviews + interview notes
- Pretesting phase—Discussion of semi-structured interview questions with ICU nurses + pretest
- Study was approved by the ethical committee of the University of Klagenfurt
- 14 open-ended theoretically driven interview questions
  - When did you first think about leaving intensive care?
  - What event or situation made you finally leave intensive care?
  - How did you decide to leave intensive care?
  - How did you actually leave intensive care?
Methods

• Data analysis with Gioia methodology (2013)
• Combination of inductive and deductive coding based on the five career shock attributes of Akkermans et al. (2018):
  • Frequency
  • Predictability / controllability,
  • Valence
  • Duration
  • Source

(1) Free coding, focusing on informant-centric terms – First order concepts (50-100 codes) Participants are seen as “knowledgeable agents”

(2) Research-centric coding – Second order themes informed by theory (Akkermans et al. 2018) Theory is combined with informant-centric terms

(3) Development of process model – Aggregate dimensions
Theory + informant-centric terms resulted in process model and various leaver types
Preliminary results:

- 12 participants only left ICU, remained in nursing profession
- 13 participants left nursing profession completely
Preliminary results

Origin of shocks

1st Order Concepts

Painful caring of young apallic patients & their children

Caring for a young teenager, who was brain dead

2nd Order themes

Emotional involvement

No emotional demarcation

Aggregate Dimensions

Emotional exhaustion
Preliminary results

Origin of shocks

Anchor example

When I think of a young mother whose child was the same age as my child at the time, yes, the mother was very young and was apallic. The child lay on top of her mother and said, "Mum, when are you going to wake up? These are things that are very stressful for me. And still are. I think a lot about this situation. Those were things like that, or when the children in particular come and ask me when their mum is finally going to wake up because she sleeps so well. These are things that are very painful. I don’t want these situations anymore. These made me quit intensive care. (Interview 20, item 54)
Thank you for your attention!

Tanja Lesnik, University of Klagenfurt
E-Mail: tanja.lesnik@aau.at
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/tanja-lesnik-2b5bb8159
Literature


