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Institut National de Santé Publique, d'Épidémiologie Clinique et de Toxicologie

**POLICY BRIEF**

**HEALTH PROFESSIONS AXIS - NURSING**

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## **Title: Nursing Profession in Lebanon: From Education to Practice**

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### **SUMMARY**

Like many other health professions, the nursing profession is constantly evolving, resulting in the emergence of new extended roles of the nurse, requiring new skills and competencies. Nurses constitute the largest group of health care professionals worldwide. Challenges to this profession make it difficult to set regional priorities for policies and research development. In Lebanon, it is imperative to make adjustments to nursing education and practice to cope with these changes and optimize the workplace ergonomics for nurses, thus, improve work environment, the quality of nursing care and the nursing profession longevity.

Based on evidence, INSPECT-LB produced recommendations regarding several aspects of the nursing profession, starting from educational engineering to good nursing practice, to several other aspects including the development factors of the profession, the recognition of specialized nurses, continuing education and nursing advocacy role.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS/MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

- Support the global standards for the initial education of professional nurses in Lebanon and disseminate it to universities who have nursing education programs.
- Promote the progressive nature of education and lifelong learning for nurses.
- Endorse use of evidence in nursing profession and enable the development of clinical reasoning, problem solving and critical thinking in their programs.
- Encourage leadership ability and continuing professional development among nurses.
- Assess emotional intelligence of the nurses in the Lebanese practice and evaluate its impact on the workplace.
- Make better use of the accreditation program to improve work environment for nurses (health care managers in collaboration with relevant stakeholders).
- Discuss and support the implementation of any other process that would elevate the number of science nursing graduates (in collaboration with relevant stakeholders).
- Explore the factors contributing to (or preventing) turnover and fatigue among nurses coping in hospital work systems.
- Collaborate with the order of nurses to promote aspects of nursing practice related to public health and community health (chronic diseases prevention, vaccination promotion, participation in research...).
- Make better use of the accreditation program in order to improve work environment for nurses (in collaboration with relevant stakeholders).
- Optimize the role of the nurse in prevention processes by initiating discussions with relevant authorities.
- Discuss the current situation of hospital and nurses and possible improvements in their practice.
- Develop a practical program with the collaboration of the order of nurses to help new graduated nursing students to bridge classroom learning to clinical practice and smooth their transition into nursing professionals. Such a program will improve job performance and decrease occupational burnout among new nurses.

## SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Introduction

Nurses make a substantial contribution to health-delivery systems in primary care, acute care and community care settings. They are nowadays more involved in policy development for human resources for health or in strategic decision-making. However, studies showed that occupational exhaustion/tiredness in hospital setting is associated with increased nurse turnover, fatigue and decreased nurse health and patient safety.

Moreover, evidence showed that newly graduate nurses undergo a stressful and challenging transition process in the nursing workplace. The lack of patient care knowledge and skills among newly graduates nurses' students and work adaption difficulties lead to a high turnover rate that drains essential new talents away from the nursing profession and further exacerbates professional staffing shortages in the healthcare sector.

Maintaining and improving the quality of nursing care and patient safety have been the focus of health services researchers over the last decade. Cross-sectional studies have showed the magnitude of implicit rationing of nursing care, which reflect processes in acute care nursing, and its direct associations with patient and nurse outcomes.

Furthermore, having a sufficient number of adequately trained nurses is also crucial for provision of quality care and maintenance of patient safety. For example, hospitals with unstable staffing and excessive workloads have relatively higher levels of staff injuries in addition to challenges in providing quality care and maintaining patient safety.

The optimization of nursing education and practice is expected to have positive effects on patients' health.

### Background and Outcomes

In Lebanon, newly graduates nurses are clearly in shortage, while nursing profession is becoming increasingly complex and demanding in terms of human resource competencies.

The characteristics of nurses' work environment can act as push factors influencing nurses' decision to remain employed. Hospital characteristics such as size, accreditation status and presence of a recruitment and retention strategy are significantly associated with better work environment among nurses.

Research was also conducted regarding the current professional and financial situation of nurses in Lebanon. Results showed that the financial situation of nurses was deteriorating, leading to burnout and lack of empathy with patients, and a decreased job satisfaction. Regarding their salaries, Lebanese nurses asked that benefits should be tailored according to their level of education, tenure and seniority.

Many nurses elaborated on the role, achievements or shortcomings of national governing entities, specifically, the order of nurses, the syndicate of hospitals and the ministry of public health. Nurses believed that it is the mandate of these governing entities to improve the standards of the nursing profession and the nurses' status in Lebanon. The need to create a stronger collaboration between national governing entities is greatly required. Another less frequently expressed concern included the need to enhance the image of the nursing profession as it affects entry into practice, satisfaction and intent to leave among other issues. Optimizing the nurse profession ergonomics and putting into practice professional laws in collaboration with competent authorities are suggested means to improve nurses' situation.

Addressing these challenges would require a strong and coordinated action from governments, professional bodies, policy makers and health managers.

## Conclusion

The professional axis of INSPECT-LB is aiming to conduct future research projects related to the nurse profession in Lebanon. The findings related to these projects may be used to guide hospital managers regarding the quality of nursing care within units and to guide future research in the area. Members of INSPECT-LB professional axis are ready to discuss any of these suggestions with the Ministry of Public Health, and present all needed documents and ideas. Hoping that these efforts would optimize the professional practice and ultimately, patients' health.

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