

1983

**INVESTIGATION INTO ACTUAL WORKING CONDITIONS
OF HOSPITAL NURSING STAFF**

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PURPOSE AND METHODS

Purpose : to clarify the working conditions of hospital staff (the majority of members of the Japanese Nursing Association), and to provide detailed information on these conditions. Using this information, fundamental recommendations will be made for improvement in working conditions.

This investigation was begun in Showa 50 (1975), and is conducted once every 4 years. This report describes the third investigation.

Method used : Random choice of regular staff members from all three divisions—midwife (all female), nurse (both male and female), and associate nurse (both male and female). A total of 8269 questionnaires were mailed. 3161 effective replies were received. This report sums up 3063 of those replies.

RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION

I. Fundamental Attributes

1. Average age is 36.0 years.
2. Marital status : 63.4% are married. 54.5% of married staff have children. 37.9% of these had a youngest child under 6 years old.
3. Average total working experience as nursing staff member is 14.5 years.

II. Work Situation

1. Average length of continuous service is 10.2 years.
2. Average number of patients per ward is 44.6. The number of officially qualified nursing staff averages 17.1 persons, and the number of nursing assistants averages 2 persons.

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III. Working Conditions

A. WORKING HOURS

1. Fixed working hours per week, after subtraction of lunch break and recess, total 43 hours. This average is much longer in comparison with the average fixed working hours per week, of 40.7 hours, for the average worker in all industries.
2. Overtime hours per week averaged 3.16 hours per person. One-third of this was not paid time.
3. Fixed lunch break : Of those who replied, 64% reported having 60 minutes, and 22.5% reported having 45 minutes. However, the actual average lunch break was 42 minutes. Only 47.3% of answers said that separate facilities were available for use during lunch and rest periods.
4. 41.9% of staff members (the largest group) usually have only one day off per week. Once a month, they have 2 days off in a single week.
5. The official number of paid vacation days is set at 18.5 days, on the average. Actual vacation time averaged 9.9 days.
6. 64.3% of replies said that a summer vacation system existed. But actual paid summer vacation time taken by those who replied, was an average of 4.8 days.
7. 18.9% of staff who are not on duty are on emergency call.

B. WAGES

Average gross income in October of Showa 58 (1983) was ¥238,000. Average basic salary was ¥185,000. Average monthly overtime pay was ¥17,000 yen. Average summertime bonus was ¥362,000 yen.

C. NIGHT WORK SITUATION

1. 82.4% of staff had night shifts of some form during October 1983 (Showa 58). 93.3% of staff on night shift, who are not supervisory personnel of patient wards, had night duty on a 3-shift system, either regular or irregular.
2. The average amount of night duty per month for shift workers (3 regular shifts or 3 irregular shifts) (non-supervisory personnel) was 9.2 days.
Number of personnel on night duty : Two-thirds of answers showed 2 persons per ward on night shift. One fourth of answers indicated 3 persons on night duty.
3. Average actual recess time during night duty, is 38 minutes before midnight, and 54 minutes after midnight.

D. PROVISIONS FOR MOTHERHOOD AND CHILD CARE

1. Actual pre-natal provision for nursing staff (multiple answers given) is, 44.3% exempted from swing shift and night shift duties, 11% given reduction in swing shift and night shift duties, 8.7% had prenatal leave, 5.9% changed duties, 5.4% had staggered working hours, and 4.8%

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had morning sickness leave. 22.5% made schedule adjustments between co-workers in different sections. On the other hand, 28.4% did not receive any consideration at all, which makes it obvious that prenatal care is not sufficient.

2. Actual post-natal care (multiple answers given here) included 58.2% exempted from swing shift and night duty, 33% given an allowance for baby care time, 16.2% had maternity leave, 14.2% had redistribution of duties, and 20.6% received no consideration.
3. Average post-natal time off is 10.6 weeks, and average maternity leave was 16.8 weeks.
4. Regarding availability of substitute staff during maternity leave, only 19.7% replied that their hospital was "Getting temporary staff for the period of leave". 39.8% answered "without any replacement", and 35.8% answered, "adjusted by movement of staff between sections", which shows that situation is bad, and that guarantees of availability of substitute staff have not improved.
5. Availability of a post-natal leave system : 78.9% answered "yes". of these, 87.2% said, "There is a regulation which allows 12 months post-natal leave."
6. 48.1% answered affirmatively regarding the existence of baby nursing facilities on the premises.

E. MOVEMENT OF PERSONNEL

1. 69.2% of staff had experienced redistribution of duties and working sections in the same facility, and the number of years of previous work in other sections was as short as 3.6 years. Experience staff responded affirmatively toward interchange of personnel, from the viewpoint of career development.

F. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

88.9% replied that they had educational programs available, on their working premises, in which they could participate. 77.9% had actually been attending such programs in the past year (1983). 49.4% of replies indicated that members have attended seminars outside their work place.

G. OPINIONS ON FULL-TIME WORK, NIGHT DUTY ONLY

When the questionnaire asked for opinions on full-time night duty, 25.4% answered they would think about it, if conditions were suitable for them, and 70.2% answered, "NO, not under any conditions."