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## Intention to quit job among nurses working at a private tertiary care teaching hospital, Nepal

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### Abstract:

**Background:** Nurses' turnover has disrupted the operational processes of health services, staffing arrangements, and hospital revenue. It is crucial for hospital managers to focus on nurses' attrition to understand the causes and consequences of their departure from the organization. This study explores perceptions of nurses leaving their current jobs

**Method:** This cross-sectional study was conducted among nurses employed at Chitwan Medical College Teaching Hospital in Central Nepal. The study included all full-time nurses with at least one year of experience in the current organization, selected through consecutive sampling. Data were collected by using structured questionnaire for demographic details and nine other domains. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics.

**Result:** Among 127 nurses surveyed, 73(57.5%) expressed an intention to quit their current job, higher among married nurses (62.9%), those without children (81.2%), critical care nurses (63.2%), and nurses with at least three years of experience (60.6%). Notably, the domains of schedule and working hours, manager, and work climate exhibited the highest intention to quit job with median percentages 66.7%, 65.7%, and 60% respectively.

**Conclusion:** This study found that more than half (57.5%) of nurses had intention to leave their current jobs. The schedule and working hours, supervision, work climate was some of the intention to quit job, which highlights targeted strategies to address these issues to retain nurses.

**Keywords:** Hospital management, Intention to quit, Job satisfaction

### How to cite

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## Introduction

Healthcare leaders are grappling with the pressing issue of nurses' attrition in recent years, as the intention of nurses to quit the profession and their organizations creates challenges in maintaining adequate staffing levels, managing nurse-patient ratios, and ensuring quality nursing care. This turnover not only disrupts operational processes and staffing arrangements but also poses a critical concern for hospital managers, prompting a need to understand the causes and consequences of nurses leaving their working organizations.<sup>1</sup>

Various studies reveal that factors such as age, marital status, professional title, work experience, employment type, hospital category, education level, engagement in hospital affairs, moderate organizational commitment, and low gross salary are key predictors for nurses intending to leave their current job.<sup>2-4</sup> Evidence suggests that nurses exhibit a higher intent to leave in private hospitals compared to public ones, with the primary reasons for choosing to work abroad being the allure of higher salaries, improved quality of life, and greater professional recognition.<sup>5</sup>

A correlation between factors influencing job retention and nurses' satisfaction levels, highlighting the critical importance of timely salary payment, a safe working environment, and sufficient equipment supplies for retaining healthcare professionals.<sup>6</sup> Another study revealed an absence of correlation between the quality of nurses' work life (QNWL) and the anticipated turnover scale (ATS).<sup>7</sup>

In some studies, it is evident that nurses leave their current jobs due to a lack of recognition for their profession and the nature of their work.<sup>8</sup> Job dissatisfaction and emotional exhaustion have been identified as crucial predictors of nurses intending to leave both their profession and organization.<sup>9</sup> A qualitative study in Finland highlights themes such as nursing as a secondary career choice, challenging work content, a poor practice environment, and an inability to identify with stereotypical images of nurses as significant factors in young nurses' career stories.<sup>10</sup> Thus, to explore perceptions of nurses leaving job, this study was conducted to determine the intention

to quit job among nurses working at a private tertiary hospital.

## Method

This cross-sectional study was conducted from 01 May to 31 May 2023 among nurses employed at Chitwan Medical College Teaching Hospital in Central Nepal. The study included all full-time nurses with at least one year of experience in the current organization.

Out of 310 nurses, 127 with one year of experience were selected as study participants using consecutive sampling. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire covering sociodemographic details and various domains related to the intention to quit the job. We used nurses' intention to quit (NITQ) questionnaire designed by Morgan Viklund. The survey questionnaire was distributed to nurses via WhatsApp, and prior to data collection, pre-testing was done among 25 nurses from the same setting, who were excluded from the main study.

Approval for data collection was obtained from the Institutional Review Committee (IRC) of Chitwan Medical College. (REF CMC-IRC/079/080-089).

We used nurses' intention to quit (NITQ) tool to in this survey. This tool was designed by Morgan Viklund and we obtained permission for using this tool. Tool consists of ten subscales, including demographic, career, wages, schedule/working hours, manager, organization, work environment, work climate, health, and intention to quit. Each subscale, employs a five-point Likert Scale, with a very good reliability indicated by Cronbach's Alpha coefficients (0.82 - 0.85).<sup>11</sup> The outcome variable was classified as intention to leave or no intention to leave using a calculated cutoff point determined by the demarcation threshold formula  $\{(total\ highest\ score - total\ lowest\ score) / two\} + total\ lowest\ score$ .<sup>12</sup> SPSS version 25 was used for data analysis, where information from the Google form was retrieved into an Excel sheet and then exported to SPSS for further analysis. Descriptive statistics, including median and frequencies, were calculated to understand the characteristics related to nurses' intention to

leave their jobs. Cross-tabulation of intention to leave and intention to stay among sociodemographic variables and scoring patterns for the NITQ scale subclasses were analysed using median percentages.

## Result

Among the 127 participants, 76.4% of nurses fell within the age group of 18 to 27 years, with 27.6% being married, and among the married participants (n=35), 54.3% had children. Considering all participants, 55.1% held a diploma-level qualification, and 61.4% were designated as staff nurses, with only 38.6% holding the title of senior staff nurse. The majority, 53.5%, worked in critical care areas, and 60.6% of participants had less than three years of experience in clinical practice, Table 1.

Our findings show that among the nurses surveyed more than half of them 127(57.5%) had intention to leave their current job, Table 2.

The intention to leave the job was observed to be similar in both age groups at 57.7% and 56.7%, respectively. High intentions to quit the job were observed among bachelor-qualified nurses

(63.2%), married nurses (62.9%), critical care nurses (63.2%), and nurses with experience  $\geq 3$  years (60%). Similarly, married nurses without children exhibited the highest intention to quit the job at 81.2%. Conversely, a low intention to quit the job was observed among married nurses with children (52.6%) and nurses with less than three years of experience (55.8%), Table 3.

The scoring pattern for the subscales of the NITQ scale provides insights into nurses' perceptions across various domains. Notably, the median percentage scores indicate the central tendencies of the responses. Among the nine domains assessed, Schedule/Working Hours, Manager, and Work Climate emerged as significant areas where nurses exhibited the highest intention to quit their jobs, with median percentages of 66.7%, 65.7%, and 60%, respectively. In the specific domain of Intention to Quit, out of a possible score of 70, the maximum obtained score was 65, resulting in a median percentage of 48.6%. The overall median percentage score across all subscales is 54.1%, indicating a moderate level of intention to quit current job among nurses regarding various domains covered by the NITQ scale, Table 4.

**Table 1. Socio-demographic variables among nurses at a private tertiary care teaching hospital surveyed for intention to quit job, n=127**

Variable	n(%)
<b>Age</b>	
18-27 years	97(76.4)
>27 years	30(23.6)
<b>Qualification</b>	
Diploma level	70(55.1)
Bachelor level	57(44.9)
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Unmarried	92(72.4)
Married	35(27.6)
<b>Having Children's (n=35)</b>	
Yes	19(54.3)
No	16(45.7)
<b>Designation</b>	
Staff Nurse	78(61.4)
Senior Staff Nurse	49(38.6)
<b>Departments</b>	
Critical (Emergency & Intensive Care Units)	68(53.5)
Non critical (Wards)	59(46.5)
<b>Work duration</b>	
<3 years	77(60.6)
$\geq 3$ years	50(39.4)

**Table 2. Nurses' intention to quit their job at a private tertiary care teaching hospital, n=127**

Variables	n(%)
Intentional to leave	73(57.5)
Not intentional to leave	54 (42.5)

**Table 3. Socio demographic variables and intention to quit job among nurses at a teaching hospital, n=127**

Variable	Intention to Quit n(%)	Intention to not Quit n(%)
<b>Age</b>		
18-27 years	56(57.7)	41(42.3)
>27 years	17(56.7)	13(43.3)
<b>Qualification</b>		
Diploma level	37(52.9)	33(47.1)
Bachelor level	36(63.2)	21(36.8)
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Unmarried	51(55.4)	41(44.6)
Married	22(62.9)	13(37.1)
<b>Having Children's (n=35)</b>		
Yes	10(52.6)	9(47.4)
No	13(81.2)	3(18.8)
<b>Designation</b>		
Staff Nurse	44(56.4)	34(43.6)
Senior Staff Nurse	29(59.2)	20(40.8)
<b>Departments</b>		
Critical (Emergency & Intensive Care Units)	43(63.2)	25(36.8)
Non critical (Wards)	30(50.8)	29(49.2)
<b>Work duration</b>		
<3 years	43(55.8)	34(44.2)
≥3 years	30(60.0)	20(40.0)

**Table 4. Scoring pattern for subclass of scale nurse intention to quit (NITQ) at a private tertiary care teaching hospital, n=127**

Domain	No. of items	Possible score	Minimum score	Maximum score	Median	Q1	Q3	Median %
Career	2	10	2	10	5	4	6	50.0
Wages	2	10	2	8	4	4	6	40.0
Schedule/working h	3	15	4	15	10	9	12	66.7
Your organization	3	15	3	13	7	6	9	46.7
Your manager	7	35	11	30	23	20	26	65.7
Work environment	8	40	13	29	21	18	23	52.5
Work climate	2	10	2	9	6	4	7	60.0
Perceived health	3	15	5	14	8	7	10	53.3
Intention to quite	14	70	14	65	34	25	42	48.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>54.1</b>

## Discussion

In this study, more than half (57.5%) of nurses expressed an intention to quit job, a lower percentage than previous studies conducted in Riyadh,<sup>7</sup> Ethiopia,<sup>8</sup> and Jordan.<sup>13</sup> However, our

findings were higher than studies from Singapore,<sup>14</sup> and Indonesia.<sup>15</sup> We found higher intention to quit job was among married nurses at 62.9% compared to a much lower intention observed among married nurses in China<sup>16</sup> at 25% and Indonesia<sup>1</sup> at 32.50%. Additionally, a higher

intention (60%) was found among nurses with  $\geq 3$  years of experience, consistent with a study in Ethiopia (63%).<sup>8</sup> This could be attributed to the availability of various job opportunities and a pathway to obtain a job and possible permanent residency in foreign countries after a minimum of 3 years of experience.

Regarding qualifications, nurses with bachelor's degrees in present study showed a high intention (63.2%) to quit the job, which is lower than nurses in Ethiopia<sup>8</sup> (66.7%), and Ghana<sup>17</sup> (86.5%). This might be due to bachelors' degrees nurses' interest and eligibility for foreign licensure examinations, leading to migration to Middle East and English-speaking countries.

Furthermore, a high intention to leave the job was observed among nurses without children at 81.2%, consistent with studies in Riyadh<sup>7</sup> at 93.1%, and China<sup>16</sup> at 86.3%. However, some studies revealed that demographics and worker-related variables may not be predictors for the intention to leave a job or profession.<sup>18</sup> Another study showed younger nurses, those with higher education, working in larger hospitals, and those in specialty units tend to experience less intention to leave their current jobs.<sup>19</sup>

In this study, only a median of 40% of nurses expressed an intention to leave the job due to low wages, lower than studies conducted in other regions such as Jordan<sup>13</sup> at 90.5%, Ghana<sup>17</sup> 96.4%, and Greece<sup>20</sup> at 60%. The highest median percentages of intention to leave job were observed were due to schedule/working Hours 66.7%, manager 65.7%, and work climate 60%.

In other studies, the inadequate staffing per shift 92.5%, work condition 60.6%, inadequate management support 93.5% and high exposure to workplace hazards 61.5% were predictors of turnover among staff.<sup>8,17</sup> Other studies also highlight various factors such as workplace environment, nature of working relationships, traumatic and stressful work experiences,

organizational commitment, and job satisfaction as leading cause to leave current employment.<sup>21-24</sup> Conversely, the intention to leave the job was low (16.6%) among migrant nurses compared to present study, but factors like nurse manager supervision and workplace environment were similar to present study.<sup>14</sup>

Some of the limitation of present study may be this was single center study from a medical college tertiary care teaching hospital situated in a relatively accessible urban environment and Chitwan is considered medical hub and near to the Kathmandu valley compared to other medical colleges in the country. Also, we used a questionnaire validated in different setup. A multicenter may not represent other private tertiary care teaching hospital in the country.

## Conclusion

The results of this study revealed the intention to leave among nurses employed in a tertiary care hospital in central Nepal. The findings indicate that 57.5% of nurses expressed an intention to quit their current jobs, with the most significant predictors being schedule and working hours, supervision, and work climate.

## Author contribution

Concept design- RPSG; Literature search- RPSG, LR; Data collection- RPSG; Data analysis- JPS; Draft manuscript- RPSG, LR, JPS; Final manuscript and accountability - all

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## Conflict of interest

None

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None

## Supplementary material

The data and supplementary material that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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