and non-resistant to change, thus are all motivated, capable of assuming responsibility, and to direct their behaviour for the achievement of set goals. Moreover, management is responsible for recognising and developing these characteristics and to help employees achieve their own goals by directing their efforts towards the organisation’s objectives. The success of one party comes in tandem with the success of the other, and neither can succeed without the input of the other. An organisation can directly benefit from the understanding of what motivates employees primarily through the metrics of lower absenteeism rates, a reduced job turnover and an increased rate of productivity.

Reference

Madion Dingli Scicluna

**TITLE**
Learning and Developmental Needs of Health Assistants and Nursing Aides: An Explanatory Study

**THE AIM OF THE STUDY**
A health care system depends on the individuals working within it. It is the health sector labour force that determines the quality and success of any health organisation. Patients and the general public expect high standards of care from whoever delivers it. To date in Malta, most of the health care professions have received support for further training, education and ongoing professional development to ensure high quality standard of care. However, minimal attention has been given to the unregulated category of health care support staff. Over the past 20 years, this category of health care workers has been assigned a variety of titles, including health assistants, nursing aides, carers and care workers.

This research study focuses on the Health Assistants and Nursing Aides because these types of workers are engaged directly within the public sector.

Forming part of a health care team is a very sensitive role. Whoever is involved in attending the patients’ bedside care requires the necessary knowledge, skills and training in doing the job in a safe and efficient manner. Health support workers working alongside nurses and other allied
health care professionals are of great support to the professional staff in any healthcare setting.

This qualitative study investigates the learning and developmental needs of Health Assistants and Nursing Aides working at a public residential entity for the elderly in Malta.

The research study sought to explore:
(i) whether there are any skills gaps amongst the health assistants and nursing aides working at a residential home for older adults,
(ii) what skills and competencies are needed to improve the current performance levels of these nursing aides and health assistants, and
(iii) what learning and developmental activities are prevalent amongst health assistants and nursing aides.

The demand for healthcare provision, especially among the elderly, is increasing, and this makes the role of all the support workers all the more vital to meet client needs. Therefore, having adequately trained personnel enriched with the best knowledge, skills and abilities to be able to carry out their job for the benefit and safety of the patient is crucial. The literature advocates that the role of the health assistants and the nursing aides is not defined, and it suggests that they may be performing tasks for which they are not qualified and neither skilled to do (Brain & Roberts, 2008). Thus, learning and development needs should be identified, and adequate training should be given in order to bridge any emerging skills gaps.

METHODOLOGY
A public residential home for the elderly in Malta was chosen as the research site because the number of nursing aides and health assistants working within this residence was the largest within any entity in Malta. Nine employees from six different wards were interviewed for this study. The sample consisted of five males and four females, with an average age of 49 years.

The Chief Nursing Manager leading the entity, six charge nurses and two deputy charge nurses, all working in the entity, were interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule which was developed for the purpose of this research study.

After the interviews were completed and transcribed, a thematic analysis was used to analyse the data, suggesting a number of findings.

FINDINGS
There are gaps in the health assistants’ and nursing aides’ knowledge, skills and abilities. A thematic analysis of the gathered data suggested categorisation under five main themes:

1. The job of the health assistants and the nursing aides
This theme presented an outline of the job of the health assistants and the nursing aides and highlighted the role and the tasks that they perform as viewed by the participants.

2. Gaps identified in the performance of health assistants and nursing aides
Here, the interviewees discussed the lack of knowledge, skills and abilities amongst the health assistants and nursing aides and it was found out that the nursing aides often held a less adequate knowledge base than the health assistants. The charge nurses also criticised the working attitudes of these workers and their level of education; they thought that it was often very low.

3. Learning and developmental needs
In the third theme, the participants emphasised the need for appropriate training opportunities that are currently available to the health assistants and the nursing aides. They also argued that these support workers attend these lectures because it is something that it is imposed on them and not because they wish to further their personal development. This may jeopardise the outcomes of such training.

4. Registration and reagularisation of health assistants and nursing aides
Adequately qualified personnel need to be sourced and secured, and they need to be formally registered and regularised. This was strongly emphasised by all participants.
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4. **Registration and reagularisation of health assistants and nursing aides**
   Adequately qualified personnel need to be sourced and secured, and they need to be formally registered and regularised. This was strongly emphasised by all participants.
5. Challenges identified amongst carers who are supplied through a private contractor.

Interviewees are not very keen on the workers being supplied by the private sector through government tenders. The participants perceived these workers as having limited knowledge, skills and abilities, and this jeopardises the working environment and quality of overall care through unfavourable behaviour and their lack of adequate knowledge and skills.

These findings suggest the need for regulating these health care support workers upon which this study is focused. This is a much needed milestone in care because it will help in identifying and regulating individuals who are employed in such roles.

CONCLUSION

In revealing the unclear job descriptions and role commitments and the inconsistent training pathways of these workers, it is hoped that the findings of my research study will indeed translate into a valid contribution towards the enhancement of the level of care delivery given by these workers.

Reference


Ivan Sciriha

TITLE

Organisational Culture: The Effects of Cultural Differences during the Integration Process of Mergers and Acquisitions.

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

Mergers and acquisitions (M&As) are a source of business transformation solutions. The intended strategies behind M&As can include corporate growth, increase in market share, combined synergies, economies of scale, diversification and shared resources. Nevertheless, history shows that most of the time these combinations fail to reach the intended preliminary aims for various motives (Weber & Camerer, 2003). Research suggests that approximately fifty to seventy-five per cent of M&As fail to live up to expectations. The post-performance has been vastly researched whilst the post-integration process in relation to cultural differences has been the least investigated (Kroon, Noorderhaven, & Leufkens, 2009).

Within the local scene, M&As have become common across a number of market sectors in these last couple of decades. This study sought to explore whether cultural differences between the two companies during a merger or acquisition have an effect on the integration process which ultimately makes the combination a success or a failure. Cultural disparities during the integration process have a number of detrimental factors such as synergies realisation and communication. In a report compiled by Schuler