The Staffing Climate in Nursing: Concept and Measurement

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Evidence-Based Decisions In Healthcare®

Keeping Patients Safe: Transforming the Work Environment of Nurses
IOM, 2004

Until now, one of the central work environment related knowledge gaps involved the staffing climate.

What is the Staffing Climate?

The Staffing Climate in Healthcare:

"a constellation of employee perceptions about the allocation and utilization of human resources necessary for patient care, patient safety, and positive patient outcomes."

DeGroot and McIntosh, 2011

The Staffing Climate in Healthcare:

"involves attitudes, beliefs, experiences, and behaviors related to decision-making practices, processes, and procedures that are rewarded, supported, and expected in the workplace.

The Staffing Climate is comprised of three dimensions, including Staffing Adequacy, Care Quality, and the Care Climate."

DeGroot and McIntosh, 2011

Staffing Climate

Work Environment
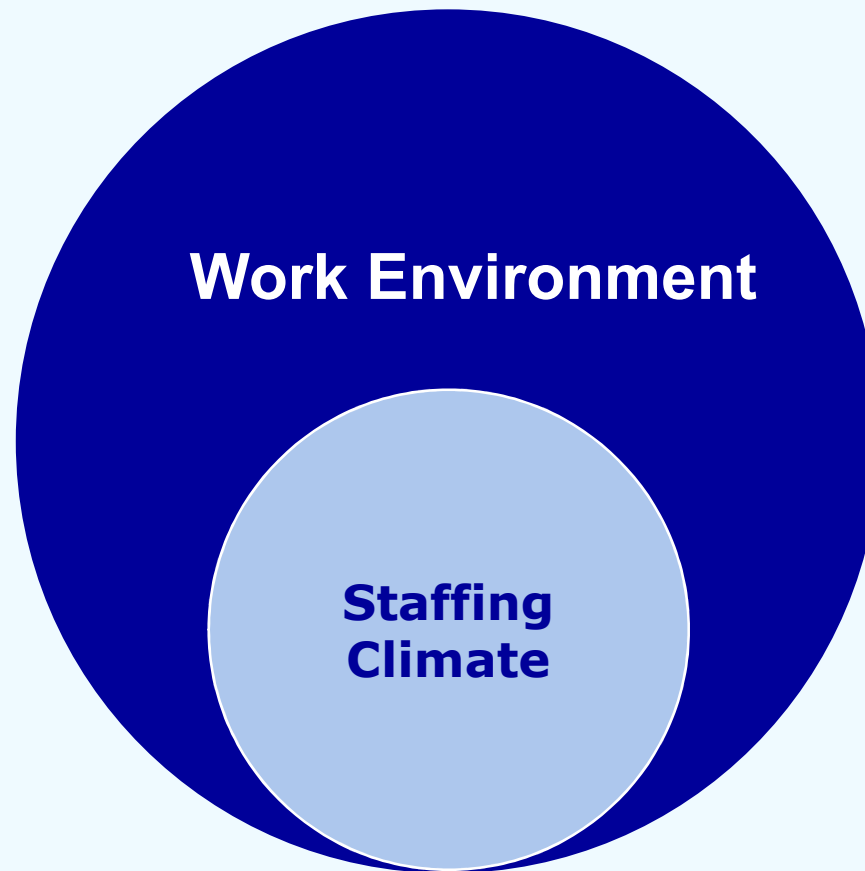
Staffing Climate

Staffing Climate Model

Methods

SCS™ *Survey Development*

- Started with items from the *Perception of Staffing Adequacy® Questionnaire*

- Added items based on literature review results from other Catalyst studies, and experience with healthcare organizations.

- Created demographics, including items on current trends.

SCS™ *Survey Description*

- First of its kind measure designed to tap work related factors beyond the number of staff that affect nurses perceptions of the staffing climate on individual units or service areas.

- Includes such elements as teamwork, co-worker expertise, handoff communications, support from other departments, staffing, skill mix, patient turnover, acuity, and other related staffing, patient care, quality issues.

SCS™ *Survey Settings*

- Eight acute care organizations, including academic medical center, community and county hospitals.

- Facilities with specialty focus included acute rehab, pediatrics, and mental health.

- Four Magnet® designated organizations, and one on the journey.

SCS™ Survey Sample

- 2,312 English speaking RN volunteers
- Exempt IRB status because of anonymity and minimal risks

SCS™ *Survey Instrument*

- 72 items pilot tested, revised, retested

- Items were added, deleted, or changed based on data analysis

- The information reported here is the outcome of that process

SCS™ Survey Procedures

- Three week online administration period

- Turnkey process, including flyers, email text and information sheets

- Introduced by CNOs

- Survey access by participant code card to log onto the Catalyst survey site

SCS™ Survey Procedures
Continued

- Contact was maintained with each organization throughout the survey

- Response rate updates provided bi-weekly

SCS™ *Survey Procedures*

Continued

- After the survey, data were downloaded into SPSS (v. 17) for cleaning and analyses

- Factor analytic procedures performed

- Principal Axis Factoring with Varimax rotation

- Cronbach's alphas calculated on the scales that emerged

Results

SCS™ Survey Sample

- Average participant age= 39.8 (SD=11)
- Years licensed as an RN= 11.8 (SD=8.5)
- Organizational tenure= 8.7 years (SD=8.5)
- 89% were Staff Nurses
- 87% were female

SCS™ *Survey Sample*
Continued

- 85% had highest degree in nursing

- 47% had Bachelor's degree for basic nursing education

- 43% were Associate degree prepared

- 76% completed basic nursing education in the US

SCS™ Survey Sample

Continued

- 83% worked full time
- 50% worked on the Day shift
- 78% worked 12 hour shifts

SCS™ *Survey Scales*

- Three scales with eigenvalue > 1
- Principal Axis factoring procedures, with Varimax rotation

Scale 1: *Staffing Adequacy*

- 11 items and Cronbach's alpha of .88

- Likert scale, 1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree

- 2 items reverse coded

- Items summed for Staffing Adequacy score

- Higher scores reflect more favorable Staffing Adequacy perceptions

Scale 2: *Care Climate*

- 8 items, Cronbach's alpha = .90

- 0-10 scale, with 0 = Strongly Disagree and 10 = Strongly Agree

- One item reverse coded

- Items summed for Care Climate score

- Higher score= more positive Care Climate perceptions

Scale 3: *Care Quality*

- 9 items, Cronbach's alpha = .94

- 5 point Likert scale with 1=Poor, 5=Excellent

- Items summed for Care Quality score

- Higher score = more positive Care Quality perceptions

Additional Psychometric Evaluation

- Predictive analysis performed

- Convergent and divergent validity

- Test-retest evaluation

- Confirmatory Factor analysis

The *SCS*™ *Survey*:
What Clients Say

"…this survey is an exceptional tool that provides input from the nursing workforce about their environment of practice."

"This is one very important tool that helps us to build the healthiest practice setting for our nurses. In doing this, the quality of care to our patients and families soar."

The *SCS™ Survey*:
Additional Client Comments

"The (survey) questions complement our Employee Opinion Annual Survey. I find the questions on the…survey more nurse centric, thus offering a stronger tool as it relates to our practice environment."

SCS™ Staffing Climate Survey

- Valid, reliable, relevant

- Unit, organization, system results

- Benchmark comparisons

- Timely, actionable data

- New evidence-base for decisions

"It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence."

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

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