

# Global Shortage of Nurses Continues

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## Abstract

Nurses play an important role in providing healthcare to individuals, families, and communities. One of the major challenges that global health systems face is a nursing workforce shortage. Various factors such as job dissatisfaction, intention to leave, and burnout are some of the predictors of nurse turnover. Another significant concern is whether the profession will be able to attract enough nurses to care for populations in the future. To ensure a healthy population, governments and health policymakers around the world must invest in nursing and healthcare and pay attention to the needs of health systems. To avoid a shortage among nurses, the government and relevant policymakers should pay highly on this issue as it may impact our future healthcare systems.

**Keywords:** challenge, global, needs, nurses, nursing shortage

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## Main Text

Nursing is a noble profession that necessitates a great deal of effort and self-dedication to provide the best nursing care possible to the community. Nurses play an important role in healthcare, accounting for the majority of the health profession. The global nursing and midwifery workforce for both genders is estimated to be around 27 million, accounting for nearly half of the global health workforce (World Health Organization (WHO), 2022). Furthermore, the WHO reported that there is a global shortage of health workers, particularly nurses and midwives, who account for more than half of the current shortage, with South East Asia and Africa experiencing the greatest needs-based shortages of nurses and midwives. The shortage of nurses is multidimensional, with varying degrees of severity in different countries. The consequences of a nursing shortage affect not only the community, but also other registered nurses. It has an impact on their performance, such as stress or moral distress caused by work overload and long shifts, which affects the nurses' physical, psychological, social, and family relationships, as well as a lack of leadership support. New research suggests that less-than-ideal hospital work environments may jeopardize efficient and effective nursing care delivery, as well as contribute to job dissatisfaction and a high turnover rate among nurses who are already in short supply (Nantsupawat et al., 2017). Furthermore, due to the rapid advancement of technology, nurses' roles are no longer limited to working in hospitals or health clinics; rather, the scope of their practice should be expanded to include tele-care for patients who are unable to receive treatment in the current facilities (Che Hasan, Nurumal, Firdaus, & Jamaludin, 2021). This is also in high demand due to the current pandemic COVID-19, which limits face-to-face interactions between healthcare professionals and patients.

Nursing shortages are primarily caused by an aging population, a retiring workforce, limited school capacity, increasing patient acuity, an explosion of knowledge and technology, and the ever-expanding role of nurses (Liu, Lam, Fong, & Yuan, 2013; Maurits, De Veer, Van Der Hoek, & Francke, 2015; Tamata, Mohammadnezhad, & Tamani, 2021). This pace should also be consistent with the rapid advancement of technology, the global increase in the number of older people, chronic disease, and the

current challenges and opportunities for providing the best possible care (Firdaus, Komariah, & Che Hasan, 2022; Sawyer et al., 2019). In addition to COVID-19 factors, there are numerous reports of global staff shortages such as the absence of appropriate staff within their specialties.

According to the WHO, the world will require an additional 9 million nurses and midwives by 2030. The following measures for increasing a national supply of nurses may benefit the global community: increased government and organizational grants for nursing schools to increase student numbers; improved benefits for nurses; creation of healthy work environments; and opportunities for personal development. Some countries have also taken consideration importing the nursing workforce from other countries to cater for their own workforce needs. This is a short-term plan with many challenges reported including high linguistic diversity, making healthcare language barriers more prevalent due to this global migration of nurses (Gerchow, Burka, Miner, & Squires, 2021). The success and limitations of each of these methods, however, vary by country or region. As a result, strategies to address nursing shortages should be tailored to each country's specific circumstances. In Iran, for example, the most important strategies for overcoming nursing shortages are centered on improving nursing workforce retention (Shamsi & Peyravi, 2020). Other strategies highlighted in Macao include improving nurses' benefits and professional status, increasing nursing school enrolments, training clinical specialists, providing a transition program for new nursing graduates, and reducing workload by training nursing assistants (Liu et al., 2013). In Malaysia, the nursing program is reported to have high demand among school leavers, though it is not as popular as other programs in the healthcare system (Che Hasan, Jusoh, Abdul Hamid, & Nurumal, 2020). It should be emphasized that, when it comes to building a career, nurses should be treated on par with other professions who work in the same setting.

On the other hand, changes in the field of education should be brought to the attention of the global community so that the paradigm shift in the career, as well as the role of nurses, can be seen in a broader context. Furthermore, the need for interprofessional learning among other related professions may promote self-efficacy attributes between nursing and other healthcare professionals programs (Nurumal, Diyono, & Che Hasan, 2020). This is consistent with the teamwork, increased critical thinking, and value addition observed throughout the studies. Achieving health for all will require a sufficient number of well-trained and educated, regulated and supported nurses and midwives who are paid and recognized in proportion to the services and quality of care they provide.

According to WHO recommendations, the entry level for nursing should be standardized around the world, with a Bachelor's degree as the minimum

qualification (WHO, 2021). The authors believe that it should be standardized to all healthcare professions, who are working together in the same setting. Therefore, they may be on the same wavelength when it comes to decision of care and thus promote better teamwork. Furthermore, in order to meet the requirements for professional manpower in the healthcare sector, the nation should give merit to the career of general nurses in addition to specialization and the nursing profession. Nurses with specialization provide an optimize health and safety environment for patients and frontline healthcare workers (Minissian et al., 2021). This could mold the future nurses to be a well-being nurse, having specific qualities such as strengths, interests, and expertise. Nursing strategies and directions must be developed in accordance with WHO recommendations to be prepared for a developed country and future challenges.

The strategies highlighted can assist policymakers at the decision-making level in resolving the nursing workforce shortage and its future consequences by refining and developing relevant policies that will address and strengthen the nursing workforce to meet demand and improve the delivery of quality health services to all individuals. Achieving health for all will require a sufficient number of well-trained and educated, regulated and supported nurses and midwives who are paid and recognized in proportion to the services and quality of care they provide. Increasing pay and promoting personal development could boost nurses' morale and intentions to stay in nursing. Furthermore, providing transitional programs for new graduates to reduce stress and facilitate their adaptations to nursing practice is an effective way to retain them in the nursing profession.

#### Declaration of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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#### Data Availability

The data are readily available.

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