

P195

WORKING CONDITIONS OF NURSING PERSONNEL AT CLINICS IN TAIWANLi-Jie Wang, Judith SC Shiao, Yue Leon Guo *NTU, Taipei, Taiwan*

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Objectives To understand working conditions and potential occupational hazards of nurses in clinics, and to formulate strategic plans for work environment improvement.

Methods A total of 1953 clinics were recruited in questionnaire survey. An expert focus group, four hospital field visits, and ergonomic analysis were also performed.

Results A total of 2006 (52.6%) questionnaires were completed and returned and were eligible for final analysis. The mean age was 36.0 years old among respondents. As for biological hazards, 409 (20.4%) nurses sustained at least one needlestick injury in the past 12 months, and 442 (22.2%) got exposed to blood or body fluids. As for ergonomic hazards, the prevalence of musculoskeletal discomforts was high (n=1879, 93.6%) and over a half (n=984, 52.4%) of respondents believed that musculoskeletal discomforts affected their performance at work. For psychosocial hazards, nearly a half of nurses (n=995, 49.6%) reported feeling stressed at work. Most of nurses cope with stress by getting rest and sleep (n=1572, 78.4%). Nonetheless, 58.5% (n=1173) of nurses were satisfied with their jobs.

Conclusions This study has identified that the clinic nurse's work environment has some room for improvement. The problem of non-report of needlestick injury and lack of proper post-exposure management, musculoskeletal discomforts, and high level of self-perceived job stress are of higher priority for improvement. We suggest that occupational safety and health guidelines for nursing routines/tasks to be formulated if the "good" working conditions for nurses are to be achieved.