

Factors influencing nurse participation in continuing professional development activities: Survey results from the Netherlands.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: Professionals are individually responsible for planning and carrying out continuing professional development (CPD) activities, ensuring their relevance to current practice and career development. The key factors that encourage nurses to undertake CPD activities are not yet clear. Several studies have investigated motives of nurses to participate in CPD programmes ("Motives"), the importance they attach to CPD ("Importance"), the conditions they consider necessary for participation ("Conditions"), and their actual participation in CPD activities ("Pursued"). The relationships among these variables, however, have neither been investigated nor reported to date.

OBJECTIVES: The aim of this study is to investigate the nature of the relationships among those factors that influence nurse participation in CPD in the Netherlands.

DESIGN: An exploratory cross-sectional study was carried out using quantitative data collected with the previously validated Questionnaire Professional Development of Nurses (Q-PDN).

SETTINGS AND PARTICIPANTS: A convenience sample of 5500 registered nurses working at one Dutch university hospital and several general hospitals was addressed.

METHODS: A descriptive study using a survey was undertaken. The questionnaire was completed and returned by 1226 nurses. Correlation analyses were conducted to determine which factors were related to nurses undertaking CPD activities. Structural equation modelling was deployed to determine the relationships among the variables.

RESULTS: "Conditions" was found to be moderately related to "Motives", which itself was strongly related to "Importance", which itself was very strongly related to "CPD activities pursued". If nurses considered a CPD activity important they were highly likely to pursue it; however, the importance attached to specific CPD activities was influenced by the presence of particular motives, which depended in part on the way CPD conditions were perceived.

CONCLUSIONS:

The key factor influencing CPD participation of nurses is how important they deem particular CPD activities; the latter is a function of their CPD motives and of their perceptions that the right conditions for participation are in place. Implications are discussed.

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KEYWORDS: CPD; Continuing professional development; Motives for participation in CPD; Nurses; Survey; the Netherlands

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