

## Nurses' Reasons of Transferring Between Departments

### Hemşirelerin Görev Yerini Değiştirmeyi Talep Etme Nedenleri

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#### ÖZ

##### Amaç

Bu çalışmanın amacı, hemşirelerin transfer taleplerinin nedenlerini araştırmaktır.

##### Gereç ve Yöntemler

Çalışma, tanımlayıcı nitelikte, retrospektif bir çalışmadır. Veriler, 2011 ve 2014 yıllarında doldurulan, hastanenin Hemşirelik Hizmetleri Hemşire/Ebe/Sağlık Memuru Görev Yerini Değiştirme Kartları değerlendirilerek elde edilmiştir.

##### Bulgular

Çalışma sonuçlarına bakıldığında; çalışmaya katılan hemşirelerin yaşlarının ortalaması 30,75±6,412 (minimum 19- maksimum 45) yılı. Çalışmaya katılan hemşirelerin % 89,6'sı kadın, % 44,7'si lisans mezunu ve % 69,4'ü riskli birimde çalışmaktaydı. Görev yerini değiştirme talep nedenleri olarak sağlık problemi, branşlaşma isteği, mobbinge maruz kalma, nöbet ve çalışma sistemi ve ekonomik nedenlerdi. Hemşireler en sık sağlık problemi nedeniyle (%30,6) görev yerini değiştirmeyi talep etmekteydi. Çalışmaya katılan hemşireler en sık acil tıp kliniğinde (% 37,3) ve yoğun bakım ünitelerinde (% 25,4) çalışmakta idiler. Yüksek lisans/doktora mezunu hemşirelerin branşlaşma isteği nedeniyle görev yerini değiştirmeyi talep eden hemşireler ile diğer nedenlerle görev yerini değiştirmeyi talep eden yüksek lisans/doktora mezunu hemşireler arasında istatistiksel anlamda fark tespit edildi (p=0,032). Riskli birimde çalışan ve görev yerini değiştirmeyi talep eden hemşireler en fazla sağlık problemi nedeniyle riskli birimden başka bir birime geçmeyi talep ettikleri görüldü.

##### Sonuç

Hemşirelerin en fazla sağlık problemleri nedeniyle görev yerini değiştirmeyi talep ettikleri ve eğitim durumu yükseldikçe çalıştıkları birimden ayrılmayı istedikleri belirlenmiştir. Hemşirelerin yetkinliklerine ve çalışmayı istedikleri birimlerin göz önünde bulundurulması ve görev yerini değiştirme nedenlerinin iyi izlenmesi gerektiğini öneriyoruz.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Hemşire; görev yerini değiştirme; görev yerini değiştirme nedenleri

#### ABSTRACT

##### Aim

The purpose of this study is to investigate the reasons for transfer requests of nurses.

##### Material and Methods

This is a descriptive and retrospective study. Our study includes all the nurses who worked at an inward patient facility of the Ministry of Health of Turkey and wished to be transferred to a new department between the years of 2011 and 2014.

##### Results

Amongst the participants; 89% were women with the mean age of 30.75±6.412, 44.7% have a college degree and 69.4% have been working at the departments with higher risks of occupational injury and work accidents. The reasons for transfer requests were health issues, wishing to major, mobbing, long working hours, irregular shifts and work schedules. The main reason for transfer requests was health issues (30.6%). Most of the participants were found to be working at the Emergency Department (37.3%) and the Intensive Care Unit (25.4%). Statistically significant difference was found between two groups of nurses; nurses with a college or a PhD degree were more likely to request a transfer in order to major in.

##### Conclusion

The main reason for requesting a transfer was health-related issues. In addition to this, having a higher academic degree leads the nurses to be more willing to transfer. We suggest that nurses' requests and competences should be taken into consideration and a detailed review of the reasons of transferring should be made.

**Keywords:** Nurse; transferring; the reason of transferring

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## Introduction

Nursing is one of the oldest professions. Nurses aim to improve and maintain the health of the society including the ill and the healthy while they offer solutions to public health issues. Main purpose of nursing is to protect, improve, maintain public health and restore health in case of illness (1).

Nurses are the major group of potential labor force of the health system and spend long hours taking care of patients (2). The studies show that there is a shortage of nurses in health facilities caused by two main reasons: the lack of resources and incorrect labor policy. In addition, when nurses are not assigned according to their qualifications, it decreases the quality of patient care, and the satisfaction of both the patient and the employee, while it also increases mortality rates and causes more errors (3).

When nurses are assigned in the right departments, mortality rates will decrease, the reassurance of the patients will increase and the length of the hospital stay will decrease. It will also create a less stressful work environment for the nurses.

To successfully manage the nursing administration, nurses must be employed at the departments according to their qualifications and reasons of their requests of transferring should be taken into consideration. We conducted this study in order to determine the reasons for the transferring requests of the nurses.

## Materials and Methods

### Subjects

Our study included the nurses who worked at inward patient facilities affiliated to the Ministry of Health of Turkey and requested a transfer to a new department between 2011 and 2014. Transfer request forms filled completely were included in the study, while others were excluded. Nurses working at the emergency services, intensive care units and dialysis units were defined as nurses working at high-risk units.

### Procedure

Materials of the study were Department Change Request forms filled by nurses, midwives and health officers between 2011 and 2014. These forms have been obtained from the Nursing Service Administration of the hospital.

### Data Analyses

Data have been registered and statistically analyzed using SPSS version 23. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test has also been applied. Continuous variables are defined as mean  $\pm$  standard deviation or median (minimum-maximum) according to the normal or abnormal distributions. Categorized variables are defined as absolute values or percentiles. The variation of the continuous variables are compared with Mann-Whitney U test and the categorized variables are compared with  $\chi^2$  test. The degree of statistical meaningful is determined as  $p < 0.05$ .

The study was approved by the Local Ethics Committee and was performed in accordance with the Principles of Declaration of Helsinki.

Our study involves the nurses who were employees of an official, inpatient facility. It cannot be implied the nurses entirely.

## Results

In this study, the reasons for the transfer requests of nurses; relationships between transfer requests, years of occupation, working at high-risk units and characteristics of unit worked were evaluated. The mean age of participants was  $30.75 \pm 6.412$  (minimum 19, maximum 45), 89.6% were women and 44.7% were undergraduates (Table 1).

Education	n (%)	Department	n (%)
High School	47 (35.1)	Emergency	50 (37.3)
2-year degree	19 (14.2)	Not Emergency	84 (62.7)
Undergraduate	60 (44.7)	<b>Total</b>	<b>134 (100.0)</b>
Graduate	8 (6.0)	<b>Department</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>134 (100.0)</b>	Intensive Care Unit	34 (25.4)
<b>Gender</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	Not Intensive Care Unit	100 (74.6)
Woman	120 (89.6)	<b>Total</b>	<b>134 (100.0)</b>
Man	14 (10.4)	<b>High Risk Unit</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>134 (100.0)</b>	High Risk Unit	93 (69.4)
<b>Departments</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	Not High Risk Unit	41 (63.6)
Emergency Department	50 (37.3)	<b>Total</b>	<b>134 (100.0)</b>
Intensive Care Unit	34 (25.4)	<b>Reasons</b>	<b>n</b>
Internal Medicine	15 (11.2)	Health Related	41 (30.6)
General Surgery	12 (9.0)	Schedule	36 (26.9)
Operation Room	5 (3.8)	Willing to branch out	36 (26.9)
Other (Obstetrics and Gynecology, urology-kidney transplant unit, home care services, policlinics, cardiology, orthopedic and traumatology, delivery room)	18 (13.3)	Mobbing	16 (11.9)
<b>Total</b>	<b>134 (100.0)</b>	Economic	5 (3.7)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>134 (100.0)</b>

**Table 1:** Nurses' demographics, the departments they work at and the reasons of transferring.

69.4% of the nurses work at departments with higher risks and the main reason for transfer requests was health-related issues (30.6%). 37.3% work in the Emergency Department and 25.4% work in an Intensive Care Unit (Table 1).

Health-related issues were the main reasons for all the 30 nurses who wished to switch to another unit, besides, all were working at the departments with higher risks. This finding was found to be statistically significant ( $p=0.030$ ) (Table 2).

Majoring is another statistically significant reason among college graduate nurses ( $p=0.032$ ) (Table 2).

There was a statistically significant difference between nurses with an associate degree and other degrees regarding mean age and working hours ( $p:0.001$ ,  $p:0.01$ ) (Table 3).

	Health Problems n (%)	Work Schedule n (%)	Willing to branch out n (%)	Mobbing n (%)	Economical n (%)
Emergency Department	19 (46.3)	12 (33.3)	13 (36.1)	5 (31.3)	1 (20.0)
Not Emergency Department	22 (53.7)	24 (66.7)	23 (63.9)	11 (68.7)	4 (80.0)
P	0.151	0.564	0.862	0.593	0.650
Total	41 (100.0)	36 (100.0)	36 (100.0)	16 (100.0)	5 (100.0)
Intensive Care Unit	9 (22.0)	9 (25.0)	9 (25.0)	7 (43.8)	0 (0.0)
Not Intensive Care Unit	32 (78.0)	27 (75.0)	27 (75.0)	9 (56.2)	5 (100.0)
P	0.546	0.952	0.952	0.121	0.329
Total	41 (100.0)	36 (100.0)	36 (100.0)	16 (100.0)	5 (100.0)
High Risk Units	30 (73.2)	25 (69.4)	24 (66.7)	13 (81.2)	1 (20.0)
Not High Risk Units	11 (26.8)	11 (30.6)	12 (33.3)	3 (18.8)	4 (80.0)
P	0.530	0.995	0.677	0.389	<b>0.030</b>
Total	41 (100.0)	36 (100.0)	36 (100.0)	16 (100.0)	5 (100.0)
Education					
High School	13 (31.7)	15 (41.7)	10 (27.8)	7 (43.75)	2 (40.0)
P	0.588	0.332	0.283	0.438	1.000
Associate degree	8 (19.5)	3 (8.3)	5 (13.9)	2 (12.5)	1 (20.0)
P	0.240	0.240	0.953	1.000	0.540
Undergraduate	19 (46.4)	18 (50.0)	16 (44.4)	5 (31.25)	2 (40.0)
P	0.809	0.461	0.963	0.246	1.000
College graduate	1 (2.4)	0 (0.0)	5 (13.9)	2 (12.5)	0 (0.0)
P	0.434	0.108	<b>0.032</b>	0.244	1.000
Total	41 (100.0)	36 (100.0)	36 (100.0)	16 (100.0)	5 (100.0)

Table 2: Relation between the reasons of the transferring requests and departments

There was a statistically significant difference between nurses who were undergraduate and others, regarding mean age and working hours. ( $p:0.000$ ,  $p:0.000$ ) (Table 3).

There was a statistically significant difference between nurses working at emergency department and other departments, regarding mean age and working hours ( $p:0.001$ ,  $p:0.002$ ) (Table 3).

There was a statistically significant difference between nurses working at intensive care units and other departments regarding mean age and working hours ( $p:0.0028$ ) (Table 3).

There was a statistically significant difference between nurses working at departments with higher risks and other departments regarding mean age and working hours ( $p:0.025$ ,  $p:0.014$ ) (Table 3).

## Discussion

In this study the reasons behind nurses' transferring requests were evaluated; and it was revealed that the nurses who made a request were mostly undergraduate with a mean age of  $30.75 \pm 6.412$  and had a occupation experience of 4.58 years. This finding suggests the importance of promoting the job satisfaction of the nurses that are new at the field and working night shifts at busy departments. According to our study, younger and less experienced nurses tend to resign easily when they don't feel compatible with the aim and objectives of the facility they work at. Especially when a health care facility is operated with less staff than required, nurses' motivation to work and commitment to the facility decreases. Doganlı and Demirci' s study showed

that 54.7% of nurses thought that they didn't have enough motivation to work and this ended up with a negative impact on the patient care as well as the commitment they feel for their job. These findings are consistent with the findings of our study.

In our study; the emergency department (37.3%;  $n=50$ ) and the intensive care unit (25.4%;  $n=34$ ) were the two main departments from which requesting a transfer was most frequent and the main reasons were health-related issues (30.6%), long day and night shifts (26.9%) and the wish to major in (26.9%). Kocaman and colleagues' (5) study showed that nurses' reasons to resign were long working hours, excessive night shifts and no annual leave. Koçaçlı and colleagues' study (6) showed that reasons include problems with the family, extra shifts and excessive night shifts. Chan and colleagues' study showed that reasons included not having adequate number of nurses and not being paid reasonable wages. Mazurenko and colleagues' study showed that the main reasons were health-related issues, and extra workload; and resignments were the results of burnout syndrome, stress, managers' attitude and having no opportunity of majoring in. MacKusick and Minick's (9) study showed that nurses' resign as a result of the hostile work environment, psychological problems caused by patient care, exhaustion and fatigue. Momani's study conducted in Jordan showed that the reasons include economical issues, workload, rewarding system, other career opportunities and the decision-making process of the hospital staff.

It is a known fact that the number of the nurses is less than needed in Turkey. Consequently, even a small number of

resignments may substantially effect the patient care. The remaining nurses are forced to work at even worsening conditions.

Yazıcı and Kalaycı's study (11) showed that even the shift system has a bad effect on human health, however 68% of the nurses' who participated in their study stated that

working hours were acceptable. Especially, long night shifts cause physiological incompatibility, sleeping disorders and exhaustion often (12). Moreover, the long night shifts

	Age	p	t	Duration of work at the department (month)	p	t	Working Hours	p	t
<b>The Reasons</b>									
<b>Mobbing</b>	31.25±5.961	0.739	0.334	29.94±28.321	0.228	1.210	7.75±6.476	0.637	0.473
<b>Schedule</b>	29.89±6.131	0.350	-0.938	22.81±25.982	0.940	-0.075	7.33±6.405	0.737	0.337
<b>Willing to major in Health related Issues</b>	30.28±6.190	0.610	-0.511	19.81±21.773	0.347	-0.943	5.42±5.385	0.059	-1.919
<b>Economical</b>	33.60±6.693	0.312	1.014	22.80±23.048	0.980	-0.025	6.00±7.314	0.728	-0.349
<b>Education</b>									
<b>High School</b>	31.79±7.226	0.168	1.386	21.98±22.090	0.704	-0.381	8.40±7.485	0.095	1.689
<b>Associate degree</b>	35.16±6.551	<b>0.001</b>	3.360	20.32±24.640	0.595	-0.533	11.53±7.777	<b>0.010</b>	2.806
<b>Undergraduate</b>	28.30±4.886	<b>0.000</b>	-4.367	22.50±24.450	0.808	-0.243	4.58±4.652	<b>0.000</b>	-4.235
<b>College Graduate</b>	32.50±3.381	0.189	1.402	40.25±31.527	0.038	2.093	6.38±2.134	0.491	-0.703
<b>Department</b>									
<b>Emergency Department</b>	28.42±5.814	<b>0.001</b>	-3.364	18.90±20.622	0.125	-1.543	4.86±5.551	<b>0.002</b>	-3.165
<b>Intensive Care Unit</b>	30.59±3.846	0.827	0.219	32.88±31.489	<b>0.028</b>	2.279	6.15±3.702	0.233	-1.199
<b>High Risk Department</b>	29.78±5.348	<b>0.025</b>	2.300	24.45±25.716	0.321	0.995	5.90±5.244	<b>0.014</b>	-2.527

**Table 3:** The relations between reasons of transferring requests, education, departments, age and working hours

frequently cause psychological problems, sleeping disorders and job burnout (12).

We could not find any study examining the relationship between the reasons for the transfer request of nurses and high-risk unit duty in the existing literature. There was a statistically significant difference between the nurses' who work at departments with higher risks and the others, in terms of the reasons for transfer requests. Nurses who didn't work at such departments requested transfer due to economical issues. Abaan and Duygulu's study showed that economical problems were one of the main reasons for the resign which is consistent with our study. It may be suggested that better payments would ensure the nurses to remain and increase their commitment. Findings show that better wages and extra payments prevent nurses from resigning and increase their commitment to their work. Findings from Duygulu and Korkmaz's study (14) about nurses' commitment to their work, job satisfaction and the reasons of resignation are consistent with our study. Their study showed that the reasons were mostly economical issues, communication problems and having no opportunity of promotion at work.

Our study revealed that the college graduate nurses' main reason was the will to major in. Mazurenko and colleagues' study showed that nurses with higher education

degrees leave their work more frequently than others. Hu and colleagues' (15) study showed that low chance of promotion caused nurses to be less satisfied with their jobs which eventually led them to leave their job. These findings may indicate that the nurses shall regularly be promoted and supplied with education-related opportunities. Studies showed that nurses who had better job opportunities and more job satisfaction, were more compatible, productive, trust-worthy, responsible and more dedicated to the institution. Thereby it is crucial for executive nurses to develop strategies in order to build up a more satisfactory and peaceful working climate for nurses.

Personal and professional development includes any opportunity of promotion and majoring in (16). It is well known that nurses are target oriented and wish to enhance the quality of their service. They should be provided with regular education in means of courses, seminars etc. Thus, nurses might have the chance of improving and progressing. When their facility or institution doesn't provide the nurses with such opportunities, the nurses become less satisfied with their jobs (17). The more the nurses realize that their objects and aims don't correlate with the institution, the less they are committed to their job. If an institution plans to provide better health care service to the patients with a lesser number of staff, the executives should pay more

attention to the improvement of the nurses, because of the major impact of their job commitment and satisfaction on the quality of service. Our study suggests that this should be reviewed urgently.

## Conclusion

Our study revealed that the main reason for transferring request was health related issues and the higher graduate degree a nurse has, the more she/he requests to be transferred. As a result, nurses' professional competence and the department they wish to work at should be taken into consideration, as these are the keys to successful employment policies.

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