

# Retaining Older and Experienced Nurses in the Workforce

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## Background

- Substantial nursing shortage in US
- Greatest deficit of nurses predicted in the southern and western U.S. regions
- Nurse turnover rates continue to increase due to stress and burnout
- Increase in nursing school enrollment, but insufficient to fill demand
- **Retention of the nursing workforce** is needed to provide quality healthcare for populations, particularly the increased healthcare needs of older adults

## Research Aims

- Examine Registered Nurses' (RNs') intent to leave the nursing profession and perceptions of workplace environments in nurses aged 50 and older
- Inform ways of retaining experienced RNs to care for populations, including the growing geriatric population

## Methods and Design

- Descriptive study inclusion factors: RN, age 50 + years, registered with the North Carolina Board of Nursing, English- speaking
- Recruiting occurred using an online survey
- Variables measured:
  - Intent to leave the nursing profession
  - Workplace environment descriptions (high or low patient acuity)
  - Workplace culture (open-ended questions)

## Results

- 195 RNs employed throughout NC
- Mean age was  $59.81 \pm 6.78$  years
- Mean RN experience was  $31.4 \pm 11.4$  years
- 70% of RNs considered leaving nursing
- 36.1% of RNs working in high acuity patient population facilities
- Patient care acuity environment and intent to leave not correlated (Pearson  $r = .01$ )



References



## Results

**Anything you'd like to share about your healthcare system culture?**

*They have a high rate of turnover and have lost most of their experienced nurses – Ageism.*

*I feel like new nurses are thrown to the wolves and eventually leave.*

*I'm planning to retire next year in a large part due to extreme frustration.*

*Promote transparency. Needed!!*

## Conclusions / Implications

- Very experienced RN participants in study
- Intent to leave the RN profession was high and not limited to high acuity patient settings, such as hospitals
- Experienced nurses remaining in the workforce help
  - Sufficient nursing staffing
  - Experienced caregiving
  - Mentorship of newer nurses
- Transparency reported as missing, but needed for older nurse retention