Are Employee Longevity and Job Satisfaction Related to Generational Differences Among the Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and the Millennials?

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Introduction: Currently there are 3 generations in the nursing workforce: Millennials (ages 19-39), Gen Xers (ages 40-54), Baby Boomers (ages 55 and over).   Retaining nurses within the healthcare system is a challenge for hospital administrators. Understanding factors important to nurse retention is essential.

Identification of the problem: This study was prompted by a noticeable increase in nurse turnover in the main Operating Room, Day of Surgery Unit, and Post Anesthesia Unit of a 435 bed not-for-profit, general and acute care facility.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study was to investigate the correlation between generational differences and employee longevity and satisfaction.

Methodology: The investigators conducted a Descriptive Correlation Design Study. Perianesthesia nurses were given the opportunity to participate in an anonymous Talent Quest survey concerning current job satisfaction, career outlook, attitudes toward nursing, positive influence of electronic medical record use, the quality of nursing care and demographics.

Results: We analyzed the responses of 34 nurses to a series of 12 questions. The scores for 9 of the questions were similar between all 3 age groups. In contrast, there were statistically significant differences in the responses between the 3 age groups for the 3 questions related to electronic medical records. ($p < 0.05$)

Discussion: Responses from each of the generational groups were similar for many of the questions. The questions specific to the use of an electronic medical record identified a generational group by the data set of responses provided by the individuals. This study doesn't attempt to answer why a specific generational group provided the responses which were given.

Conclusion: We found that the only questions on which there are statistically significant differences between the 3 age groups deal with electronic medical records. We can conclude that Millennials are more likely than Gen Xers to report that electronic medical records positively influence the following outcomes: their job satisfaction, productivity and time management and quality of patient care.

Implications for perianesthesia nurses and future research: This data may indicate how Millennials who have been born and raised into an electronic, digital world may be very proper resources for other generations of the nursing workforce.