

ABSTRACT

Factors Influencing the Migration of Jamaican Nurses

Eulie Westcarr

The migration of nurses from one developing country to another, and from developing countries to developed ones is of great international concern. This migration creates manpower and health coverage hardships for the countries from which the nurses are migrating, Jamaica being one such country.

Although Jamaica apparently trains the "required quantum" of nurses to adequately staff the health care system, there is a constant shortage of nurse manpower in the health services.

This study was undertaken to identify the factors that contributed to the migration of Jamaican nurses, and that the information gathered would be used to explore the causes of nurse migration, and which would be helpful to planners who could use this information in developing career structure that could have a positive influence in reducing migration.

Two hospitals in New York, the Metropolitan Hospital Center and the Bronx Lebanon Hospital were identified for conducting the study as the nurses there were considered to be representative of Jamaican nurses who migrated. It is widely known

within the nursing fraternity that screening officers from these hospitals visit the island several times per year, in order to carry out regular recruitment drive for purposes of permanent employment/residence.

At each of these hospitals, a list of Jamaican nurses employed was obtained, and the nurses were asked to complete a structured questionnaire. It was hoped that the information gathered would not only be useful in helping to explore the causes of nurse migration, but would have a positive influence in reducing it.

The results showed that the main factor that contributed to the migration of these nurses was low salary.

Among the recommendations made were that nurses be paid a salary comparable with other professions, also to which commensurate with post basic education (Marshall-Burnett, 1988)