

Time management in Turkish nurses

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Abstract

Time management is an essential skill for the employees who work in a busy health settings. This was descriptive study and the aim of this study is to determine the importance paid for time management in nursing. in Turkey. Data was collected by searching "Ulakbim National Databases and Turkish Medline and 22 studies out of 365 were included in the assessment.. While studies which determine time usage show that nurses do not use their time efficiently, studies which measure time management skill, time management skill of nurses or students is at medium-high level. In order to clarify this contradiction, much more studies should be carried out and apart from descriptive studies factors which effect use of time in working environment should be analyzed. This study shows that the issue of time management in nursing is not analyzed as a privileged issue in Turkey and there has not been study that would evaluate time management of nurses.

Keywords: Nurse, student, time management, work sampling

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1. Introduction

Managing time efficiently means that the individual can control and monitor his/her professional and personal life. Effective time management (TM) strategies requires; setting goals, setting priorities among competing responsibilities, planning and organising activities and minimising time wasters (Gordon & Borkan, 2014). Through TM, nurses who often find themselves performing many different tasks during the course of a single day can cope with time pressure and limitations.

Nurses are the primary caregivers and the biggest group of health care providers in the hospitals (Ançel 1996; Ebrahimi et al., 2014). The efficient use of their time is critical in providing effective nursing services which can affect the quality of the given health care services. However increased nurse workload and the growing nursing workforce shortage have negative impact on the amount of nursing time available for care activities (Hendrich et al., 2008; Tamiselvi & Regunath 2013). Therefore nurses must identify effective TM approaches to increase their professional productivity as an administrator or caregiver and also personal satisfaction in their life. They must also identify time wasters that insidiously reduce productive time.

According to Turkey Health statistics (2013), the number of nurses per 100 thousand people is 271 and quality and quantity of nurses are inadequate for better nursing services. In this sense, it is a must for nurses to manage their time well for an efficient work. The aim of this study is to determine the importance paid for time management in nursing.

2. Methodology

This was descriptive study with the purpose of determining the studies conducted on TM in nursing in Turkey. Data was collected by searching “Ulakbim National Databases and Turkish Medline”. Review was not restricted in the sense of years it covers and was carried by using words of “time management”, “nurse”, “student”, “work sampling”. Studies and theses whose sampling was comprised of graduate and student nurses were included in, compilations were excluded from the study.

3. Findings

As a result of review, 22 studies out of 365 were included in the assessment (Table 1). It was determined that the first study was carried out in 1982 and the last study was carried out in 2015, 7 studies were carried out as thesis, 17 studies were about service nurses, 1 of them about manager nurses and 4 of them about student nurses. All the studies are descriptive and 18 of them were carried out by nurses and two types of measurements were carried out. First of them are studies in which time spent for nursing care activities are determined. The second one covers TM skills or attitudes are measured.

Table 1. Studies and Features on Time Management and Time Usage

| Studies for determination of time management skills | | | |
|---|--|----------------------|---------------------|
| Author | Scale/Method | Sample | Researcher's Domain |
| Bahçecik et al., 2004 | Time Management Scale for Nurse Managers | 233 Nurses | Nursing |
| Başak et al., 2008 | Time Management Inventory | 323 Nursing Students | Nursing |

| | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| İz & Özen, 2010 | Time Management Inventory | 68 Nursing Students | Nursing |
| Kıdak, 2011 | Time Management Inventory | 135 Managers (32 head nurse) | Medicine |
| Kaya et al., 2012 | Time Management Inventory | 584 Nursing and Midwifery Students | Nursing |
| Köse et al., 2012 | Time Management Inventory | 165 Nursing Students | Nursing |
| Karadağ & Cankul, 2015 | Mental Workload Scale | 171 Nurses | Health Institutions Management |
| Şahin, 2015 | Empirical Study Technique | 219 Hospital Staff (51 Nurses) | Business Management |

Studies for determination of time using

| Authors | Scale/method | Sample | Researcher's Domain |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------|
| Platin et al., 1982 | Self- Recording | 80 Nurses | Nursing |
| Ançel, 1996 (Doctorate thesis) | Work Sampling | 6997 Observations | Nursing |
| Cankul, 1997 (Master thesis) | Work Sampling | 3515 Observations | Health Institutions Management |
| Kukulu, 1997 (Doctorate thesis) | Time Study and Work Sampling | 43 Care Activities 1290 Observations | Nursing |
| Uysal, 1998 (Master thesis) | Work Sampling | 10297 Observations | Nursing |
| Kılıçaslan, 1998 (Master thesis) | Work Sampling | 2040 Observations 416 Patients | Nursing |
| Özbıçakçı, 1998 (Master thesis) | Time Study | 62 Care Activities | Nursing |
| Ançel, 2003 | Work Sampling | 1252 Observations | Nursing |
| Tsinlly, 2003 (Doctorate thesis) | Time Study | 44 Care Activities | Nursing |
| Ançel, 2006 | Self-sampling | 8 Nurses | Nursing |
| Yıldırım, 2006 | Work Sampling | 7600 Observations | Nursing |
| Türkmen & Uslu, 2011 | Continuous Observation, Nursing Activity List | 65 Nurses | Nursing |
| Avcı et al., 2013 | Cheltenham Patient and Classification Scale | Care Activities List | Nursing |
| Kılıç et al., 2014 | Observation, Motion Study | 4 Nurses | Medicine and Nursing |

3.1. Studies in which time management of nurses are determined

These studies are descriptive in which data such as primarily work sampling, time study, motion study and continuous observation are collected through objective techniques. It is seen that personal record technique and self-sampling were used only in two studies. Although there are measurements in different shift and at weekend, TM of nurses in day shift was analyzed in this study (Table 2).

Table 2. Studies in which time management of nurses are determined

| Authors | Direct Care and indirect care activities % | Housekeeping management activities % | Non-nursing Activities % | Personal breaks % | Wasted time % | Others % |
|----------------------|---|---|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Platin et al., 1982 | 79.4 | 9.2 | - | 11 | - | - |
| Ançel, 1996 | 35-40.2 | 7-11.2 | 0-2.3 | | 21.3-40.9 | 9-26 |
| Cankul, 1997 | 29.8 | 15.1 | - | 55.2 | 46.3-63.4 | - |
| Kukulu, 1998 | - | - | - | - | 27.5-40.9 | 17.8 |
| Uysal, 1998 | 84.3 | 5.9 | - | 9.8 | - | - |
| Kılıçaslan, 1998 | 83.05 | 6.2 | - | 10.6 | | 0.15 |
| Özbıçakçı, 1998 | Direct care: 86.16 | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Indirect care: 11.84 | | | | | |
| Ançel, 2003 | 53.5 | 14.6 | 2.2 | 27.8 | 17.5 | 1.9 |
| Tsinlly, 2003 | Direct care: 73.96 | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Indirect care: 26.04 | | | | | |
| Ançel, 2006 | 55.5 | 7.2 | 0 | 11.4 | 25.9 | |
| Yıldırım, 2006 | 69 | 15.0 | - | 16 | - | - |
| Türkmen & Uslu, 2011 | Indirect care: 9.1 | 8.3 | - | - | - | - |
| Avcı et al., 2013 | 48 | 31 | 15 | 6 | - | - |
| Kılıç et al., 2014 | 56.6 | - | - | 4.2 | - | - |

It was determined that in nearly all of the studies, nursing activities are classified as direct and indirect care, unit related activities, non-nursing activities nursing and personal requirement and time allocated for each activity was detected. It was determined that observation number was sufficient enough to enable 95% reliability in work sampling studies. In 5 of the studies time loss was also determined and so manpower requirement was calculated. Ançel (1996) stated that due to time loss, labour loss of all the nurses in a shuttle throughout all the weeks vary between 5.5-11.5 days, Tsinlly (2003) stated that time efficiency level in emergency unit is 57%, and the number of nurses is three time more compared to the work, Kukulu (1998) stated that the number of nurses working is excessive compared to workload. Loss of time presented in the studies varies between 17.5-63.4%.

In the studies analyzed, nursing activities are composed of reactive activities for physical care and treatments; proactive activities, professional development, research and training activities are not included in working hours or this subject is not searched.

3.2. Studies for determination of time management skills

Eight of the studies are about TM skill or attitude. These studies are descriptive and analyze relation between TM skill and age, gender, anxiety, personal characteristics and academic success. Four of the studies are about student nurses, 1 of them is about nurses and 3 of them are about hospital personnel including nurses (Table 3).

Table 3. Studies for determination of time management skills

| Authors | Results |
|------------------------|---|
| Bahçecik et al., 2004 | A scale study for manager nurses (Cronbach Alpha:0.81), The majority of nurse managers have high TM skill scores and they manage their time well. |
| Kıdak, 2011 | Female managers' TM attitudes are more positive than males and all have high sensitivity to the time wasting. |
| Başak et al., 2008 | Nursing students' TM skill is high and older of them have higher scores than the others. There is a significant correlation between TM scores and academic achievement. |
| İz & Özen, 2010 | Students TM skills are at mid-level, there is a relationship between age and TM, but no significant relationship between academic achievement and TM. |
| Kaya et al., 2012 | Students' TM skills are at mid-level, females are better than males and TM skills of the students decreased as the anxiety level increased. |
| Köse et al., 2012 | Students' time planning scores are high, there is negative and moderate correlation between internet addiction with TM. There are significant relationship between personality traits and TM. |
| Şahin, 2015 | Participants reported that no organizational and managerial problems but working time problems occur in the work settings. Employees are caught in the trap of managerial and personal time. The concept of TM is effected by sex, age, profession and education. |
| Karadağ & Cankul, 2015 | "Pressure of short deadlines" is a factor that contribute to the highest mental workload among nurses. |

In the findings it was generally seen that TM skills of individuals are at medium or high level. One study is scale study (Bahçecik et al., 2004). Different from other studies, the study of Karadağ and Cankul (2015) is a mental workload study and among factors composing mental workload, pressure of short deadlines is emphasized as an important result.

4. Discussions

TM is a resource which needs to managed importantly and effectively. However as it is identified in this study; when it is considered that the first publication in nursing issue was done in 1982 and there have been 22 publications in the last 33 years, it is thought that this issue was not elaborated sufficiently.

While studies which determine time usage show that nurses do not use their time efficiently, studies which measure TM skills, TM skills of nurses or students is at medium-high level. In order to clarify this contradiction, much more studies should be carried out and apart from descriptive studies factors which effect use of time in working environment should be analyzed.

In the studies, it was determined that the rate of time loss is between 17.4-63.4% and the most important share among reasons of time loss is related to the personal time of nurses. In literature, the rate of time loss of nurses was reported as 5.0-23.0% (Hendrickson et al., 1990; Cardona et al.,1997) and the rate of duration allocated for personal requirement was reported as 19% (Williams et al., 2009). When it is considered that the number of nurses is insufficient in Turkey, it is seen that strategies which would enable effective TM are required in study field.

Although nurses complain about lack of time and number of nurses in some studies, when workload and use of time are considered it was determined that the current number of nurses is excessive (Kukulu 1998; Ançel, 1996, 2003; Tysinlyy, 2003). This situation shows that time loss should be evaluated in the sense of manpower and the awareness of nurses should be raised about use of time.

Nearly all the studies analyzed show that nurses spare time rather on emergency and technical works. However, nurses should spare time on proactive activities such as protective and health improving approaches in order to provide more effective service. Therefore awareness of nurses should be raised about allocating time for non-emergency works category in "Time Management Matrix" defined by Covey (1994).

In the studies analyzed, apart from the study of Ançel (1996, 2003) it was determined that nurses did not analyze time allocated for research, in-service training, and professional development activities. According to Robichaud and Hamric (1986), nurses spend 12% of their time on research, 27% on training and nearly no time on occupational development. Nurses in Turkey should spend time on training and development activities as they spend time on personal requirements, researchers should pay attention on this issue and nurses should be aware that they should spare on these activities.

TM skill is a learned skill and graduate nurse should be taught this skill while student in order to make effective TM. In the studies it was stated that TM skills of students and nurses are at medium or high level and that they are sensitive about TM, yet there is a need for searching how this skill is reflected on working environment.

This study shows that the issue of TM in nursing is not analyzed as a privileged issue in Turkey and there has not been study that would evaluate time management of nurses.

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