

Abstract

Nurse performance plays a critical role in the quality of patient care. Human factors and limitations such as fatigue, stress, and illness can affect the nurses ability to perform safe care. Performance instruments such as checklists can enable nurses to assess their health and “fitness to work” status. However, there are few tools found in the literature used in the ambulatory care setting. The Personal Safe Survey (PSS) is a self-assessment tool that enables Registered Nurses in an ambulatory care setting to assess their “fitness to work” status. The majority of the RN’s in the ambulatory care setting that used the PSS reported they were “fit to work” and practice safe care. It appeared that RN’s (ages 45-54) disagreed that they are taking medication that impairs their ability to perform safe care. Education appeared to play a role in the findings. BSN nurses disagreed more strongly that they are taking medications that impairs their ability to perform safe care compared to ADN nurses. Both Diploma and ADN nurses feel “fit” to work but not as uniformly as the BSN group. Diploma nurses agreed more strongly that they would use the PSS and encourage coworkers to use the PSS more than ADN nurses. Nurses identified opportunities for the organization and leadership to improve the health status of their nurses by providing them with a safer environment- mentally, physically, and emotionally. The findings suggest that RN’s support the use of the PSS, that educational degree may play a role in the use of the PSS, and that organizations need to provide a safer workplace for RN’s in the ambulatory care setting.