

Challenges facing overseas nurses practicing in Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

Saudi Arabia has prioritised health care, resulting in an excellent health care system for the country. Improvements, however, have been hindered by a serious shortage of qualified nurses. This can be attributed to the poor image of nursing held in Saudi Arabia and across the Middle East because of cultural and religious believes. In this context Saudi Arabia has looked overseas for qualified nurses. However the employment of overseas qualified nurses in Saudi Arabia has given rise to challenges for both to the health care system and the nurses themselves.

This study aimed to explore the problems and challenges experienced by a group of Overseas Qualified Nurses (OQNs) who had worked in the King Fahad Medical City for a period of more than two years. The study employed a qualitative, phenomenological design to assist in understanding the experiences of twenty-three (23) OQNs nurses who provide nursing care to Saudi patients. Thematic analyses were used as the data analysis technique.

The research found that there were two significant issues that affected the day-to-day professional practice of these nurses. The first was that the overall Saudi Islamic Culture was pervasive; and the second was that communication obstacles due to language barriers often presented insurmountable difficulties in their professional practice.

The areas of future research identified from the study include, exploring the views of hospital administrators to the challenges faced by OQNs, as well as the impact of these nurses on the quality of patient care. This links directly to the important area of strategies to increase the numbers of local Saudi nurses.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification. I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis and all sources used have been acknowledged in this thesis.

Signature:

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature.

Date: ...15\01\2014.....

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAM	Complementary and Alternative Medicine
ICU	Intensive Care Unit
KFMC	King Fahd Medical City
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MOH	Ministry of Health
OQN	Overseas Qualified Nurses
OR	Operations Room
NPO	Nil by mouth
PCA	Patient Care Assistance
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him
UNE	University of New England
WA	Ward Assistants/Ward Clerks
WHO	World Health Organisation