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Chronic Fatigue Predicts Hospital Nurse Turnover Intentions

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Purpose
Determine the impact of specific workforce engagement factors on nurse employees’ intention to leave the hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-21.

Research Question
Do meaning and joy in work, resilience, occupational fatigue, and burnout predict employee intention to leave during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021?
Study Framework: Workforce Engagement Factors Predicting Intention to Leave

Inter-shift Recovery → Acute Fatigue → Chronic Fatigue

Meaning and Joy At Work → Protective Factors

Work Related Resilience → Burn Out

Burn Out → Intent to Leave (Retention)

Chronic Fatigue Predicts Hospital Nurse Turnover Intentions
Methods

Cross-sectional correlational study using online survey

Nurses employed > 3 months, all settings
Psychometrically Sound Measures

• Nurse Characteristics

• Meaning and Joy in Work Questionnaire

• Resilience at Work Scale

• Occupational Fatigue (OFER-15): Acute fatigue, Inter-shift recovery, Chronic fatigue

• Burnout – Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI-HSS): Emotional exhaustion, Depersonalization, Personal accomplishments

• Turnover – Intention to remain in job, organization, nursing
Data Analysis

Descriptive data (aggregate)

Correlations among variables

Path analysis (structural equation modeling technique to investigate patterns of effect within a system of variables)
Results

Demographics: N=151
• 89% female
• 88% baccalaureate in nursing or higher
• Mean age 45 yrs (range 24-73)
• 68% clinical/staff nurses
• 68% certified
• From all hospital areas

9% indicated they would likely leave their position at SJO within 6-12 months
•
Nursing workforce factors predicting intention to leave (using total burnout scores)
Chronic occupational fatigue - only significant predictor of turnover intention during the COVID-19 pandemic among hospital nurses in varied roles.

Burnout not predictive of turnover intention *when considered with other study variables*.

↑ chronic fatigue predicted ↓ meaning and joy at work and ↓ work-related resilience.

Meaning and joy at work and resilience (thought to be potentially protective) - not predictive of total burnout *when considered with other study variables*. 
Discussion

Builds on pre-pandemic findings

9% nurses reported intention to leave the hospital within 6-12 months

- ↓ than other studies among nurses
- still alarming… as half of these nurses intend to leave nursing!

In the causal model (all relationships considered at once), chronic occupational fatigue only significant predictor of intent to leave

Burnout not predictive of turnover intent but is related to turnover intent.
Publication (accepted after abstract submission)