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“Linking organisational factors and patient care: Does healthcare workers’ well-being matter?”

Kevin Teoh¹ and Juliet Hassard²

¹Birkbeck, University of London, United Kingdom; ²University of Nottingham, United Kingdom

For the edited book “The Triple Challenge: Connecting Health care worker well-being, patient safety and organisational change”

Abstract

Although healthcare worker well-being is posited as a mediator between organisational factors and patient care, there has been little empirical examination of this. Moreover, nearly all of this research investigates such relationships at the individual level, ignoring the fact that factors at the departmental, organisational, sectoral, and national levels all impact on working conditions, workers’ well-being, and patient care. We first review the literature linking organisational factors (e.g. overcrowding, resourcing, hospital type) to healthcare workers’ well-being and patient care. Few studies have tested well-being as a mediator, with nearly all of these involving nurses and burnout, and focus predominately on organisational leadership and staffing levels. Based on this, we propose a conceptual model that brings together organisational factors (i.e. structure, people, external influences), the work environment (i.e. job demands, job resources), healthcare worker well-being (i.e. negative well-being, positive well-being, individual states) and patient care outcomes (i.e. individual and organisational level); with healthcare workers’ well-being postulated as a mediator. We also highlight that in testing the proposed model and to advance our understanding of this relationship, researchers should account and overcome the lack of theory, issues of measurement, and shortcomings in research designs.