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Paper Topic: Benefits and Concerns of 12 Hour Shifts and How Fatigue Effects Patient Outcomes and Nurses' Health & Wellbeing

I. Introduction

Possible ideas for the introduction:

- Explaining how nurse schedules are competitive and how they're destined to work long shifts
- introducing what I'll be discussing the benefits and concerns of working longer & shorter shifts

Thesis Statement

Nurses should not work twelve hour shifts consecutively as it is detrimental to their health and wellbeing as well as patient outcomes. When assigned twelve hour shifts nurses should be required to take their breaks. Employers should enforce policies to promote the relevancy of nurse and patient health.

II. Body

Main Point: Concerns of twelve hour shifts

Examples/Details/Explanations:

- a. increase the risk of needlestick injuries and musculoskeletal disorders
- b. errors
- c. drowsy driving
- d. longer work days and how 12 hour shifts turn into longer because of paperwork and forms they have to fill out
- e. Patient satisfaction suffers unnecessarily which causes financial crisis as well

Source

1. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/751530533?accountid=10639>.
2. <https://www.registerednursing.org/12-hour-shifts-vs-10-hour-shifts/>
3. <https://www.pressganey.com/docs/default-source/industry-edge/issue-4-may/the-question-of-12-hour-shifts.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

Counterargument: Benefits of nurses only work three or four days out of the week because of longer shifts

Examples/Details/Explanations:

- a. less patient turnover
- b. better work-life balance
- c. less commuting
- d. improved absenteeism

Source:

<https://www.rasmussen.edu/degrees/nursing/blog/nursing-debate-8-hour-shifts-vs-12-hour-shifts/>

<https://nurse.org/articles/nurses-three-days-a-week/>

Main Point: Studies have shown relation between working longer shifts and burnout, fatigue, and negative patient outcomes

Examples/Details/Explanations:

- a. Geiger Brown study: discovered that nurses working a string of 12 hour shifts consecutively averaged just 5.5 hours of sleep and those who work nights only average about 5.2 hours of sleep
- b. Sleep deprivation has health effects including hypertension, diabetes, obesity, heart attack, stroke, unhealthy behaviors, and depression
- c. Incidents that have happened because nurses were tired and burned out (killed 16 year old because of mistakenly intravenous delivery of an epidural; nurse from Farmington, MN pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of careless driving after killing an 18 year old woman in a traffic crash)

Source

<https://www.nursingtimes.net/clinical-archive/patient-safety/the-12-hour-shift-friend-or-foe-30-01-2015/>

<https://search.proquest.com/docview/391411371?accountid=10639>

<https://www.pressganey.com/docs/default-source/industry-edge/issue-4-may/the-question-of-12-hour-shifts.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

Counterargument

Main Point: how 12 hour shifts came about and how hospitals see advantages of working 12 hour shifts

Examples/Details/Explanations:

- a. More time off
- b. fewer commutes
- c. schedule only two shifts

III. Conclusion

Twelve hour shifts provide a lot of benefits for nurses such as: better work-life balance, less patient turnover, less commuting, and improved absenteeism. Many nurses prefer working

twelve hour shifts because of the off time and work-life balance it provides. However, since studies have shown extended shifts compromise nurses' ability to consistently provide high quality and compassionate care to patients then everyone loses. Patients suffer unnecessarily, nurses lose sight of their mission they've dedicated themselves to, and hospitals sacrifice the loyalty of patients and the communities they serve. Getting rid of 12 hour shifts altogether would put health employers in a bind. Creating strategies that support the relevancy of nurses' health and wellbeing would reduce the risk of fatigue and harm done to patients, nurses, and people outside of hospitals.

Sources:

<https://search.proquest.com/docview/751530533?accountid=10639>

<https://www.pressganey.com/docs/default-source/industry-edge/issue-4-may/the-question-of-12-hour-shifts.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

Other Ideas to Conclude:

Discussing what health managers and employers can do to reduce the risks:

- some nurses shouldn't work 12 hour shifts if they have any chronic illnesses
- ensure nurses end their shifts on time (Geiger Brown study shows 12 hour shifts turned into 12.5 hours and 50% of shifts were much longer)
- Avoid having meetings when night shift nurses shifts have ended
- Keep a fund for cab rides as some nurses may be too tired to drive
- Make sure nurses take their breaks
- Examine nurses' culture