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**Nurse Retention in a Correctional Facility: A Study of the Relationship between the
Nurses' Perceived Barriers and Benefits**

ABSTRACT

PROBLEM: Retention of nursing staff is more complex in a correctional facility. Over the past three years only 20% of the staff remains employed. Without retention of qualified correctional nurses, there are decreases in access, gaps in continuity and less time for mentorship. Trained correctional nurses improve patient and staff safety, provide more education and are more team-oriented.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study was to identify benefits and barriers to nursing staff satisfaction with their job and the likelihood that they will continue to work in correctional centers.

EBP QUESTION: What are the nurses' perceived barriers and benefits with continued employment in the correctional facility? Which of these barriers and benefits will significantly impact the likelihood of the nurses remaining in current employment 1 year, 3 years, and, 5 years?

METHODS: A non-experimental descriptive design was used to assess retention issues. Instruments included a Sociodemographic Questionnaire and Stamp's IWS©, scored on a 7 point Likert scale. All nurses in current employment as well as new hires were invited to participate (33 RNS and LPNs).

OUTCOMES: Descriptive statistics were used for the Sociodemographic Questionnaire and questions answered as to the likelihood of remaining employed. Some barriers identified included salary, professional recognition, work environment, increased responsibility, excess paper work, and minimal voice in planning of policies and procedures. The relationship between barriers and benefits and intent to stay were analyzed using Spearman r . Benefits identified included a positive nurse/physician relationship, pride in profession, and autonomy.

IMPLICATIONS: Practice and patient care will be favorably impacted if correctional nurses are provided services such as new hire orientation, clinical ladder programs to recruit and retain nursing staff, and a teambuilding process. Consideration for funding and research could be applied for from quality improvement activities and documentation of scientific projects. Implications for leadership should start with communication to the staff and administration. Business of practice could be addressed in review of salaries and the exploration of cost analysis survey of nurse retention. Policy and laws within the state correctional system could be improved with valid studies on nurse recruitment and retention.