

Is the delivery of individualized care compromised by the working environment? A comparative study between Greek and Cypriot nurses

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Background: Empirical evidence suggests that individualized care leads to more appropriate treatment and better patient outcomes, increases patient satisfaction, improves health related quality of life and promotes patient autonomy. However, there is a lack of coherent information and empirical research assessing the driving and restraining forces that promote and impede its implementation. There is also lack of evidence related to the effects that the hospital environment has on nurses perceptions and support of individuality of care.

Objectives: The aim of this study was to examine and compare the professional environment as related to individuality in the care provided in two culturally similar countries as are Greek and Cyprus. This is a part of a larger international study.

Learning outcomes: The learners will be able to define organizational variables which affect the delivery of individualize care. They will also be able to recognize the environmental differences between different cultures as related to individualized care. Finally, learners will be able to understand different organizational variables that may influence the concept of individualized care.

Design: A cross-sectional comparative study design was employed.

Settings: This study was carried out in total 9 hospitals in Cyprus and Greece

Participants: Data were collected amongst orthopaedic nurses in 4 hospitals in Greece (n=147, rr=81.66%), and 5 hospitals in Cyprus (n=150, rr=87.7%).

Instruments: The Revised Professional Practice Environment (RPPE) and the Individualised Care Scale (ICSA and ICSB) was used. The data were analysed using descriptive methods and inferential statistics such as Pearson correlation coefficient and t-test.

Findings: Statistically significant differences were found between countries in the ICS-A and ICS-B sub scales measuring perceptions of individuality in care as well as in the professional environment where care is practiced. The mean scores of the RPPE for Greek nurses were significantly higher than that of Cypriot nurses in five out of the eight dimensions of their working environment, that is handling disagreement and conflict (p=0.000), control over practice (p=0.001), leadership and autonomy (p-value=0.002), teamwork (p=0.000) and cultural sensitivity (p=0.005). No significant differences were found between the two countries in subscales of internal motivation, relationship with the physicians and communication about patients.

Conclusions: The results of this study may be attributed to different organizational variables in the two countries but they have implications for clinical practice in terms of understanding the impact of the environment on the implementation of individualized care.