

## **Management views on Introducing a Performance Management Programme for Nurses at Malta’s Acute Public Hospital**

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**Malta**

**Session 2B**

**12/3/2010**

There is sufficient evidence that enhancing nurses’ performance has impact on improving patients’ outcomes and quality of care. A Performance Management Programme (PMP) is considered as a means to address nurses’ performance. This study sought to capture managements’ views on introducing a PMP for nurses at the acute hospital setting.

A questionnaire with open – ended questions was distributed to 8 Nursing Managers. This yielded a response rate of 87.5% for this study. A fully structured questionnaire was also distributed to all 54 appointed Ward Managers of whom 44 replied resulting in a response rate of 81.5%.

Both the qualitative and quantitative information gathered that all Ward Managers affirm that nurses under their charge need to be further assessed on job performance, discuss work related problems, need support and guidance in their work. All respondents also confirm that feedback is required to achieve high standards in nursing.

Additional findings disclosed that 84.74% of Nursing Managers and 95.46% of Ward Managers agree that performance assessment should be linked to nurses’ training and development. However, conflicting results were obtained as regards linking performance to pay where 47.73% of Ward Managers agree whilst 52.27% disagree to this notion.

All participants confirm that the Ward Manager closest to the employee should be the primary assessor. Bureaucracy is seen as an obstacle by 91% of the respondents. Recommendation for management includes implementation of a PMP after discussion with all stakeholders including the unions. Concurrently. Reducing bureaucracy, decentralisation and instilling a culture of accountability are prerequisites for a PMP to prevail.

As regards to suggestions for further research, performing a pilot study would be beneficial prior to full scale implementation.

**PS: This paper is the work of Mr. Stephen Azzopardi – one of my students who graduated in Post Qualification Diploma in Health Service Management last November. I was his supervisor and approval has been sought from the author prior submitting.**