Critical Analysis of Nursing Practices in Bridging Clinical Care and Administrative Leadership

Ali abdullah mohammed balharith[1], Nayef Masoud Ali AlQahtani[2], Sami Adburrahman Ayed Aloufi[3], Saif Awad Awadallh Alharbi[4], Naif Fayez Naif Alshammari[5], Bandar Salim M Alahmadi[6], Fahad Khalil Masad Althubyani[7], Fahd Hamdan Alsaedi[8], Tareq Hamed Al saedi[9], Mohammed Saud Alsahli[10]

Abstract

For some time, nursing work has assumed a more complex function in healthcare; specifically, work has more administrative responsibilities. Therefore, This shift has benefits that allow for the evolution of professional practice and challenges the nurses' attempt to narrow the gap between clinical floors and leadership positions in various organizations. This paper, therefore, provides a critical review of nursing interventions, factors related to nurse leaders and followership, and organizational, patient and contextual outcomes. The review also presents major categories: collaboration by nurse leaders, change leadership and patient care outcomes. Moreover, it investigates the challenges concerning integrating the clinical leadership function and gives recommendations for improving the performance of the nurse leaders who perform two different roles. The results evidence how different leadership skills ought to be developed in nurses to reform the health systems and enhance interprofessional relations and patient care.

Keywords: *Nursing Leadership, Clinical Care, Administrative Leadership, Nurse Managers, Healthcare Systems, Patient Outcomes, Interdisciplinary Collaboration.*

Introduction

The nursing profession occupies a strategic place in healthcare delivery; it acts as the core component of the care delivery system in society. Historically, nursing was perceived only as a profession that focuses on direct care of patients on the ward. Over the last few years, though, the nurse's role has been growing, with more and more nurses being assigned leadership positions in the administration and management of healthcare organizations. It is now apparent that nurses are decision-makers, participants in policy formulation, and managers of healthcare systems. It is important to see how clinical care can blend with administration, as leadership is a critical factor that determines the outcome of patients, staff productivity, and the efficiency of any health system (Wiggins & Madden, 2015; Mohammad et al., 2024a; Mohammad et al., 2023a; Mohammad et al, 2024b). From the above discussion, this paper seeks to discuss the following topics: The need for nursing leadership, acute areas of challenge and innovation, and the means to enhance leadership practice in nursing units.

As mid and high-level employees of healthcare organizations, nurse leaders not only have direct patient care responsibilities but are also expected to supervise and coordinate staff, control resources, and facilitate the implementation of organizational goals. The fact that care delivery models continue to expand and the consumer population diversifies makes this balance challenging. It is a concern that experienced nurses in

[1] Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, Email: aabalharith@moh.gov.sa
[2] Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, Email: namaalqahtani@moh.gov.sa
[3] Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, Email: Saloufy@moh.gov.sa
[4] Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, Email: saif_5533@hotmail.com
[5] Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, Email: n1004502992@gmail.com
[6] Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, Email: Bsa9@hotmail.com
[7] Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, Email: Fkaljohani22@gmail.com
[8] Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, Email: fhalsaadi@moh.gov.sa
[9] Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, Email: tassaidy@moh.gov.sa
[10] Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia, Email: mosalsahli@moh.gov.sa

leadership positions may develop a cold between their clinical skills and guiding others in the clinical practice. Moreover, advancements in healthcare systems have implied that nurse leaders must rise to the new challenges of management, organizational, and strategic problem-solving competencies.

In the present paper, the author will briefly discuss the state of knowledge regarding nursing leadership, review existing data regarding nurse leaders' effects on clinical and management aspects of care, and propose directions for disseminating the integration of scholarship between clinical competency and leadership in healthcare settings.

Literature Review

Clinical/administrative role integration in nursing leadership has remained an area of interest in the last few years. Nurse leaders have a critical responsibility in defining healthcare, and leadership in nursing correlates with patient, organizational and nurse outcomes. The literature review below describes major nursing leadership issues regarding clinical care and management roles.

The Nurse Leaders in Healthcare Organizations

Nurse leaders have a very pivotal position within the healthcare facility. As Ulrich et al. (2019) pointed out, the nurse leader is expected to be the agent of change who translates what goes on the clinical front into decisions on the administrative front, overseeing patient care delivery and organizational resource management. Nurse leaders influence staffing, budget, and policy decisions and often implement policies. This also involves providing critical support in the needful adjustments to ensure that the organization complies with the standard set in the healthcare industry. The new paradigms of care have increased the complexity of care delivery systems and, thus, called for the leadership of nurses knowledgeable in clinical and organizational processes.

Impact on Patient Outcomes

Multiple studies have demonstrated that nurses' leadership results in improved patient outcomes. Research has shown that patients' outcomes are enhanced when nurses participate in decision-making at an organizational level. Aiken et al. (2011) further noted that hospitals with more nurse leaders also report low patient mortality, fewer adverse events and higher satisfaction scores. Nurse leaders' engagement in formulating clinical governance and organizational policies will go a long way in guaranteeing high-quality patient care. Further, the nurse leaders continue their role as patient advocates to promote the translation of evidence-based practice into the clinical setting.

Dilemmas arising with the implementation of clinical and administrative responsibilities

However, several issues are likely to hinder the effectiveness of nurse leaders strategically positioned to connect clinical practice with management. The main issue is the dilemma of the interdependence of clinical competencies and administrative work. Kramer et al. (2013) opine that clinical practice, supervising more nurses, controlling finances, and performing other responsibilities can sometimes create role conflict for a nurse leader. Also, the nurse leaders may have struggled with other healthcare workers to perceive the leadership position as invading their customary functional or medical lines of work. This role conflict may sometimes lead to stress and/or burnout, which influences overall job performance and satisfaction.

Collaboration and Communication Between the Sections of Healthcare Organizations

Nursing leadership competencies also entail good communication and a capacity to create interprofessional relationships. There has been a shift in the health care system where employees from different disciplines work in teams to offer care to their patients. This requires the nurse leaders to act as managers of communication between clinical and administrative staff and interdisciplinary teams. In the same year, it was argued that since well-knit teams are associated with enhancing patient satisfaction and organizational culture, nurse leaders who build strong teams are likely to promote better outcomes.

Development of Leadership Competencies in Nursing

Of most importance is the leadership competencies that have to be developed in the nursing profession if these two clinical and administrative roles are to be integrated well. Some characteristics include clinical competence, good communication, strategic planning, management, and financial skills. In their review of the literature, Gopee and Galloway (2017) emphasize the need for leadership development for qualified nurses or promotion to administration. Leadership programs focusing on clinical and management skills can help nurse leaders navigate the complexities of their dual responsibilities. Furthermore, mentoring and support from senior leaders can assist nurses in developing the skills needed to excel in both areas.

Methods

This paper adopts a qualitative, systematic review approach to systematically review the literature on nursing leadership and its function of linking clinical practice to bureaucratic leadership. PICOT criteria with Population: Patients, Intervention: Exercise, Comparator: Information, Outcome: Knowledge was used to search in PubMed, CINAHL, Google Scholar, and Scopus with the inclusion of articles between 2010 and 2023. The criteria for including studies were, firstly, the subject of the study investigating nurse leaders in the clinical and/or leadership roles; secondly, the effects of nurse leaders on patient outcomes; thirdly, the issue of role strain experienced by the nurse leaders due to their clinical and/or administrative responsibilities.

The information sources comprised original primary research and secondary research articles and reports, with emphasis on sections and sub-sections containing details on the following four major themes: clinical and administrative role integration, competencies of nursing leadership, and effects of nurse leadership on healthcare outcomes. These conclusions were then synthesized and grouped into several themes, with the subject analyzed holistically to present the study results. This situation shows that when an organizational change process is expected and planned, organizational members will develop a readiness set for the coming change and be able to perceive it easily whenever it happens.

Results and Findings

Nursing administrators or nurse leaders have a vital and dynamic responsibility over the quality of patient care and the development of processes for achieving that quality. Another important, not fairly researched, conclusion is that nursing leaders have the power to enhance healthcare quality. Table 1 summarizes several prior studies that aimed at quantifying the effectiveness of empowering only the nurse leaders as determinants of patient outcomes (Stanley & Stanley, 2019; Mohammad et al., 2023b; Al-Hawary et al., 2020; Al-Husban et al., 2023). The experience from the present study demonstrates that whenever nurse leaders have direct functional involvement in clinical decision-making and clinical management, there is a positive change in patients' care outcomes.

Table 1. Impact of Nurse Leadership on Patient Outcomes

Study	Leadership Impact on Patient Outcomes	Key Findings
Aiken et al. (2011)	Lower mortality rates and fewer adverse events	Hospitals with nurse leaders show improved clinical outcomes
Ulrich et al. (2019)	Enhanced staff satisfaction and reduced turnover	Nurse leaders contribute to higher nurse retention rates
Kramer et al. (2013)	Improved patient satisfaction and reduced prehospitalization	Active nurse leadership leads to more patient-centered care

Barriers to Effective Integration of Clinical and Administrative Roles

In evaluating the barriers to adopting self-scheduling from the literature, one was found to be role conflict, where the nurses' clinical work conflicted with their administrative duties. Several novice nurse leaders describe difficulty moving from direct patient care to manager positions. These factors include workload management, administrative hierarchy, and Osmond's perception by other healthcare professionals that nursing work only entails clinical work.

Figure 1. Nurse Leader Role Conflict
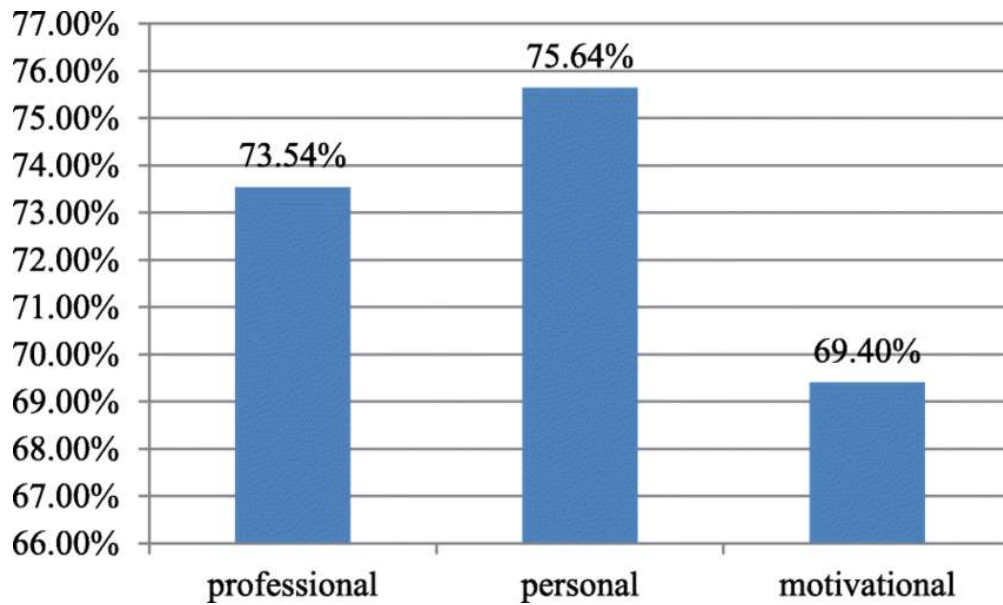
Bar chart illustrating the percentage of nurse leaders reporting role conflict due to dual clinical and administrative responsibilities (Stanley & Stanley, 2019).

Competencies for Successful Nurse Leadership

Research highlights that successful nurse leaders must possess a wide range of competencies, including clinical expertise, communication skills, financial management knowledge, and strategic planning. **Table 2** outlines the key competencies identified in the literature.

Table 2. Key Competencies for Nurse Leaders

| Competency	Description	Importance
Clinical Expertise	In-depth knowledge of clinical care and patient management	Ensures high-quality patient care
Communication Skills	Ability to facilitate communication among staff and stakeholders	Enhances teamwork and collaboration
Financial Management	Understanding of budgeting, resource allocation, and cost-effective care	Ensures sustainability and resource optimization
Strategic Thinking	Ability to make long-term decisions based on evidence and organizational goals	Drives organizational change and improvement

Discussion

The analysis of the literature sources shows the great significance of nursing leadership in closing the gap between clinical practice and management in healthcare organizations. This deviation is due to the evolving nature of healthcare, where more patients' autonomist roles have made nurse leaders not only basic caregivers but also directors, managers, and policymakers. Because nurse leaders are in a strategic position

to oversee the operations of the health care organizations, they must ensure that the system is well-designed to offer optimum quality and efficient services to a patient(Sullivan, 2018; Al-Nawafah et al., 2022; Alolayyan et al., 2018). Nurse leaders bring clinical experience into the administration to influence patients' outcomes, staff satisfaction and interprofessional relationships. Nevertheless, there are mix-ups of clinical care to administrative leadership, and for these reasons, various factors must be considered to develop healthcare organizations for sustainability.

Nurse Leaders' Participation in Clinical-Administrative Interface

Nurse leaders occupy a strategic position to act as a link between the clinical and the managerial levels in organizations that deliver health care services. Nurse leaders give direction on executing patient care but also participate in decision-making in the organization, resource management, and legal adherence. This duality is the essence of successful functioning in the healthcare field, where the organization of the process is directly associated with the leadership of nurses who help to ensure that the clinical and managerial view of the healthcare institution is best aligned with the attempt to improve the quality of healthcare delivery.
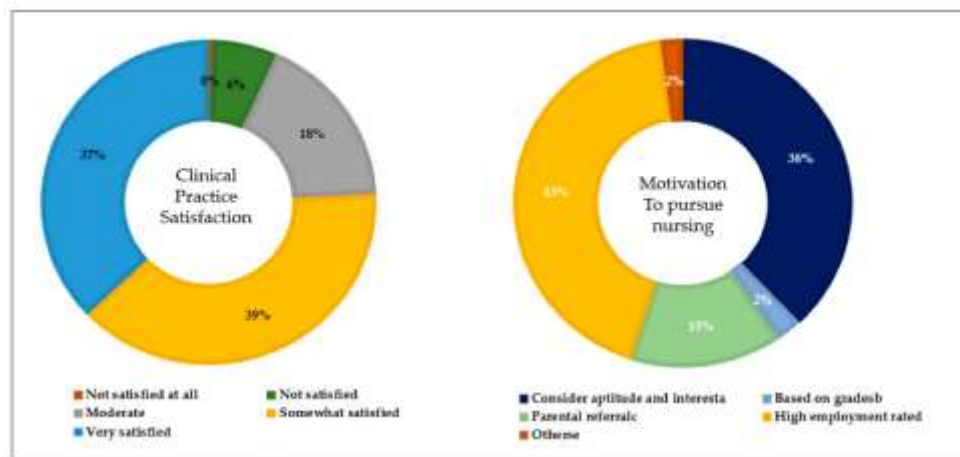

(Stanley, 2016)

At the clinical level, nurse leaders are accountable for promoting compliance with evidence-based practice among nursing personnel who determine the quality of services to be rendered to patients. These include decision-making processes regarding patient safety, care delivery, and therapeutic results. Nurse leaders are also expected to conduct and oversee orientation and staff development for the nursing personnel through training, which significantly influences care delivery and attrition of the workforce. Strengthening nursing leadership is another common research evidence showing that hospitals/healthcare organizations with strong nursing leadership experience better outcomes, including lower mortality rates and fewer adverse events among patient populations. Executive nursing leaders who practice at the bedside, participate in the care of patients, influence care decisions, and promote and advocate for nursing on patient and system care matters.

From the management side, nurse leaders have responsibilities of coordinating skills, resource management bud, getting skills and policymaking to contribute to the organizational functioning of health systems. They are also held accountable for managing staff or workforce, which entails talking or predicting demand for the healthcare workforce and ensuring that staffing is adequate to meet patient needs. Nurse leaders may be messengers of the front-line nurses, communicating their concerns to the top management. Such leadership in these areas contributes to providing efficient healthcare organizations and satisfying patients and employees.

The Case of Managing the Interface between Clinical Practice and Administration

Admittedly, separating clinical and administrative roles within professional nursing leadership is beneficial, but integrating such roles comes with the following important challenges. A key issue is whether nurses themselves experience role conflict when performing clinical and administrative work. The main problem concerning nurse leaders is how to be more efficient and provide enough time for patient care and organizational responsibilities. As with any organizational management responsibilities, managing budgets, human resources, and compliance with the law may cause workplace apathy or burnout.
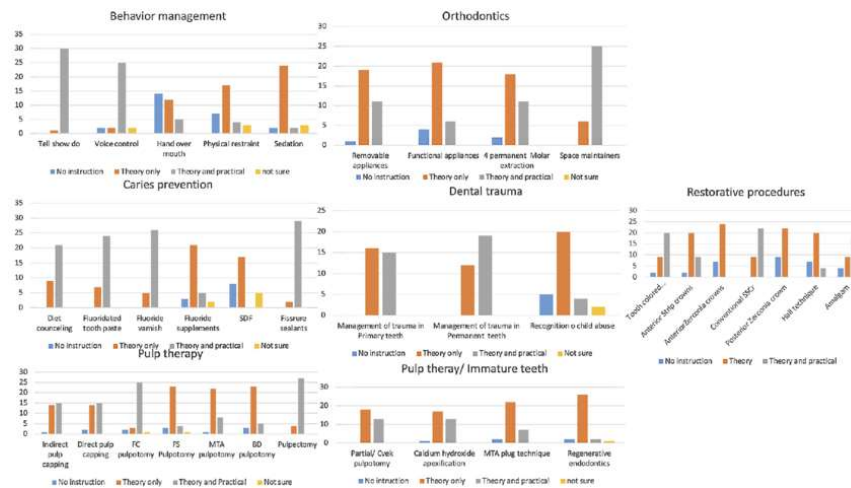
(McKeown et al., 2020)

The new recognition of the health facility needs, the growing call for health services, and shortages in staffing have intensified the role conflict experienced by the nurse leaders. As health organizations continue to develop the welfare of patients, subordination of the staff and the complicated organizational workings vital for the provision of health care also grow to be demanding challenges for the nurse leaders. This can lead to a situation in which the nurse leaders are overwhelmed and cannot effectively spearhead activities such as nursing and management(McKeown et al., 2020; Alzyoud et al., 2024; Mohammad et al., 2022; Rahamneh et al., 2023). Therefore, this role conflict might harm the nurse leaders' job satisfaction, stress levels, and well-being, affecting patient care and organizational performance.

There is also tension from other healthcare practitioners regarding the growing administrative responsibility of head nurses. Although nursing leadership in decision-making and policymaking benefits patients, some healthcare practitioners may consider such change a threat to vertical structures or delegation of roles. For instance, physicians could refuse to allow shifts in decision-making responsibilities to the nursing leaders. It may be incomprehensible that the nursing leaders lack adequate administrative knowledge to make strategic decisions. Getting around such barriers entails developing a good relationship between the two parties that comprises respect and trust and ensuring that leaders trained as nurses possess all the competencies required in administration.

Clients require professional development to achieve their professional goals in clinical and managerial roles. With the ever-changing healthcare landscape, nurse leaders must Possess and develop adequate knowledge to support the changing systems. It is, however, impossible to highlight one's clinical prowess when clinical understanding is the central point of leadership yet remains insufficient on its own. Admin and/or managerial competencies required of the post holder: Financial management, strategic planning, human resource management and policy development. Suppose there are no sharp succession planning and recurrent leadership training programs. In that case, nurse leaders may lack the adequate capacity to manage the strategic challenges of healthcare management organizations(Murphy & Curtis, 2016; Al-Azzam et al., 2023; Al-Shormana et al., 2022; Al-E'wesat et al., 2024). They may be ill-prepared for each of the two roles' multifaceted demands.

The Role of Leader in Overcoming These Challenges Among Nurses

Therefore, there is a need for effective nurse leadership to overcome these challenges. Nurse leaders must possess a full range of competencies that will enable them to function effectively in both clinical and management aspects. Patient leaders need leadership skills to work with diverse male staff, gain trust with other staff in healthcare facilities and other healthcare workers, and be able to change others' minds in a healthcare facility. Power conflicts and lack of support from other employees create role conflicts; thus, nurse leaders should acquire interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, and negotiation competencies. Addressing externality, the current paper is on how nurse leaders can develop positive working relationships with physicians, administrators, and other members of the healthcare system to reduce hurdles to interdisciplinary interaction and guarantee that clinical and administrative systems work in harmony.

Integrating with other fields is among the most useful approaches to closing the divide between patient treatments and organizational management. Nurse leaders should ensure that everyone in the healthcare facility is on the same team and striving to achieve the same goal. Nurse leaders can contribute when they take an active part within interdisciplinary teams, thus being able to offer a perspective that could include the patient, staff and organizational issues encountered. Likewise, by engaging the nursing staff in the decision-making process, there is a way that the nurse leaders can present the issues facing the frontline nurses to upper management and, therefore, guarantee that organizational strategies respond accordingly to the frontline realities of work(Knight & Cross, 2019). It has been found that patients treated in organizations where interdisciplinary cooperation is valued have improved results, and the staff members are happier.
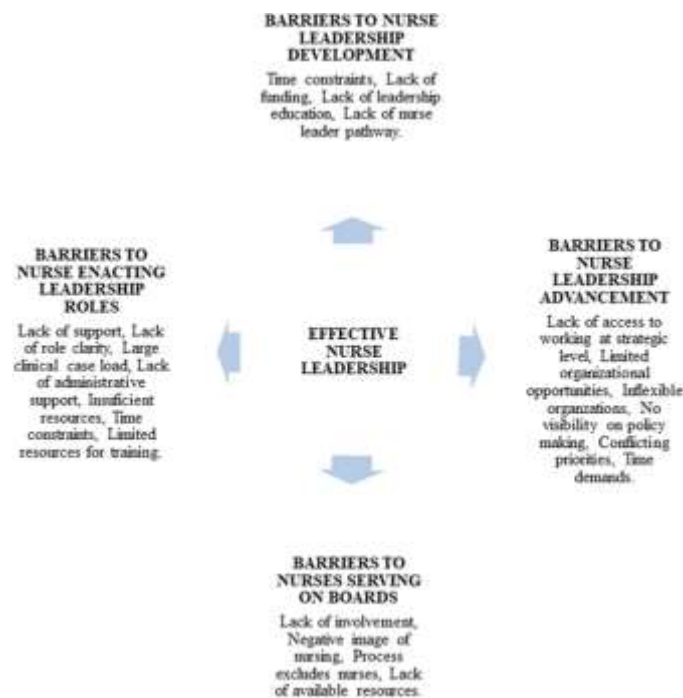
(Hodges & Lingard, 2017)

Recommendations for Building Nurse Leadership

Invest in Leadership Development Programs

The Rationale for Leadership Development for Nurses Leadership development should be offered in healthcare organizations, which involves offering comprehensive training for nurses. Besides clinical training, leadership and financial and strategic management skills should also be included. This means that such academics should prepare these nurse leaders in ways that enable them to handle clinical and

administrative concerns competently. Nurse leaders must be provided with learning activities that update their knowledge about leadership and management practices in healthcare settings during service periods.

Encourage Interdisciplinary Collaboration

The supervisor of nurses should foster good working relationships with physicians, administrators, and other healthcare workers. This can be done by forming multidisciplinary teams that aim to improve patients' clinical outcomes while enhancing Clinic productivity. With coordination, the nurse leaders can guarantee that clinical and administrative activities are strategic to achieving the organization's objectives.

Provide Support for Role Conflict Management

In responding to the problems of role conflict, health systems should implement systems to assist nurse leaders. This could include clerical support for dealing with tasks that can be too time-consuming and cumbersome in terms of allocation of resources and formulation of policies. Further, it is important that adequate time squarely rests on nurses who coordinate and oversee the units or departments within the organization, time sufficient for them to not only deliver direct patient care but also effectively manage the organization's administrative responsibilities.

Promote a Positive Work Environment

To improve the existing work scenario, nurse leaders must develop a healthy work climate that enhances staff satisfaction and retention. These issues relate to staff development, working conditions, workload, and burnout(Chiu & Adair, 2016). A healthy work environment will pay off by enhancing the satisfaction level of nurses and simultaneously improving the lot of the patients.

Foster Strong Communication Channels

Apart from clinical care, proper communication is central to possible solutions to the leadership challenge. Nurse leaders should provide methods for freely discussing issues, ideas, and feedback within staff and management. Time for meetings, coaching in individual and group settings, and company team-building sessions will enhance confidence in sharing data.

Conclusion

The roles of a clinical nurse advocate prescriber are shown to involve close interaction between the clinical and administrative aspects of medical practice, which adds to the difficulty of the nurse leader's work. In the ever-transforming and advancing healthcare facilities, the demand for individuals who are competent in both clinical practice and administration is similarly likely to rise to higher levels. Ideal leadership is essential in male reporting of challenges concerning role conflict, other health care professionals' resistance, and CPCD. Promoting leadership development, encouraging collaboration between different fields, and continuous support of the nurse leaders are the key features that allow the development of a favorable environment to contribute to the necessary increase in quality and outcomes of healthcare services with satisfactory staff enervation. The study identifies that modern nurse leaders can combine clinical experience in a practice area with management and governance roles and are best placed to effect change in future healthcare systems.

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