Younger Workers, Older Leaders: A Qualitative Study Exploring Generational Perceptions of Leadership
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**Problem:** One estimate is that within the next twenty years there will be a deficit of over one million Registered Nurses in the United States, which will represent a 20% vacancy rate in the acute care setting. Currently 59.1% of all nurses work in the acute care setting.

With the anticipated shortage this will create a dire situation for the sickest and most vulnerable population.

**Evidence:** It is projected that the number of new nursing graduates will not keep pace with the demand. The primary reasons nurses leave the acute care setting are due to either retirement or “conflict in the workplace,” which is described as dissatisfaction with workflow, mentoring, career development and leadership.” The results of the most recent national Health Resources and Administration survey of Registered Nurses, which was conducted in 2008, demonstrated that 27.8% of Registered Nurses who left their current employer did so due to “lack of good management/leadership”

**Strategy/Practice Change:** The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the views of nursing leadership as perceived through the eyes of the four generations in the nursing workforce.

**Evaluation:** Using a case study design, data was obtained through observations and focus groups. Findings demonstrated similarities and differences between the views of each generation toward nursing leadership which will foster Leaderships’ understanding of generational diversity within the workforce.

**Results:** Results demonstrated that perceived leadership style, the nurses’ sense of autonomy and empowerment, awareness of being respected, and feeling supported by leadership varied between the generations. The value code that “linked” each concept was the importance of trust.

**Lessons Learned/Recommendations:** Educational sessions will be provided to leadership giving them the skills to address the needs of a multigenerational workforce. Focus groups will continue with the nursing staff to determine the effectiveness of the education.

**Bibliography:**


