

## Nurse-Related Clinical Non-Licensed Personnel in U.S. Hospitals and their Relationship with Nurse Staffing Levels

Suhui Li, Patricia Pittman, Xinxin Han, Timothy Lowe

### OBJECTIVE

This study examines the nurse-related clinical non-licensed personnel (CNLP) staffing in U.S. hospitals between 2010 and 2014, in terms of their job categories, staffing trends, and relationship with hospital registered nurse (RN) and licensed practical nurse (LPN) staffing.

### DATA/SETTING

We used five years of data (2010-2014) from an operational database maintained by Premier, Inc. that tracks labor hours, hospital units, and facility characteristics.

### DESIGN/METHODS

We assessed the changes over time in the number of total hours worked by RN, LPN, and CNLP, adjusted by total patient days. We then conducted linear regressions to estimate the relationships between nurse and CNLP staffing, controlling for patient acuity and hospital fixed effects.

### RESULTS

The overall use of all three types of staff hours per patient day declined from 2010 to 2014. We found no evidence of substitution occurring between CNLP and nurses during the study period, as nurse-related CNLP hours were positively associated with RN hours, and to a lesser degree with LPN hours.

### CONCLUSIONS

Findings point to the importance of understanding where and why nurse and CNLP hours per patient day have declined, and to the importance of examining the effect of these changes on outcomes.

**Key Words:** Healthcare Workforce, Unlicensed Assistive Personnel, Nurse Staffing, Clinical Non-Licensed Personnel, Substitution