

Job Satisfaction Analysis of Nurses, who Work in Neurology and Neurosurgery Units

Analiza satysfakcji z wykonywanej pracy pielęgniarek pracujących w oddziałach neurologii i neurochirurgii

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Abstract

Introduction. Satisfaction, facing problems and motivation are currently strategic points to be analysed in terms of nurses' work. All positive or negative perceptions and attitudes towards work translate into commitment, identity creation, turnover and also status. The fit between the individual and the organisation draws attention. Both the complementary and supplementary dimensions show to what extent the employee's needs are met and whether the recognised values of the two groups are the same. For the employee, this translates into identification with the workplace. A high degree of fit influences the status of the workplace, the involvement of employees in the tasks at hand increasing their quality. On the other hand, the existence of mismatches generates bad interpersonal relations, inappropriate division of responsibilities, loss of trust, and leads to conflicts.

Aim. Comparative analysis of changes in the context of sense of job satisfaction of nurses working in neurological and neurosurgical wards in the Silesian province over the last decade.

Material and Methods. The study was conducted in 2012 and 2022 among nurses working in neurological and neurosurgical wards of the N.M.P. Regional Specialist Hospital in Częstochowa and the Prof. K. Gibiński University Medical Centre in Katowice. The study used an original questionnaire containing 61 questions on various aspects of the work performed.

Results. Among the respondents, the predominant age group is over 51 years old with a master's degree, whereas in the earlier survey it was 31–40 years old with a secondary vocational education. The survey showed that 33% more respondents felt that their job involved a lot of physical exertion. The percentage of those able to cope with complex mental tasks has decreased significantly, the percentage of nurses who are overburdened with too many tasks has increased, 75% of them notice the impact of work on family life. Professional qualifications are being improved by 40% more of those surveyed than ten years ago, but 29% are attending fewer conferences and training courses, and 24% are introducing innovations into their workplace less than in 2012. A sense of meaningfulness and usefulness of the tasks performed at work is shared by 66% of respondents, previously 91% in 2012. The impact of the ward's equipment on the work performed is now noted by 70% more nurses, and is considered by 66% of respondents as a factor giving greater job satisfaction, a decade ago it was 86% of respondents. Nursing staffing is considered sufficient by 34% more respondents than the previous survey showed. Far fewer respondents now perceive the impact of aggressive patient behaviour on their work. The percentage of respondents noticing conflicts with doctors increased by 72%. 77% more respondents feel they are treated fairly by their superiors than a decade ago. Low social prestige of the profession is noticed by only 6% of nurses.

Conclusions. Nurses do not feel satisfaction with their work, even though they see a sense of purpose in the activities they undertake. This means that their need for development has been disrupted by low motivation both socially and economically, a sense of being undervalued and insufficient identification with the workplace. Most of the same people took part in the current survey as ten years ago, their attitude to their work has changed dramatically. Nurses are coping less well with their tasks. The work is associated with too much physical and mental strain. Relationships between nurses and patients and between nurses and other team members have changed. Nursing staffing in neurological and neurosurgical wards, where patients with severe conditions are often hospitalised, is insufficient. (JNNN 2022;11(3):114–123)

Key Words: job, motivation, nurse, professional identity, satisfaction

Streszczenie

Wstęp. Satysfakcja, mierzenie się z problemami oraz motywacja są obecnie strategicznymi punktami jakie należy przeanalizować w aspekcie pracy pielęgniarek. Wszystkie pozytywne lub negatywne odczucia i postawy wobec pracy przekładają się na zaangażowanie, kreowanie tożsamości, fluktuację, a także jej status. Zwraca uwagę dopasowanie pomiędzy jednostką, a organizacją. Zarówno wymiar komplementarny jak i suplementarny pokazuje na ile potrzeby pracownika są zaspokajane oraz czy uznawane wartości obu grup są tożsame. W przypadku pracownika przekłada się to na identyfikowanie się z miejscem pracy. Wysoki stopień dopasowania wpływa na status zakładu pracy, zaangażowanie pracowników w wykonywane zadania podnosząc ich jakość. Natomiast istnienie rozbieżności generuje złe relacje interpersonalne, niewłaściwy podział obowiązków, utratę zaufania, prowadzi do konfliktów.

Cel. Analiza porównawcza zmian w kontekście poczucia satysfakcji z wykonywanej pracy pielęgniarek pracujących w oddziałach neurologicznych i neurochirurgicznych województwa śląskiego na przestrzeni ostatniej dekady.

Materiał i metody. Badanie zostało przeprowadzone w latach 2012 i w 2022 wśród pielęgniarek pracujących w oddziałach neurologicznych i neurochirurgicznych Wojewódzkiego Szpitala Specjalistycznego im. N.M.P w Częstochowie oraz Uniwersyteckiego Centrum Medycznego im. Prof. K. Gibińskiego w Katowicach. W badaniu posłużono się autorską ankietą zawierającą 61 pytań dotyczących różnych aspektów wykonywanej pracy.

Wyniki. Wśród badanych dominuje grupa wiekowa powyżej 51 r.ż. z ukończonymi studiami magisterskimi, natomiast we wcześniejszym badaniu była to grupa 31–40 lat z wykształceniem średnim zawodowym. Badanie pokazało, że 33% więcej respondentów uważa, że ich praca związana jest z dużym wysiłkiem fizycznym. Zdecydowanie zmniejszył się odsetek osób będących w stanie sprostać złożonym zadaniom umysłowym, zwiększył procent pielęgniarek obciążonych zbyt dużą ilością zadań, 75% z nich zauważa wpływ pracy na życie rodzinne. Kwalifikacje zawodowe podnosi 40% więcej badanych niż dziesięć lat temu, ale 29% mniej uczestniczy w konferencjach i szkoleniach, a 24% mniej wprowadza nowości do swojego miejsca pracy niż w 2012 roku. Poczucie sensu i użyteczności wykonywanych w pracy zadań ma 66% respondentów, wcześniej w 2012 roku była to grupa 91%. Wpływ wyposażenia oddziału na wykonywaną pracę obecnie zauważa 70% więcej pielęgniarek, a jako czynnik dający większą satysfakcję z wykonywanej pracy uznaje 66% badanych, dekadę temu było to 86% ankietowanych. Obsadę pielęgniarską za wystarczającą uważa 34% więcej respondentów, niż pokazywało wcześniejsze badanie. Zdecydowanie mniej osób zauważa obecnie wpływ agresywnych zachowań pacjentów na wykonywaną pracę. O 72% wzrósł odsetek respondentów zauważających konflikty z lekarzami. Za sprawiedliwie traktowanych przez przełożonych czuje się 77% więcej badanych, niż dekadę temu. Niski prestiż społeczny zawodu zauważa tylko 6% pielęgniarek.

Wnioski. Pielęgniarki nie odczuwają satysfakcji z wykonywanej pracy, mimo że widzą sens podejmowanych przez siebie działań. Oznacza to, że ich potrzebę rozwoju zaburzyła niska motywacja zarówno społeczna jak i ekonomiczna, poczucie niedoceniań oraz niewystarczająca identyfikacja z miejscem pracy. W obecnym badaniu brały w większości udział te same osoby co dziesięć lat temu, diametralnie zmienił się ich stosunek do wykonywanej pracy. Pielęgniarki gorzej radzą sobie z zadaniami. Praca związana jest ze zbyt dużym obciążeniem fizycznym i psychicznym. Zmieniły się relacje między pielęgniarkami, a pacjentami oraz między pielęgniarkami, a innymi członkami zespołu. Obsada pielęgniarska w oddziałach neurologicznych i neurochirurgicznych w których często hospitalizowani są pacjenci w ciężkim stanie jest niewystarczająca. (PNN 2022;11(3):114–123)

Słowa kluczowe: praca, motywacja, pielęgniarka, tożsamość zawodowa, satysfakcja

Introduction

When analysing the areas related to the work a person does, it is not so much the definition of work itself that needs to be considered as its meaning for the individual. To what extent does it provide a sense of identity, allows for the acquisition of new skills and challenges, or the satisfaction of material needs, as well as respect and acceptance in a social group. Adequate management of one's professional identity translates into success or failure in correlation with job satisfaction. Finding values that are a common ground and shared by employees will increase motivation, differences and conflicts that have a destructive effect on the organisation [1–8].

Satisfaction, facing problems and motivation are currently strategic points to be analysed in terms of nurses' work. All positive or negative feelings and attitudes towards the job translate into commitment, identity

creation, turnover and also status. The fit between the individual and the organisation draws attention. Both the complementary and supplementary dimensions show to what extent the employee's needs are met and whether the recognised values of the two groups are the same. For the employee, this translates into identification with the workplace. A high degree of fit influences the status of the workplace, the involvement of employees in the tasks at hand increasing their quality. On the other hand, the existence of mismatches generates poor interpersonal relations, inappropriate division of responsibilities, loss of trust, and leads to conflicts [1,3,5,9–13].

The dynamics of the changes taking place in the working environment of nurses, the numerous artefacts have an impact on personal and professional life. It is therefore advisable to consider the problem not only in the context of the relationship between the employee, other members of the team or the mission of the

organisation, but in the context of the specificity of the profession itself [4,14–17]. The interactions taking place create psychosocial risk factors influencing the perception and thus the level of satisfaction. These are linked to leadership style, group coherence, freedom to make decisions, shift work, rest. Individual perceptions of the work environment are of similar importance, including the negative affect associated with focusing on the negative aspects alone. Time pressure, role conflict, decision-making authority and discretionary skills significantly affect the work performed. The key role of psychosocial and organisational factors, employer support influence better job performance, higher quality of care. Having skilled staff, job satisfaction generates benefits for the employer, nurses and patients alike. Particular attention should be paid to providing tools and technology and creating opportunities for competence growth for nurses who want to develop their own skills [1,3,18–24].

The aim of this study was to analyse comparative changes in the sense of job satisfaction of nurses working in neurological and neurosurgical wards in the Silesian Province over the last decade. To examine the determinant factor of satisfaction in terms of the changes taking place.

Material and Methods

The study was based on two sources: a satisfaction analysis done in 2012 and an analysis done in 2022. In both cases, the research group consisted of neurosurgical and neurological nurses of the NMP Regional Specialist Hospital in Częstochowa and the Prof. K. Gibiński University Medical Centre in Katowice. The research tool was an original survey questionnaire. Permission to conduct the survey was obtained from the Directors, as well as the Managers and Nurses coordinating the work of individual wards. The respondents were informed about the anonymity of the survey and the voluntariness of their participation. In the analysis of satisfaction with the profession, the following were taken into account: relations with the patient, relations with the supervisor, relations with team members, qualifications, remuneration, ward equipment and attitude to work. Differences over the last decade were selected for the final analysis.

A total of 53 nurses voluntarily and anonymously completed the questionnaire (39 nurses from neurological wards and 14 from neurosurgical wards). The largest group (38%) was in the age range 51+. The least numerous (4%) were those in the 18–25 age range. The majority of respondents were women (99%). Married people made up 66% of the respondents, with 4% living with a partner or separated. The largest group (38%) had a master’s degree. The fewest people (28%) had a

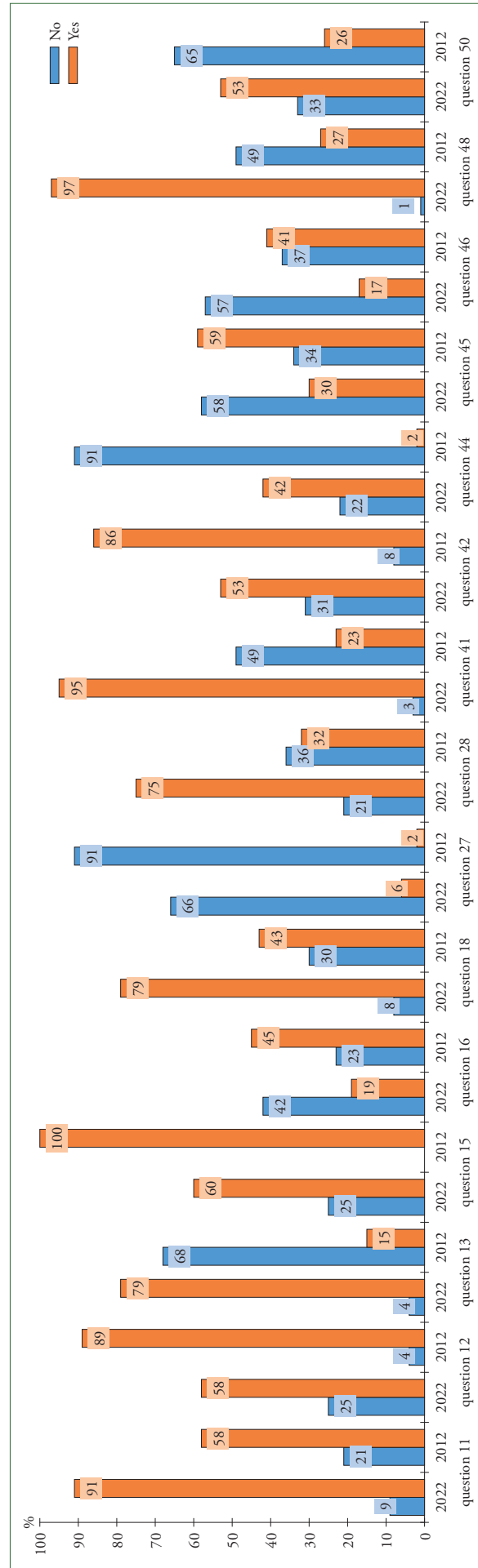


Figure 1. The most important differences

secondary vocational education. Eighty-seven per cent worked in a two-shift system and 13% of respondents worked in a single-shift system. In 2012, 86 nurses completed the survey (37 nurses from neurological wards and 49 from neurosurgical wards). Compared to the 2012 survey, the first significant difference is the age of the respondents, at that time the largest group (48%) was between 31 and 40 years of age, and the smallest group (6%) was between 26 and 30 years of age. The second difference is the education they have. At that time, the largest group (55%) had a secondary vocational education and the smallest group (2%) had a university degree (Figure 1).

Results

Category: Work

In 2012, 33% fewer respondents than in 2022 (91%) felt that their job required a lot of lifting and carrying. In contrast, 31% more respondents in 2012 than today rated their ability to cope with the demands of their job in terms of physical exertion positively. In contrast, 64% fewer respondents than in 2022 (79%) considered the work to be hard for them. A decade ago, 100% of those surveyed felt that they were able to cope with complex mental tasks, although 45% of them found such tasks difficult, now the figure is 60%, with 19% saying such tasks were too difficult for them. This year's survey showed that 79% of nurses are burdened by too many responsibilities and tasks, according to the group surveyed ten years ago, 43%, 36% less. A decade ago, 21% of those surveyed felt that they had to be constantly ready to respond quickly to incidents; now 55%, or 34% more, feel this way. The existence of a correlation between occupational hazards and their impact on the job in 2012 was recognised by 94% of those surveyed, and in 2022 by only 15% (Figure 2).

The current survey showed that 66% of respondents feel that the activities they undertake at work are meaningful and useful, in 2012 this was 91%. In contrast, 75% feel that work detracts from their family life, in 2012 this was 32% of respondents. In 2012, more people (85%) were thinking about work when they return home than in 2022 (38%). The proportion of nurses who feel undervalued at work has increased, a decade ago it was 13%, now it is 58% (Figure 3).

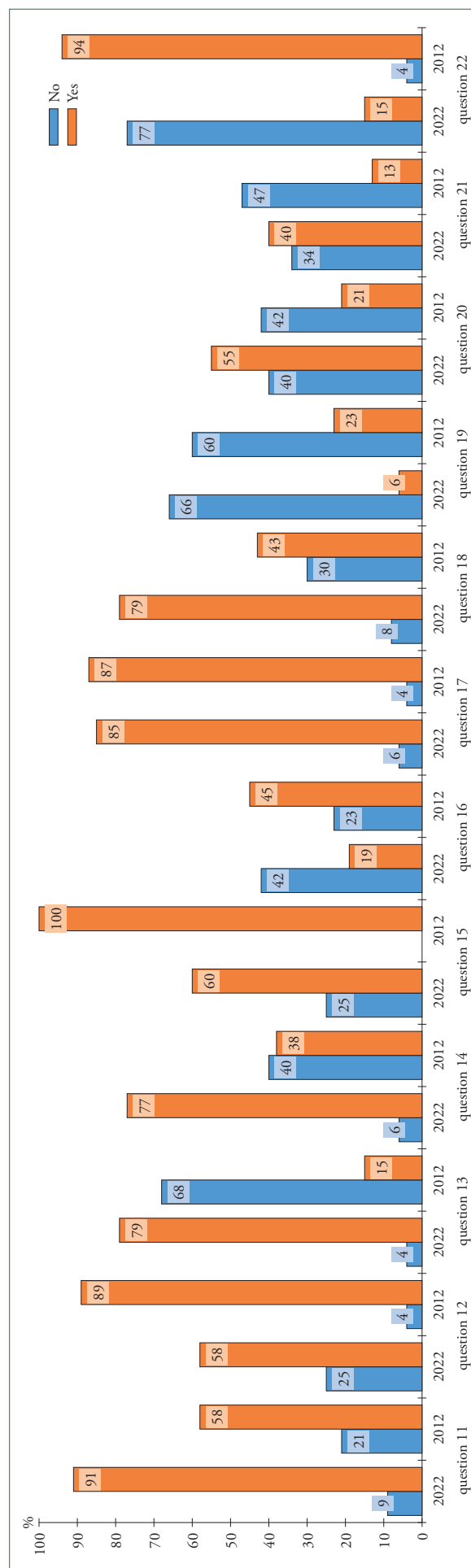


Figure 2. Category work

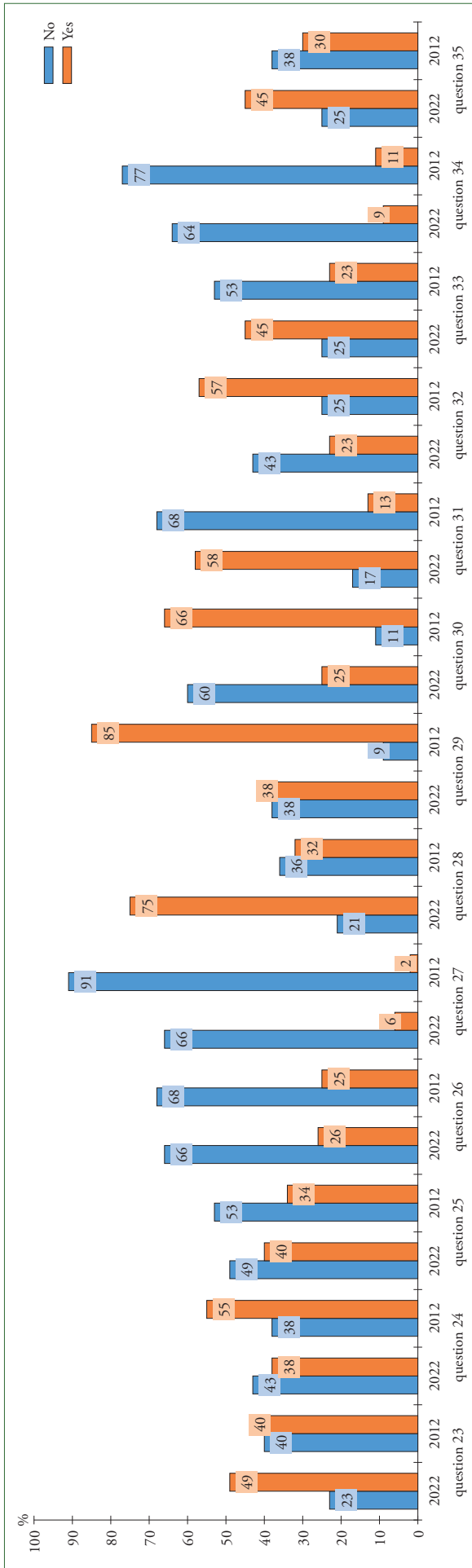


Figure 3. Category work question 23–35

Category: Patient

The impact of patients’ aggressive behaviour on the work performed was perceived by 94% of the respondents in 2012, while it is currently 17%. On the other hand, the impact of the severity of the patients’ condition on the quality of their work was considered by 70% of nurses in 2012, while it is now 45%. Ten years ago, 80% of the respondents believed that there were conflicts with patients in their work, in 2022 only 10% believe so. The survey showed that, according to 95%, there are irritations with doctors, in 2012 this was 23%. In a slightly lower percentage it is disputes with nursing staff in 2012 86%, in 2022 53% (Figure 4).

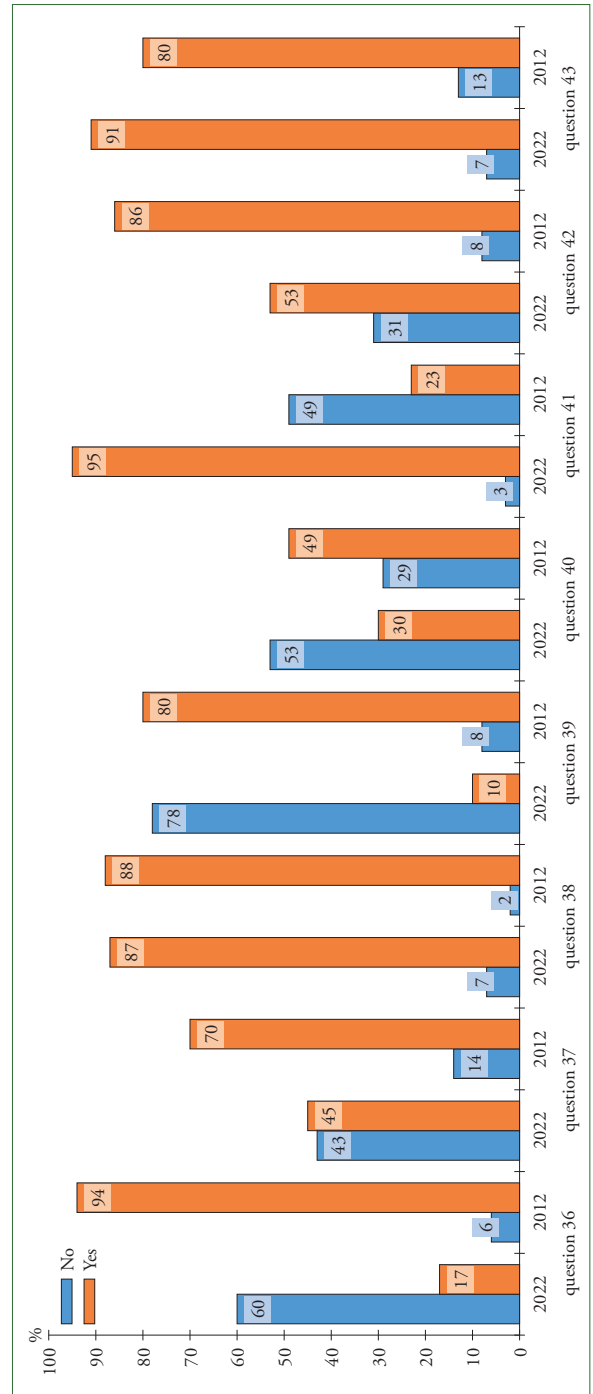


Figure 4. Category patient question 36–43

Category: Qualifications

Professional qualifications over the last two years in the 2012 survey were improved by 2% of respondents, in 2022 by 42%. However, 30% now attend training courses and conferences, where in 2012 it was 59%. Ten years ago, more respondents were innovating in their workplace, it was 41%, at the moment it is 17% (Figure 5).

Category: Equipment

In 2012, 27% recognised the impact of the ward’s equipment on their work, while in 2022, 97% of respondents already perceive such a correlation. A sense of satisfaction in this regard was felt by 26% in 2012 and 53% in 2022 (Figure 6).

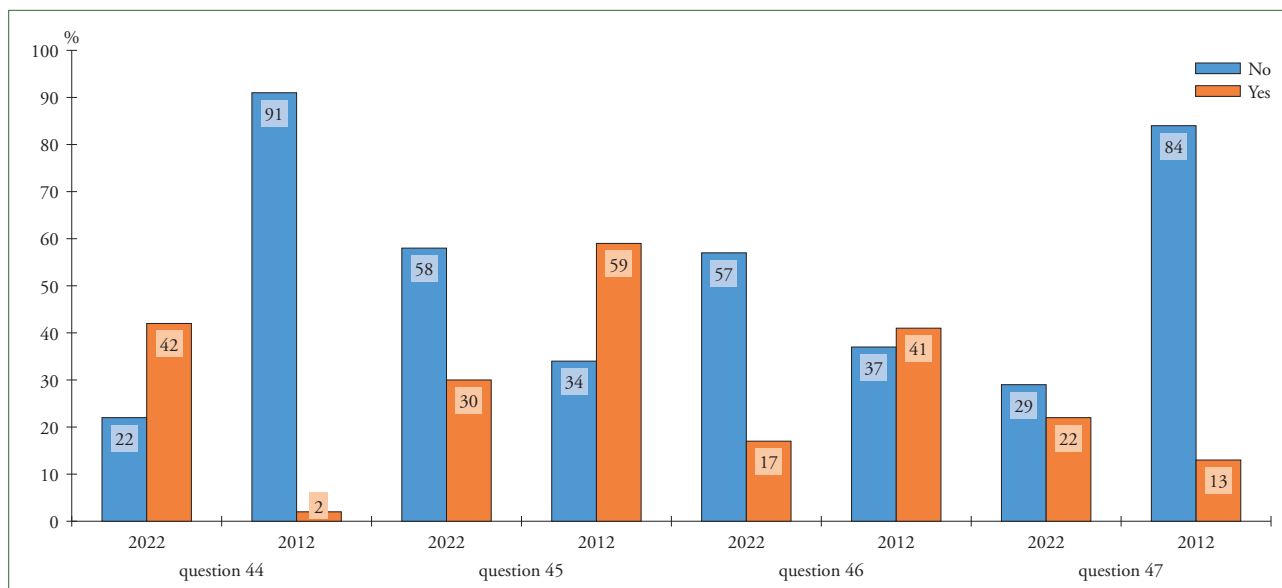


Figure 5. Category qualifications question 44–47

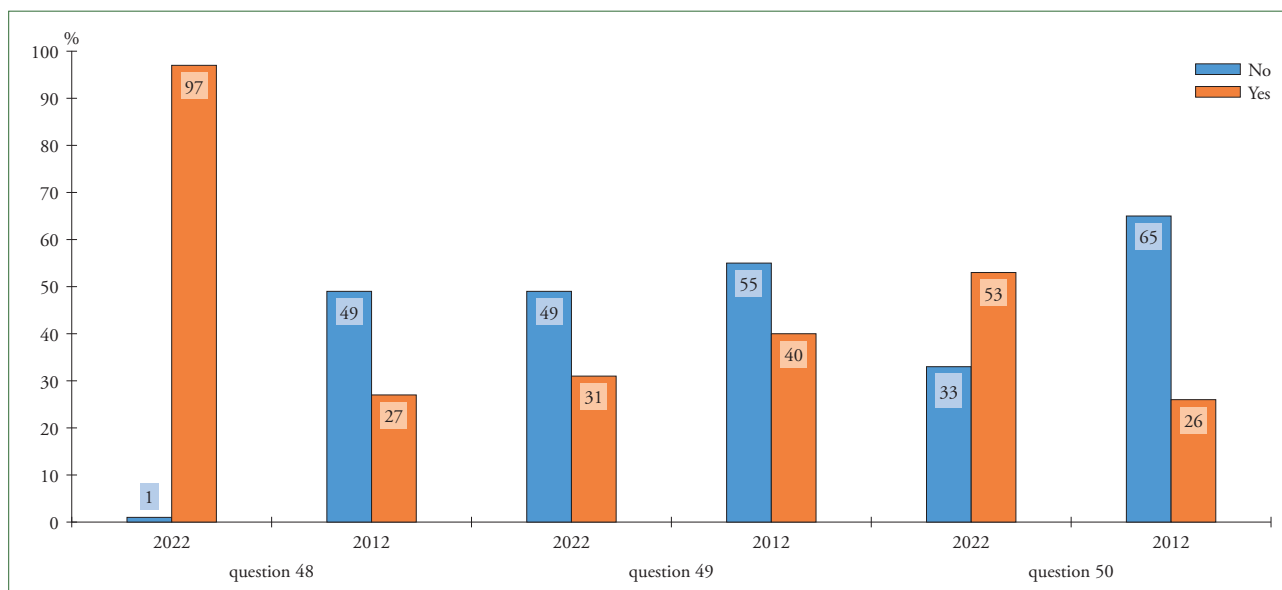


Figure 6. Category equipment question 48–50

Categories: Team and Supervision

Nursing staffing was considered sufficient by 1% of respondents in 2012, by 2022 it was 19% of respondents. They felt that they were treated fairly by their superiors ten years ago by 16% of respondents, and by 2022 by 93% (Figure 7).

Category: Remuneration

In 2012, 67% of people felt that the remuneration they receive is adequate for the activities they perform, in 2022 it was 86%. The proportion of people who believe that active workers are rewarded has increased, but this is still less than half of respondents. The

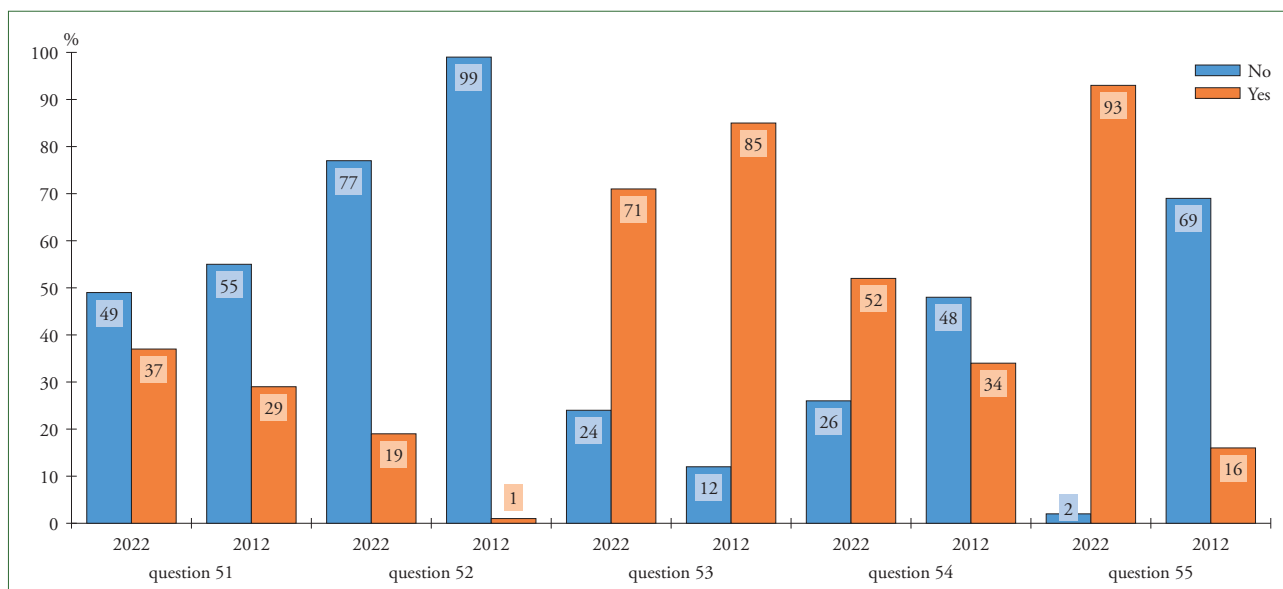


Figure 7. Categories team and supervision question 51–55

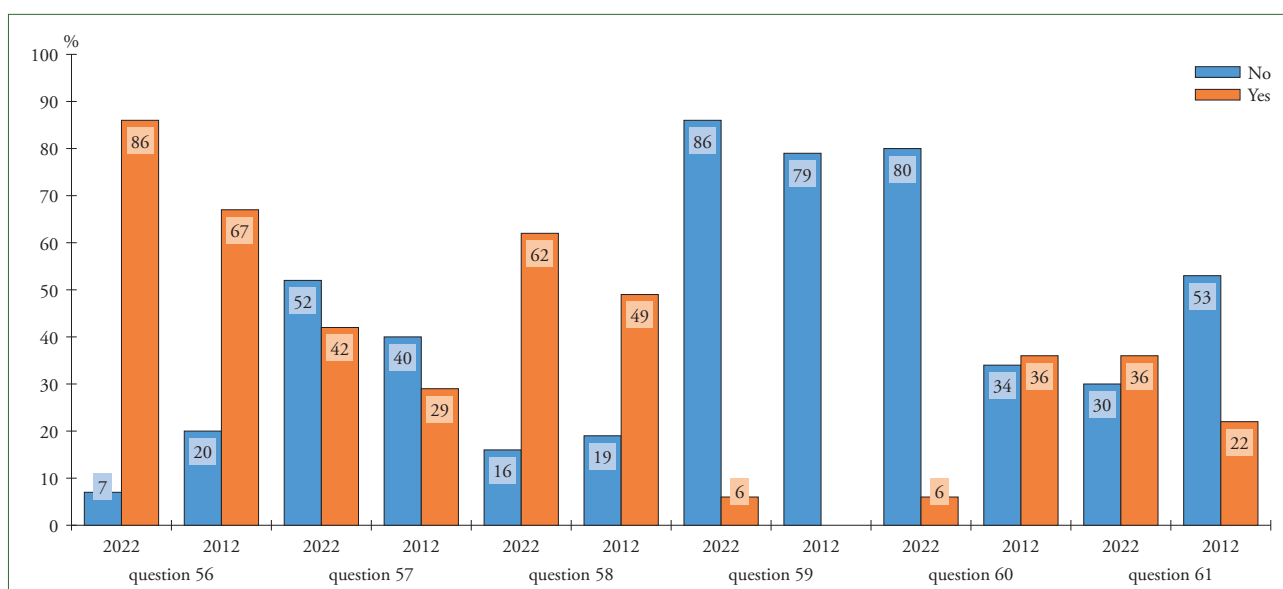


Figure 8. Category remuneration question 56–61

association of the work performed with low prestige and lack of social recognition was linked in 2012 by 36% now it is 6% of respondents (Figure 8).

Discussion

Work is an indispensable element in people's lives, triggering the emergence of lasting psycho-physical qualities, initiative, enriching life experiences, providing opportunities for development, as well as providing financial resources. It can be a source of satisfaction as well as dissatisfaction. The satisfaction survey is a tool to effectively identify dysfunctional areas and aspects of work that are best perceived [2,3,5,9].

In the current study, a comparative analysis of the changes that have taken place in the area of job satisfaction

among nurses over the last decade was made on the basis of a survey. The survey results showed a lack of job satisfaction among nurses. There has been a change in the dominant age group and education, where in the previous decade it was nurses aged 31–40 with secondary vocational education and now over 51 with a master's degree. The Central Statistical Office in 2021 reported an average age of nurses of 53.64 [25], which confirms the classification of the majority of nurses surveyed in the 50+ group. The creation of a professional identity is related to the specificity of nursing, the mission of the organisation and the perception of the actions of both the individual and the group. Dorota Milecka draws attention to the strengthening of personal competences which translates into feelings of job satisfaction [24]. Our own study showed a large decrease in nurses' sense of meaning and usefulness of the tasks performed at

work compared to a decade earlier. Danuta Kunecka demonstrates the validity of nurses' perceptions of the meaning of work through the level of satisfaction they feel [26]. Despite the increase in the percentage of people upgrading their qualifications, there remains the issue of attending training and conferences and introducing innovations in the workplace where there has also been a regression. The workplace is an area for professional development and a key element of this is a focus on innovation as highlighted by the European Lifelong Learning Strategy [27]. A study conducted in hospitals in Slovenia by Mateja'e Lorber showed low levels of staff engagement which is linked to the underutilisation of their potential and intellectual capital [28]. An important factor affecting the sense of satisfaction is the atmosphere in the workplace, the existence of conflicts between team members against social norms results in a decrease in the efficiency of the tasks performed and affects the atmosphere [26,29].

Differences can also be seen in the area concerning the equipment of the department with state-of-the-art equipment as a factor giving greater satisfaction. The material aspect of the working environment, i.e. equipment, is important in shaping satisfaction, as demonstrated in Agnieszka Springer's analysis, placing this factor on a par with the employee's development opportunities [30]. A similar relationship was described by Zielińska-Więczkowska and Buśka [31].

The low percentage of respondents indicating nursing staffing as sufficient, compared to the earlier analysis together with the dominant age group, confirms the existence of a generation gap, being a factor exacerbating dissatisfaction. This problem was observed by Anna Gawęda in her study, arguing that factors contributing to dissatisfaction include too few nurses in relation to the condition and number of patients [32]. Our own study also showed that active employees are still not rewarded. Available studies show that an important factor in the sense of job satisfaction is salary, both basic and additional gratification. A similar study was conducted in Ethiopia by Firew Ayalew [29] finding it to be an important motivator influencing satisfaction which is corroborated, among others, by the results of other studies available in the literature [13,24,26,30,33–35]. The current study indicates a lower percentage of respondents who would recommend their workplace to others.

A global look at the aspects analysed brings up one conclusion — that it is not possible to speak of a feeling of job satisfaction among nurses working in neurological and neurosurgical units. The passage of time and numerous artefacts gave a different result than in the study from the previous decade. Satisfaction evaluation should be carried out periodically and a high level of satisfaction should be in the interest of every employer.

Conclusions

1. Nurses do not feel job satisfaction because there is not an optimal fit between the individual and the organisation. All the common values that are supportive and shared by employees resulting in a greater increase in motivation were not found.
2. Nurses do not see the point of the activities they undertake which is related to an underestimation of their potential and experience, as well as a lack of gratification.
3. With a high degree of probability, it can be said that most of the same people took part in the current survey as ten years ago. The survey was conducted in the same hospital wards. What has changed diametrically is the attitude of the respondents to their work.
4. The work of nurses is associated with too much physical strain, which is influenced by the ageing of nurses and the specific nature of the wards.
5. Nursing staffing in neurological and neurosurgical wards, where patients with severe conditions are often hospitalised, is inadequate.
6. Nurses are coping less well with their tasks, as the strategy for completing them has deteriorated, which is associated with physical strain and an excess of responsibilities.

Implications for Nursing Practice

The level of job satisfaction is an exponent of an employee's involvement in decision-making processes, in line with the organisation's mission and purpose, while also influencing identification with the organisation. Performing cyclical analyses will make it possible to identify which factors have the greatest impact on the extent of satisfaction, and to learn from the actions taken. Utilising the experience and potential of the nurses, being open to innovation and engaging in collaborative dialogue will allow strategic points to be found to enhance the fit between the individual and the organisation. Human resource management, planning of activities, should take into account the specific and different characteristics of neurological and neurosurgical units. Paying attention to the quality and not just the sheer quantity of patients hospitalised, reviewing the duties that nurses have to perform should translate into the staffing of these units. Consideration of all these factors, in terms of building mutual and effective cooperation, will influence the feeling of job satisfaction.

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