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WORK ENVIRONMENT, CAREWORKER AND RESIDENT OUTCOMES IN SWISS NURSING HOMES – A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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A growing minority of the elderly people live in nursing homes. The quality and safety of residential care depends on organizational factors, such as the quality of nurses' work environment. The Swiss Nursing Homes Human Resources Project (SHURP) aims to gain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of key organizational factors and their relationships with careworker and resident outcomes in Swiss nursing homes. SHURP is a cross-sectional, multi-center study. The survey was conducted in a randomized sample of 163 Swiss nursing homes among careworkers of all educational levels from May 2012 to April 2013. The careworker questionnaire consisted of established scales (e.g. Practice Environment Scale – Nurse Work Index, Safety Attitudes Questionnaire), as well as investigator-developed items. Additional facility and unit data (e.g. staffing, grade-mix, turnover), and nursing home resident outcomes were collected with a questionnaire filled out by the nursing home directors.

Overall, the careworker survey response rate was 76% (n=5'984 careworkers). In the 163 nursing homes, the mean full-time equivalent was 49 careworkers per 100 beds. Turnover had a median of 9% and the median percentage of registered nurses in a unit care team was 30%. Only 63% of the registered nurses were trained in Switzerland, showing the heavy reliance of Swiss nursing homes on qualified personnel from other countries. In total, 94% of the careworkers considered the quality of care to be good (range between nursing homes: 57% to 100%) and 91% felt supported by their supervisors (range: 41% to 100%). They agreed less on the adequacy of the number of staff at hand to get the work done (61%). Many careworkers reported some health problems (e.g. 71% back pain, 48% sleeping problems). As for nursing home residents, 4.5% showed weight loss in the last 3 months, 5.1% had a urinary tract infection treated with antibiotics in the last 30 days, 3.2% had physical restraints and 1.7% had a pressure ulcer they acquired in the nursing home. The most prominent outcome was the use of bedrails among 18.5% of the nursing home residents, ranging from 0% to 62% between nursing homes. Overall, the nursing home resident outcomes measured showed a good quality of care, which is corroborated by the careworkers. Some problematic issues were staffing resources and dependence on qualified personnel from other countries, and relatively high health complaints of careworkers. Moreover, there was a high variability of quality between nursing homes. In the next phase of this study, we will analyze the associations between these key themes using multivariate and multilevel analyses.