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LETTER TO EDITORS

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GENERATION Y NURSE: WHAT DO I NEED IN THE WORKPLACE?

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Dear Madam,

Generation Y nurses, born after 1980, have been a major concern in nursing today. They are demanded to be a future leader because of an increasing number of Baby boomer nurses who begin to retire,¹ which lead to the lack of nursing leaders in the country. It is anticipated that by 2020, more than 50% of the nursing workforce will be fulfilled by Gen Y nurses.¹ However, the recruitment to replace the retiring nurse leaders is very challenging. Gen Y nurses are considered as the future of nursing leadership, but some questions are raised whether they will be interested and/or prepared to step into leadership roles.²

On the other hand, there also has been another challenge to keep this Gen Y nurses to stay longer in their nursing workplaces. Therefore, it is required to

identify exactly and precisely what will retain them in the profession in the long term, which is a big challenge for nurse leaders today.

Some literatures mentioned that, the Gen Y nurses need to be challenged; and certain needs must be first addressed at the start of employment, which consist of:

1) *Work Life balance*. Gen Y nurses will not view work as their "life," rather they will favor flexibility in the workplace. They are significantly less likely to be work-centric than previous generations.³ The Gen Y nurses are clear what they needed for their personal lives, and needed to be able to spend time with family and friends as well as taking time to relax.⁴ But, they do not wish to take work home with them nor wish to ruminate and worry about work when they were not at work. Thus, given the stressful job such as

nursing, the Gen Y nurses' views of being able to leave work as a mature and sensible approach to their work, as well as insight about the possible negative effects of the job.

2) *Flexible work schedules and shifts.* This is related to work life balance. Gen Y nurse wants to know the long-term schedule to plan activities, and wants some shift flexibility to be able to respond when something unexpected arises in personal life. These nurses would like to be able to adjust their schedules to their needs rather than organize their needs around their schedules

3) *Appropriate financial remuneration, opportunity for professional development, and recognition.* It is suggested that, Gen Y nurses seek *appropriate financial remuneration* along with opportunities for ongoing professional development and recognition to ensure career aspirations can be met. Recognition such as, "congratulating nurses, recognizing their know-how and skills, or offering pleasant work conditions are ways to show nurses that they do matter".⁵

4) *Technology-based working condition.* Gen Y nurses also seek a workplace that is *equivalent technologically* to their abilities. They want to be *able to communicate in the workplace using tools they are familiar with socially*, to support their role in health teams.⁵

5) *Friendly employer.* It is suggested that employers need to be *more employee friendly* if they hope to attract the Gen Y to their business – an initiative for health executives to consider.⁶

In summary, Gen Y nurses expect to be respected, valued, stimulated, included and supported in their workplace. They may not be loyal to their workplace if not adequately supported, inspired and encouraged. Gen Y nurses are loyal to their family and friends. They like to spend

more time with the people who are important to them, and enjoy a much-improved work/ life balance. The emphasis for Gen Y nurses is a better quality of life, or work life balance. Nursing managers in this regard need to focus on their needs, strengths and structure a workforce that will support them in their professional nursing role, particularly as the research indicates that they are likely to change professions more often than any other generations.

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This study is the original work of the corresponding author.

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