

# Nurses' recruitment and selection: Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia

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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to describe the current state of the recruitment and selection of nurses in Indonesia as a reflection on the pandemic. This article may be useful for evaluating the effectiveness of the human resource management system in Indonesia. However, nurses are heroes to be appreciated.

## Keywords

Nurses; recruitment; selection; COVID-19; pandemic

## Background

Almost all hospitals are overwhelmed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to a lack of human resources, every hospital was relentlessly recruiting nurses, including nurse volunteers, to help serve the increasing number of patients who were positive for COVID-19 coming to the hospital. It can be said that the need for nurses is enormous during a pandemic ([Aunguroch et al., 2022](#)).

It cannot be denied that nurses are the health workers who play an essential role in improving health status and are the backbone of service facilities because there are more of them than other health workers. Nurses have a role as

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### Article info

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caregivers, which is the primary role where nurses will be actively involved for 24 hours in providing nursing care to patients ([Gunawan, 2020](#)). In addition, nurses also act as educators in charge of providing health education to patients undergoing isolation, families, and the general public. During the pandemic, all nurses caring for COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients have sacrificed personal and family interests. Nurses face the threat of contracting a virus that could end in death. As part of the front line in dealing with COVID-19 cases, not a few have experienced physical and mental exhaustion – a tremendous appreciation for all nurses in Indonesia ([Marzilli, 2021](#)).

In this very article, the author wants to describe the concept of recruitment and selection of nurses in Indonesia, including the process, stages, and exact conditions in the field during the pandemic, so that we can learn from them.

## Concepts' Overview

Conceptually, recruitment and selection are one element in human resource management, but they are two separate processes. Recruitment is a series of processes that start with finding, finding, and attracting applicants to be employed within and by an organization. Meanwhile, the selection is the process of matching the needs and requirements of the organization to the skills and qualifications of job applicants ([Aunguroch et al., 2022](#)).

For the recruitment process, the method can be done internally and externally. Internal methods include employee transfer, job rotation, and promotion from within. External methods include applying directly (walk-ins or write-ins), online applications, graduate recruitment (agreement between organizations), employment agencies, and employee referrals ([Aunguroch et al., 2021](#)).

## Recruitment and Selection of Nurses in Indonesia

The recruitment and selection process for nurses in Indonesia is generally based on three employment categories: Civil Servants (PNS), government employees with work agreements (PPPK), and “honorer” employees ([Aunguroch et al., 2022](#)).

### PNS

PNS are State Civil Apparatus (ASN) employees who are appointed as permanent employees by the Personnel Guiding Officer and have a national employment number. In other words, the civil servant status is a permanent employee.

The recruitment and selection process for civil servants is based on planning for employee needs, job analysis, formation (number and composition of employee ranks), and staff procurement.

There are several stages in the implementation of the test to become a civil servant ([Daftar CPNS, 2020](#)), namely:

- 1) Selection of document administration
- 2) Selection of basic competencies using the Computer Assisted Test (CAT), whose material consists of a national insight test, a general intelligence test, and a personal characteristic test.
- 3) Selection of competencies, which consists of substantive tests, psychological tests, interviews, and skills tests
- 4) Value integration (basic competency selection 40% and specific competency selection 60%)
- 5) Announcement of the results
- 6) Document filing (Certificate of Police Records, Statement of not being bound by other agencies, Statement of not being involved in political parties, Statement of willingness to be placed anywhere, Health Certificate from a Government Hospital, Statement Letter of being free of drugs)
- 7) Appointment and placement, including the trial stage, which is for a period of at least one year and a maximum of two years. Then the new civil servants can be appointed.

### PPPK

PPPK employment status is an ASN employee appointed with a work contract agreement in a particular position by the Civil Service Supervisor in accordance with the needs of Government Agencies and the provisions of the Act. In other words, PPPK is a contract employee with a certain period of service. Simply put, PPPK is an employee who is “outsourced” by government agencies, both local and central government. PPPK is contracted for a minimum of one year and can be extended for a maximum of 30 years, depending on the situation ([Aungsuroch et al., 2022](#)). In other words, PPPK is an Indonesian citizen who meets particular requirements and is appointed based on a work agreement for a certain period in order to carry out government duties.

PPPK is paid the same as civil servants. PPPK is also given allowances similar to the allowances for Civil Servants, which consist of family allowances, food allowances, structural position allowances, functional position allowances, or other allowances.

From a career perspective, civil servant careers are more promising than PPPK because civil servants have clearer career paths. As a result, civil servants can aim

for a higher position to become the main leader. Meanwhile, for PPPK employees, if they want to occupy a position as a prominent leader, they must go through the appointment of an employee outside the agency or refer to as open bidding.

On the other hand, this PPPK was opened to facilitate those who did not pass the PNS and appoint “honorar” staff to become contract employees equal to PNS.

The process of recruiting PPPK employees is almost the same as that of civil servants. The determination of the formation of the PPPK takes into account many aspects, such as the priority of the type of health workers needed, the location of placement, as well as the regional financial capacity. At this point, the mapping and data collection of the shortage of health workers in the regions must be truly adequate and must be validated.

PPPK health worker recruitment requirements (Ulya, 2022):

1. Being included in 30 types of health functional positions according to Presidential Regulation Number 38 of 2020.
2. Having educational background, at least Diploma-III health
3. Having been recorded in the Health Human Resources Information System
4. Having an active STR or registration certificate and SIP or practice license (for those who work in health care facilities)
5. Being a non-ASN health worker
6. Being proposed by the local government

The stages of PPPK recruitment are almost similar to the steps of PNS recruitment (Ulya, 2022), which consist of:

1. Administration selection
2. Competency selection
3. Interview
4. Physical, psychological, and/or mental health tests
5. Announcement of selection results
6. Complete documents and appointments

#### “Honorar”

Meanwhile, “honorar” staff is someone who is appointed by the Civil Service Development Officer or other officials in the government to carry out specific tasks in government agencies whose salaries are paid by the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget (or called APBN) or Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (or called APBD).

The “honorar” staff are non-PNS and non-PPPK employees, so the status of PPPK is not the same as “honorar” employees. “Honorar” recruitment is also not regulated in the ASN Law, where recruitment is often not through an

accountable process. For local government agencies, “honorar” employees may be recruited without the permission of the central government. The “honorar” salary is determined by the agency or supervisory official based on the budget allocation in the Work Unit.

## Discussion

Now the question is, will health workers, especially nurses, find it easier to find work in the future? Will “honorar” nurses be appointed as PNS or PPPK? In 2023, the government will remove this “honorar” category. The abolition of “honorar” stems from the central government’s concern for regions that continue to recruit “honorar” (Putra, 2022). Hopefully, the government can make the right decision to appreciate “honorar” nurses who have worked for many years.

As a reflection, during the pandemic, there were a lot of nurses who worked voluntarily even though sometimes the incentives came late. The recruitment and selection process is fast even though the competence is still general. All procedures are made easy. In other words, the hospital, especially the human resource management, can work very quickly. And today, the pandemic in Indonesia is under control, where the position will enter an endemic. Will there be an ease in the recruitment and selection process for nurses who have been struggling all this time? Will they just be forgotten? Hopefully, the government and hospitals throughout Indonesia will not forget their services.

## Conclusion

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesian nurses always fought tirelessly with other health workers. Caring for and protecting societies, even if they have to risk their lives. Therefore, the recruitment and selection process for nurses should be a priority during a pandemic and post the pandemic. “Honorar” nurses and volunteers should be appointed as employees. There should be job opportunities for them after the pandemic. However, the authors acknowledge the Indonesian government is planning to open nurse job opportunities in the near future. It is expected that the plan will become a reality.

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### Authors’ Contributions

All authors contributed equally in developing this article.

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### Data Availability Statement

Not applicable

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