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Skill mix team policy for solving the problem of nursing shortage in Thailand

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Thailand has faced a shortage of nurses as several other countries. The appropriate number of nursing workforce in 2014 was 1,22,053 but the actual number was 98,420 and that 23,633 were needed to replace the gap. Moreover, production rate is as equal as the loss rate each year. Nurses in service system work hard with approximately 54 hours per week. Therefore, Division of Nursing, Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) set the policy for solving a shortage. The study objectives are to set nursing policy recommendations and to evaluate the policy implementation. The study design is modified from policy formulation process that consisted of three phases; policy formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation. The first phase, policy formulation was conducted in 2 steps; 1) feasibility analysis of skill mix team policy 2) focus group discussion among stake-holders for skill-mixed team policy where practical nurse (PN) is a member in a nurse team. The second phase; policy implementation was conducted within 3 aspects; 1) revising of PN curriculum by Thailand nursing and midwifery council 2) PNs were trained in 32 MoPH subsidiary nursing colleges with revised curriculum 3) director and head nurse of 116 secondary hospitals were informed the policy to implementation (employment). The third phase; policy evaluation consisted of 1) implementation of PN revised program in nursing colleges 2) PN employment in targeted hospitals 3) 12 head nurses were interviewed to reflect the skill mix team policy implementation. The result revealed that the permanent secretary approved and agreed to launch the skill mix team policy to 116 targeted hospitals. Nine MoPH subsidiary nursing colleges have implemented PN training program with a revised curriculum and 1,714 graduated PNs were employed among 88 targeted hospitals in 2017. Twelve head nurses agreed that skill-mixed team policy could reduce nursing workload and reduce the problem of nursing shortage. In addition, nursing shortage is needed more in-depth study, particularly PN study program in some nursing colleges, the employment of PN in some secondary hospitals for further improvement.

Biography

Sirima Leelawongs, a Master of Nursing Science Program in Public Health Nursing from Mahidol University. She is the Chief of Policy and Strategy Group of Nursing Division Ministry of Public Health Thailand.

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