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The impact of nurse leader emotional intelligence on employee engagement and performance outcomes

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Staff nurses experience dissatisfaction with nurse leaders and often leave their positions. Employee churn and vacancies create gaps in continuity of care and may negatively impact patient quality and safety. Empirical evidence exploring relationships between nurse leader emotional intelligence, work environment, and leadership performance is scant. This study will be conducted at a local health system and will explore relationships between nurse leader emotional intelligence, employee engagement, and performance outcomes including registered nurse turnover and retention rates at Cone Health System. There are a total of 118 eligible nurse leaders (51 Department Directors and 67 Assistant Directors). The research questions that will be addressed are: (1) is there a relationship between the nurse leader personal and professional characteristics, emotional intelligence, employee engagement, and performance outcomes? (2) are there differences in employee engagement and nurse leader performance outcomes between nurse leaders reporting high emotional intelligence compared to nurse leaders reporting low emotional intelligence? Upon completion, the results will provide essential empirical data in a study that will evaluate the impact of Cone Health System nurse leader emotional intelligence on employee engagement and performance outcomes. The results may be used to enhance nurse leader self-awareness. Leader self-awareness may lead to the adaptation of emotional intelligence behaviors that promote improvements in the work environment and performance outcomes.