

Nurse Turnover in Lebanese Hospitals

Sandra Abi Daher,

Saint Joseph University Beirut, Lebanon

sandra.abidaher@net.usj.edu.lb

sandra.ad.frangieh@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:

This article analyzes nursing staff turnover in Lebanese hospitals by examining its rates, causes, and the impact on healthcare quality and team dynamics. Survey data from nursing staff across Lebanese hospitals in 2022 are used to identify turnover factors. Descriptive statistics categorize turnover rates by hospital size and region. Structural equation modeling identifies key factors influencing turnover, such as work environment, compensation, professional development, and organizational support. The study reveals that high turnover rates negatively affect care quality and team stability, while extremely low turnover may hinder innovation. This research highlights the need for tailored retention strategies to improve nursing staff motivation, reduce turnover, and enhance hospital performance.

General Subject Classification: Healthcare management

Sub-Selection Class: Nurse workforce management

Introduction

Nurse turnover has become a significant concern within Lebanon's healthcare sector, exacerbated by the country's ongoing economic and social challenges.

A detailed study of this issue could provide valuable insights for hospital managers and policymakers in addressing and potentially mitigating this problem.

In a critical sector such as healthcare, nurse turnover is a key indicator of organizational stability. However, during times of economic crises and pandemics, this challenge becomes particularly pronounced, highlighting deep issues at economic, organizational, and human levels.

The economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have amplified concerns related to nurse turnover. In addition to traditional challenges like talent retention and team cohesion, increased workloads and higher health risks have emerged as major concerns. Recent studies, such as one by the American Nurses Association (ANA), found that nearly 60% of nurses considered leaving their positions due to the heightened pressures during the pandemic.

Turnover, calculated by the number of employees voluntarily leaving a company over a set period, is a critical aspect of human resource management. The economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have intensified the existing challenges surrounding nurse turnover, as evidenced by recent research. Excessive turnover may signal underlying problems, such as unfavorable working conditions, poor management, or low employee satisfaction, as noted by studies like those of Chen et al. (2020).

For over two decades, hospitals in Lebanon have been dealing with relatively high nurse turnover rates (exceeding 3% of their average staff), with variations depending on hospital size, reputation, and standing.

A 2020 online survey of 511 nurses conducted by the Lebanese Nurses Association (ANI) revealed that:

- 40.6% of nurses reported that nothing would make them give up nursing as a profession.
- 38.3% indicated they no longer wished to be nurses, but remained in the profession because their families depended on their salaries.
- 24.8% of respondents were considering working abroad.

It is crucial to consider the specific impacts of the economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic on nurse turnover. Recent studies by organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) found a significant increase in nurse turnover during the pandemic, with rates reaching as high as 30% in some regions.

This raised several questions, including:

- What are the characteristics of hospitals with high nurse turnover rates?
- What are the reasons behind this turnover?
- What costs or challenges does this turnover present for Lebanese hospitals?
- Have retention policies in these hospitals been successful in curbing nurse turnover?

This study aims to answer these questions. The primary objective is to analyze the phenomenon of nurse turnover in Lebanese hospitals in-depth. Specifically, the study aims to :

- Examine nurse turnover rates :
 - o Measure overall turnover rates among nurses.
 - o Identify variations in turnover rates based on hospital size and category.
- Identify the causes and key indicators of turnover:
 - o Assess the impact of organizational factors on turnover.
 - o Determine the most representative indicators of turnover.

1. Nurse Turnover: A theoretical and documentary approach (Literature review)

Also known as staff rotation, turnover is an indicator that measures the number of voluntary departures and entries within an organization over a set period, usually annually. It is a key aspect of human resource management, as high turnover can have negative consequences on productivity, organizational culture, and recruitment and training costs. Turnover is calculated as the percentage of voluntary departures relative to the total workforce during the middle of the year.

The causes of high turnover are varied and include: poor management, unfavorable working conditions, non-competitive salaries, lack of career prospects, and a mismatch between employee expectations and job realities. Regarding the specific factors contributing to nurse turnover, these include:

- High workload due to irregular hours and overtime, burnout, and job dissatisfaction.
- Stress and pressure from emergency situations and emotionally challenging encounters.
- Low compensation and benefits relative to workload.
- Lack of support and recognition from hospital management.
- Difficult working conditions due to understaffing, stressful work environments, and outdated equipment.

It is also important to recognize that the decision to stay or leave a job is not solely dependent on job satisfaction but is closely tied to organizational culture and change management. Companies that manage to create a positive work environment based on trust, respect, and innovation are better equipped to retain their best employees. Moreover, proactive change management and transparent

communication can help alleviate uncertainties and fears, thus strengthening employees' attachment to the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2021).

The high turnover rate among nurses has led some hospitals in Lebanon to adopt various retention strategies to stop or at least slow down the departure of this staff, which is costly for hospitals in terms of recruitment, integration, training, bridging the performance gap left by departing staff, and transferring knowledge or hospital-specific techniques to competitors.

Conversely, excessively low turnover rates (below 1%) are not necessarily a good indicator, as they may suggest a lack of renewal or dynamism within the organization, which could hinder innovation and growth. For nurse turnover in hospitals, when high, it is likely to have negative consequences on the quality of care, patient satisfaction, and team stability.

2. Dimensions of Nurse Turnover in Lebanon

2.1. Research methods

The scientific methods employed to address the study's questions are divided into the following stages:

- **Literature review:**

Focused on books, articles, doctoral theses, and online documents addressing HR functions, retention policies in general, those targeting nurses, their working conditions, and turnover, as well as references concerning the Lebanese hospital sector (capacity, accreditation, rankings, management) and the nursing staff (workforce, training, unionization, etc.).

- **Exploratory research:**

This included two techniques:

- Participant observation in several Lebanese hospitals to gather insights into the experiences of healthcare staff.
- Semi-structured interviews with HR managers and heads of nursing staff in hospitals to collect diverse information, documents, and statistical data about their nursing staff.

- **Documentary research:**

Involved consulting two types of documents:

- Statistical compilations on hospitals and their nursing staff in Lebanon.
- Legal documents: legislation and regulations governing nursing practices in Lebanon.

- **Survey :**

Conducted with a sample of 300 nurses in Lebanese hospitals, selected using a quota sampling method, representing three independent variables: hospital ranking, region, and nurse gender. The survey collected data on demographic, educational, and socio-economic characteristics (remuneration), marital status, work tenure, working conditions, retention measures, nurses' attitudes towards these measures, their impact on performance, loyalty, and career prospects within their hospitals.

Following the survey, we cross-analyzed the dependent and independent variables based on our research problem, hypotheses, and thesis outline. This analysis identified the necessary tables for statistical and qualitative analysis, which were then prepared for the article writing process.

Our approach is interdisciplinary, combining medical, demographic, psychological, sociological, economic, financial, and human resource management factors in analyzing the data.

2.2. Nurse Turnover rates in Lebanese hospitals

In the 2021/2022 period, the nurse turnover rate in Lebanese hospitals was 24.2% (Table 1). This high rate likely had a negative impact on nurse performance and increased recruitment and training costs in the Lebanese hospital sector. Notably, 28.26% of hospitals reported a turnover rate below 3%, while 51.7% of hospitals had turnover rates exceeding 15% (Table 1).

Table 1 : Lebanese Hospitals, by Tturnover Rate for the Year 2021/2022

Categories of Nurse Turnover Rates (%)	% hospitals
0 - 3	28.26%
4 - 6	3.04%
7 - 10	3.48%
11 - 15	13.48%
16 - 20	12.17%
21 - 30	13.48%
31 - 40	4.78%
41 - 50	3.04%
51 and above	18.27%
Total	100.00%
Average % of nurse turnover	24.20%

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

We consider the nurse turnover rate in relation to several independent variables that determine it, among which is the size of the hospital's nursing staff. In hospitals with fewer than 100 nurses, 70.7% have a turnover rate of less than 3% (Table 2). This is likely because many nurses in smaller hospitals are less qualified, reducing their employment opportunities elsewhere. In contrast, larger hospitals experience higher turnover rates. For example, in 52% of hospitals with 351 to 400 nursing staff, the turnover rate exceeds 51%, and the same is true for 44% of hospitals where the nursing staff size ranges from 501 to 600 nurses (Table 2).

Thus, it is the larger hospitals that have been most affected by turnover, likely due to the higher qualification levels of their nursing staff.

Table 2: Lebanese Hospitals, by Turnover Rate for the Year 2021/2022, and Nursing Staff Size (in %)

		Categories of Nurse Turnover Rates (%)									
		0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 and above	Total
Number of Nurses	<100	70.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	24.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	2.4%	100.0%
	101-150	37.0%	0.0%	3.7%	3.7%	7.4%	37.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	100.0%
	151-200	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	201-250	42.9%	7.1%	3.6%	0.0%	32.1%	10.7%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	100.0%
	251-300	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	301-350	7.7%	0.0%	7.7%	15.4%	7.7%	7.7%	46.2%	7.7%	0.0%	100.0%

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

Similarly, the hospital's location appears to be a determinant of the turnover rate, as it is observed that in 53.2% of hospitals in rural areas, the turnover rate for nursing staff is 51% or higher, while it drops to 3% or lower in hospitals located in urban areas (Table 3). The difference in compensation is likely a contributing factor here.

Table 3: Lebanese Hospitals, by Number of Voluntary Departures of Nursing Staff in the Year 2021/2022, and by Hospital Location (in %)

	What is the number of nurses who voluntarily left your hospital (i.e. not including those who were made redundant or retired) during the last 12 months?												
	<10	10 - 20	20 - 30	30 - 40	40 - 50	50 - 60	60 - 70	70 - 80	80 - 90	90 - 100	> 100	Do not know	Total

The hospital is in an area:	Rural	31. 9%	10. 6%	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	4.3 %	53. 2%	0.0 %	100. 0%
	Urban	74. 1%	3.7 %	3.7 %	0.0 %	14. 8%	0.0 %	3.7 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	100. 0%
	Semi-urban	32. 1%	9.6 %	18. 6%	2.6 %	7.1 %	3.8 %	0.0 %	0.6 %	0.6 %	5.1 %	12. 8%	7.1 %	100. 0%
	Total	37. 0%	9.1 %	13. 0%	1.7 %	6.5 %	2.6 %	0.4 %	0.4 %	0.4 %	4.3 %	19. 6%	4.8 %	100. 0%

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

By type of ownership, in 38.4% of hospitals owned by individuals, the nursing staff turnover rate is 3% or lower, whereas it exceeds 40% in 43.2% of hospitals owned by a group of secular individuals (Table 4). The difference in qualifications should be considered a factor here.

Table 4: Lebanese Hospitals, by Turnover Rate in 2021/2022, and Type of Ownership (in %)

		Categories of Nurse Turnover Rates (%)									
		0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 and above	Total
Your hospital is owned by	An individual	38.4 %	7.0 %	2.3 %	27.9 %	12.8 %	2.3 %	7.0 %	1.2 %	1.2 %	100.0 %
	A group of lay individuals	29.7 %	0.0 %	5.4 %	2.7 %	5.4 %	13.5 %	0.0 %	10.8 %	32.4 %	100.0 %

	A religious community or order	21.3	0.0	0.0	4.5	13.5	24.7	2.2	1.1	32.6	100.0
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	The State	11.1	5.6	22.2	11.1	16.7	11.1	16.7	5.6	0.0	100.0
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	Total	28.3	3.0	3.5	13.5	12.2	13.5	4.8	3.0	18.3	100.0
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

Additionally, comparing nurses' salaries with those in other hospitals has an impact on the turnover rate. In 46.4% of hospitals where nursing staff report that their salaries are higher than those in other hospitals in Lebanon, the turnover rate exceeds 50% (Table 5). This suggests that nurses in these hospitals may have received offers from hospitals abroad with higher salaries or better working conditions, given their qualifications.

Conversely, in 63.8% of hospitals where nursing staff report that their salaries are higher than those in some hospitals in Lebanon, but lower than those in others, the turnover rate is 3% or lower (Table 5).

Table 5: Lebanese Hospitals, by Turnover Rate in 2021/2022, and Salary Comparison with Other Hospitals in the Sector (in %)

		Categories of Nurse Turnover Rates (%)									
		0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 and above	Total
Generally speaking, the salaries of nurses in your hospital are?	Superior to those of the others hospitals in Lebanon	0.0%	17.9	0.0	17.9	0.0%	17.9	0.0%	0.0	46.4	100.0
	Almost equal to		%	%	%		%		%	%	%

	those of other hospitals in Lebanon	15.4 %	1.9%	5.8 %	1.9%	25.0 %	23.1 %	3.8%	1.9 %	21.2 %	100.0 %
	Less than to those of the other hospitals in Lebanon	16.0 %	1.2%	2.5 %	30.9 %	16.0 %	6.2%	2.5%	6.2 %	18.5 %	100.0 %
	Higher Than those of some hospitals, and lower than those of others	63.8 %	0.0%	4.3 %	0.0%	2.9%	13.0 %	10.1 %	1.4 %	4.3%	100.0 %
	Total	28.3 %	3.0%	3.5 %	13.5 %	12.2 %	13.5 %	4.8%	3.0 %	18.3 %	100.0 %

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

It is also worth noting that the training received by nurses at their hospital is a determinant of turnover rates. In 59.7% of hospitals where nursing staff report having learned something beneficial for their profession through their work, the turnover rate is greater than 15% (Table 6). This suggests that hospitals are affected by the training they provide to their nursing staff. On the other hand, in 63.4%

of hospitals where nursing staff report having learned nothing that benefits their profession, the turnover rate is 3% or lower (Table 6).

Table 6: Lebanese Hospitals, by Turnover Rate in 2021/2022, and Training Received at the Hospital (in %)

		Categories of Nurse Turnover Rates (%)									
		0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 and above	Total
Since you have been working at this hospital have you learned anything new that benefits your nursing experience?	Yes	63.4 %	14.6 %	2.4 %	4.9 %	2.4 %	4.9 %	2.4 %	4.9 %	0.0 %	100.0 %
	No	20.6 %	0.5 %	3.7 %	15.3 %	14.3 %	15.3 %	5.3 %	2.6 %	22.2 %	100.0 %
	Total	28.3 %	3.0 %	3.5 %	13.5 %	12.2 %	13.5 %	4.8 %	3.0 %	18.3 %	100.0 %

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

Furthermore, the adoption of retention policies by hospitals should, in principle, lead to a relatively low turnover rate. However, this is not the case in Lebanese hospitals, as in 29% of hospitals without a retention policy, the turnover rate is low (3% or lower), compared to 25.9% in those that have such a policy (Table 7). Additionally, in 66.5% of hospitals without a retention policy, the turnover rate

exceeds 10%, compared to 61.1% in hospitals with a retention policy (Table 7), indicating a minor difference.

It follows that retention policies for nursing staff in most hospitals in Lebanon are insufficient and, therefore, not very effective in discouraging voluntary departures.

Table 7: Lebanese Hospitals, by Turnover Rate in 2021/2022, and Retention Policy for Nursing Staff (in %)

		Categories of Nurse Turnover Rates (%)									
		0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 and above	Total
Does your hospital follow any policy for retaining nurse ?	Yes	29.0 %	1.1 %	3.4 %	13.1 %	13.1 %	11.9 %	1.7%	4.0 %	22.7 %	100.0 %
	No	25.9 %	9.3 %	3.7 %	14.8 %	9.3%	18.5 %	14.8 %	0.0 %	3.7%	100.0 %
	Total	28.3 %	3.0 %	3.5 %	13.5 %	12.2 %	13.5 %	4.8%	3.0 %	18.3 %	100.0 %

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

It is also noteworthy that the existence of a human resources department could contribute to reducing the turnover rate. Thus, the lowest turnover rate (3% or lower) is found in 29.3% of hospitals with such a department, compared to 13.3% in those without one (Table 8). Similarly, turnover rates exceeding 15% are found in 80.1% of hospitals that lack a human resources department, compared to 49.9% in those that have one (Table 8).

Table 8: Lebanese Hospitals, by Nursing Staff Turnover Rate in 2021/2022, and Existence of a Human Resources Department (in %)

		Categories of Nurse Turnover Rates (%)									
		0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 10	11 - 15	16 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 and above	Total

Is there a human resource department in your hospital?	Yes	13.3 %	0.0 %	6.7 %	0.0%	66.7 %	6.7%	0.0 %	0.0 %	6.7%	100.0 %
	No	29.3 %	3.3 %	3.3 %	14.4 %	8.4%	14.0 %	5.1 %	3.3 %	19.1 %	100.0 %
	Total	28.3 %	3.0 %	3.5 %	13.5 %	12.2 %	13.5 %	4.8 %	3.0 %	18.3 %	100.0 %

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

2.3. Reasons and factors of Nurse Turnover

2.3.1. Job opportunities elsewhere

56.52% of voluntary departures by nursing staff were due to job offers from hospitals abroad (Table 9), particularly in Gulf countries and Europe. It is worth noting that the training, experience, and qualifications of Lebanese nurses are highly regarded by foreign hospitals.

Table 9: Reasons for Voluntary Departures of Nursing Staff in 2021/2022

To your knowledge, for what reason they have left your hospital:	% of departures
Change of area of residence	22.61%
Opportunity to work abroad	56.52%
Insufficient salaries	12.61%
Salaries lower than other hospitals in Lebanon	0.87%
Poor training of nurses	0.43%
I don't know	6.09%
Others	0.87%
Total	100.00%

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

Nurses with higher education are the most sought-after in the hospital labor market, representing 96% of the cases (Table 10).

Table 10: Nursing Staff, by Job Offers from Other Hospitals and Education Level, in 2022

		Have you had any work offers from other hospitals?		
		No	Yes	Total
Educational level	University	4.0%	96.0%	100.0%
	Technical	55.6%	44.4%	100.0%
	Total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

Nurses with over 15 years of experience are also highly sought after, with job offers from other hospitals ranging from 49.5% to 62.5% of the cases (Table 11).

Table 11: Nursing Staff, by Work Experience and Ease of Finding Employment in Other Hospitals, in 2022

		How easy would it be for you to find a job at another hospital, with about the same salary, and the same social benefits that you currently have?			
		Very easy to find a similar job	More or less easy to find a similar job	Not at all easy to find a similar job	Total
Number of years of work as a nurse in this hospital and in others :	1 – 2 years	8.3%	91.7%	0.0%	100.0%
	3 – 5 years	27.3%	36.4%	36.4%	100.0%
	5 – 10 years	12.1%	69.7%	18.2%	100.0%
	10 – 15 years	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	15 – 25 years	49.5%	26.4%	24.2%	100.0%
	25 years and over	62.5%	10.4%	27.1%	100.0%
	Total	39.1%	38.3%	22.6%	100.0%

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

Given the demand for Lebanese nurses abroad and the limited supply of local nursing staff, even non-degreed nurses report that it is relatively easy (27.3%) to find a job in another hospital, with a similar

salary and benefits to their current position, while the remaining 72.7% find it more or less easy (Table 12).

Table 12: Non-Degree Holding Nursing Staff, by Type of Training Received, and Ease of Finding Employment in Other Hospitals, in 2022

		How easy would it be for you to find a job in a another hospital, with approximately the same salary and benefits as you currently have?			
		Very easy to find a similar job	More or less easy to find a similar job	Not at all easy to find a similar job	Total
Number of years of work as a nurse in this hospital and in others :	Thanks to a training session organized by the hospital (current or old) to people not graduates	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	The hospital (current or old) has assigned one tutor to teach me this profession	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	While working as a nursing assistant for	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	100.0%

	some time				
	Total	27.3%	72.7%	0.0%	100.0%

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

Moreover, due to the shortage of nursing staff, even those who have not learned anything beneficial to their profession through their work report that it is very easy (68.3%) to find a similar job in another hospital (Table 13).

Table 13: Nursing Staff, by Training Received at Their Hospital and Ease of Finding Employment in Other Hospitals, in 2022

		How easy would it be for you to find a job at another hospital, with approximately the same salary and benefits as you currently have?			
		Very easy to find a similar job	More or less easy to find a similar job	Not at all easy to find a similar job	Total
Since you worked in this hospital, have you learned something new that benefits	Yes	68.3%	22.0%	9.8%	100.0%
	No	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%

your job as a nurse?					
	Total	39.1%	38.3%	22.6%	100.0%

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

Even 61% of nurses who have not gained any professional skills from their work at their hospital report receiving job offers from other hospitals (Table 14).

Table 14: Nursing Staff, by Training Received at Their Hospital and Job Offers from Other Hospitals, in 2022

		Have you had any work proposals made by other hospitals?		
		No	Yes	Total
Since you worked in this hospital have you learned something that benefits your profession as a nurse	No	39.0%	61.0%	100.0%
	Yes	52.4%	47.6%	100.0%
	Total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

2.3.2. Insufficient compensation

13.5% of nursing staff attribute their colleagues' voluntary departures to low or inadequate salaries offered by hospitals in Lebanon (Table 9). Furthermore, 79.1% of nursing staff report that their salary does not cover their personal expenses or those of their dependents (Table 15), and this is also the case for 53.6% of those working more than 48 hours per week (Table 15).

Table 15: Nursing Staff, by Weekly Working Hours and Salary Adequacy in Covering Expenses, in 2022

		Your salary:			
		Does not allow you to cover your expenses and those of your dependents	Allows you to cover only your expenses and those of people who are at your expense	In addition to your expenses, it allows you to make savings	Total
The number of working hours that you carry out per week at the hospital :	Less than 10 hours	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	20 – 30 hours	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	30 – 40 hours	79.6%	20.4%	0.0%	100.0%
	40 – 48 hours	78.9%	13.8%	7.3%	100.0%
	More than 48 hours	53.6%	42.9%	3.6%	100.0%
	Total	79.1%	16.9%	4.0%	100.0%

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

Even those whose salaries are at the top of the pay scale in Lebanon, around 4 million LBP in 2021/2022, report that their salary does not cover their expenses or those of their dependents, in proportions ranging from 61.7% to 81.7% (Table 16).

Table 16: Nursing Staff, by Salary Range, and Salary Adequacy in Covering Expenses, in 2022

	Your salary :
--	---------------

		Does not allow you to cover your expenses and those of your dependents	Allows you to cover only your expenses and those of people who are at your expense	In addition to your expenses, it allows you to make savings	Total
The monthly salary you receive is in the category of:	1 – 1.5 millions	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	2 – 3 millions	93.3%	6.7%	0.0%	100.0%
	3 – 4 millions	80.4%	19.6%	0.0%	100.0%
	4 – 5 millions	81.7%	18.3%	0.0%	100.0%
	5 millions in LL and more	61.7%	23.3%	15.0%	100.0%
	Total	79.1%	16.9%	4.0%	100.0%

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

Similarly, 90.4% of nursing staff believe that their salary is not commensurate with the effort they put into their work at the hospital (Table 17). This is also true for 96.4% of those working more than 48 hours per week (Table 17).

Table 17: Nursing Staff, by Weekly Working Hours and Salary Comparison to Effort at the Hospital, in 2022

		Is the salary you receive commensurate with the effort you put into your hospital?		
		No	Yes	Total
The number of working hours	Less than 10 hours	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	20 – 30 hours	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%

that you carry out per week at the hospital :	30 – 40 hours	72.2%	27.8%	100.0%
	40 – 48 hours	94.7%	5.3%	100.0%
	More than 48 hours	96.4%	3.6%	100.0%
	Total	90.4%	9.6%	100.0%

Source : Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

Even those with the highest salaries (4 million LBP in 2021/2022) report, at very high proportions (80% to 93.3%), that their salary does not reflect the effort they put into their work at the hospital (Table 18).

Table 18: Nursing Staff, by Salary Categories and Salary Comparison to Effort at the Hospital, in 2022

		Is the salary you receive commensurate with the effort you put into your hospital?		
		No	Yes	Total
The monthly salary you receive is in the category of:	1 – 1.5 millions	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	2 – 3 millions	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	3 – 4 millions	91.1%	8.9%	100.0%
	4 – 5 millions	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%
	5 millions in LL and more	93.3%	6.7%	100.0%
	Total	90.4%	9.6%	100.0%

Source : Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

As a result, it appears that 70% of nursing staff are dissatisfied with their salary, and this proportion is 64.3% even among those with the highest salaries in the hospital sector in Lebanon (Table 19).

Table 19: Nursing Staff, by Salary Comparison to Other Hospitals in Lebanon, and Level of Satisfaction with Their Salary, in 2022

		Are you satisfied with your current salary?			
		Satisfied	More or less satisfied	Not satisfied	Total
In a general	Greater than those of other hospitals in Lebanon	0.0%	35.7%	64.3%	100.0%

Almost at equality with those of others hospitals in Lebanon	1.9%	53.8%	44.2%	100.0%
Less than those of other hospitals in Lebanon	4.9%	19.8%	75.3%	100.0%
Greater than those of some hospitals and less than those of some other hospitals in Lebanon	0.0%	14.5%	85.5%	100.0%
Total	2.2%	27.8%	70.0%	100.0%

Source: Survey conducted among nursing staff in Lebanese hospitals in 2022.

2.3.3. Various factors of Nurse Turnover

The large-scale voluntary departure of nursing staff, which began with Lebanon's economic and financial crisis in the last quarter of 2019, has not yet come to an end. Currently, 42.6% of nursing staff are willing to take any opportunity to work elsewhere. This proportion rises to 63.8% in hospitals where nurse salaries are higher than those in some other hospitals, yet lower than those in others (Table 65, p. 107, Doctoral Thesis). However, not all staff in hospitals with higher salaries compared to others take up job offers from these institutions, confirming the impact of salary levels on turnover. Furthermore, 45.2% of nurses, who feel their salaries do not match the effort they put into their work, are willing to accept job offers from other hospitals in Lebanon or abroad (Table 66, p. 108, Doctoral Thesis).

Similarly, 68.5% of nursing staff who feel that their hospitals do not acknowledge their efforts are open to opportunities offered by other hospitals. In contrast, 81% of those who feel appreciated are not willing to leave their current hospital for another opportunity. This suggests that recognition is a key factor in preventing turnover (Table 67, p. 108, Doctoral Thesis). Salary discrimination also significantly contributes to turnover. Among those who report that colleagues doing the same work are paid better unjustly, 63.6% are willing to take up offers from other hospitals, compared to 62.7% of those who do not face such discrimination (Table 68, p. 109, Doctoral Thesis). Additionally, 96.8% of nurses who are not proud to work at their current hospital are willing to accept job offers elsewhere (Table 69, p. 109, Doctoral Thesis). A large majority (80-100%) of nurses who report a depressing work climate, discriminatory evaluations, poor management, lack of recognition for dedicated staff, and low salaries are ready to accept job opportunities elsewhere (Table 70, p. 110, Doctoral Thesis). Similarly, 62.7% of those whose work does not improve their chances of finding a job in other hospitals are willing to take opportunities offered by other institutions, highlighting that a lack of job learning opportunities contributes to turnover (Table 71, p. 111, Doctoral Thesis). Regarding the reasons behind turnover, 86.3% of nurses who would not recommend their hospital to close family or friends are willing to take offers from other hospitals (Table 72, p. 112, Doctoral Thesis).

2.4. Destination of departing Nurses

Of the nurses who voluntarily left their hospitals, 79.57% went abroad, while 20.43% moved to other hospitals within Lebanon (Table 52, p. 97, Doctoral Thesis), drawn by hospitals that had lost much

of their nursing staff to foreign job opportunities (Table 52, p. 97, Doctoral Thesis). Among those who went abroad, 37.39% moved to Gulf countries, 33.04% to Europe, and 7.83% to the Americas (Table 53, p. 97, Doctoral Thesis).

3. Renunciation of voluntary departure

3.1. Rates of renunciation

60% of nurses working in university hospitals, 75% of those who view their hospital as the best or one of the best, 96.3% who experience a good working environment, 86.1% who speak highly of their hospital's reputation, 87% of those with strong ties to their hospital, and 64.3% who say their hospital has a staff retention policy are likely to reject voluntary departure (Table 73, p. 112, Doctoral Thesis). Even 56.7% of nurses who find it easy to secure a similar job with equivalent salary and benefits in another hospital renounce such opportunities (Table 74, p. 114, Doctoral Thesis). In fact, 59.1% of nurses who received job offers from other hospitals chose not to accept them (Table 75, p. 114, Doctoral Thesis).

3.2. Reasons behind renunciation

The decision to remain in a difficult job despite the opportunity to leave can be explained by several factors, particularly in the Lebanese context.

- **Economic reasons and lack of opportunities:** One key reason some nurses stay despite tough working conditions is the lack of alternative opportunities. Lebanon's complex economic situation limits job prospects, making the security of an existing job more appealing, despite less-than-ideal conditions. The high cost of living and financial obligations also discourage nurses from taking the risk of leaving without a guarantee of finding another job.
- **Professional and ethical attachment:** Another contributing factor is a strong commitment to their profession and sense of duty. Many nurses feel deeply attached to their patients and profession, compelling them to stay despite challenges. This professional commitment is often reinforced by an ethical code that prioritizes patient care over personal considerations.
- **Social and family support:** Finally, the role of social and family support plays a part in the decision to stay. Nurses may opt not to resign due to the support they receive from their family, colleagues, or community, which can mitigate the negative impact of difficult working conditions and help manage stress.

These factors indicate that the decision not to resign is driven by a combination of economic, professional, and social motivations.

Conclusion

The study of nurse turnover in Lebanese hospitals reveals concerning trends, with a turnover rate of 24.2% for 2021-2022. This is particularly pronounced in larger institutions and highlights significant challenges facing the Lebanese healthcare system. Contributing factors such as heavy workloads, lack of institutional support, and limited career prospects are primarily responsible for this instability. When comparing these results with international data, Lebanon's turnover rates are not unique. Similar or even higher turnover rates are observed in other regions, especially in the U.S. and parts of the Middle East. Common factors, such as heavy workloads, lack of recognition, and economic difficulties, are shared across these contexts, albeit with varying intensity. An interesting aspect of this study is the renunciation of voluntary departure by some nurses despite adverse working conditions. This is explained by economic factors, professional attachment, and

strong social support, underscoring the complexity of the motivations behind nurse retention. Overall, the findings emphasize the urgent need for effective retention strategies in Lebanon, including improvements in working conditions, increased institutional support, and better opportunities for professional development. These measures are essential not only for stabilizing the nursing workforce but also for ensuring the continuity and quality of healthcare services in Lebanon. Given the global nature of similar challenges, the Lebanese experience may offer valuable insights for other countries facing similar issues.

Bibliography

1. **International Council of Nurses. (2022).** Nurse shortage and retention: The critical role of nursing in addressing the global health workforce crisis [Policy brief]. International Council of Nurses. https://www.icn.ch/sites/default/files/inline-files/ICN%20Policy%20Brief_Nurse%20Shortage%20and%20Retention.pdf
2. **Colosi, B. (2024).** 2024 NSI National Health Care Retention & RN Staffing Report. NSInursingSolutions. https://www.nsinursingsolutions.com/Documents/Library/NSI_National_Health_Care_Retention_Report.pdf
3. **Doucette, J. (2023, November 29).** The state of nursing turnover and key nurse retention strategies. Press Ganey. <https://info.pressganey.com/press-ganey-blog-healthcare-experience-insights/the-state-of-nursing-turnover-and-key-nurse-retention-strategies>
4. **Abi Daher, S. (2024).** *La fidélisation du personnel infirmier dans les hôpitaux au Liban et son impact sur sa motivation et rotation* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. University Saint-Joseph of Beirut.