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NURSES' AWARENESS OF MANDATORY CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES: A PILOT SURVEY

Ryan Michael F. Oducado, Julie Anne Faye S. Palma, Bonna S. Palma

¹*West Visayas State University, La Paz, Iloilo City.*

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***Correspondence to Author:**

Ryan Michael F. Oducado
*Magelang Midwifery Study Program
and Magelang Nursing Study
Program, Health Polytechnic of the
Health Ministry Semarang, Perintis
Kemerdekaan Road, North Kramat,
Magelang City Tel. (0293) 363054*

E-mail:

rmoducado@wvsu.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

Aim: This research aimed to determine nurses' awareness of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) law and its implementing rules and regulations (IRR). **Methods:** This pilot survey utilized a descriptive research design among nurses (n=30) in a private hospital in Iloilo City. A researcher-made questionnaire was used to gather data and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and Mann-Whitney U to test for differences between variables. **Results:** Results indicated that were nurses were generally aware of the CPD law and its IRR. However, more than half were not aware of learning activities under Self-Directed Learning and that nurses can earn CPD credit units through online CPD programs offered by an accredited CPD provider. More than one-third were not aware that excess CPD cannot be carried over to the next three-year period, that only completed post baccalaureate degree programs can be used to earn CPD credit units and that an accredited CPD program should be accredited by the CPD Council. There were no significant differences in the awareness of nurses when grouped according to sex, age, civil status, position, salary and length of work experience. **Conclusion:** It is hoped that addressing the information gaps regarding the CPD law identified in this study may assist in increasing nurses' support in the implementation of the mandatory CPD among nurses.

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INTRODUCTION

Republic Act No. 10912 or the Continuing Professional Development Act was enacted in 2016 “to promote and upgrade the practice of profession in the country ... [and to] ... improve the competence of the professionals in accordance with the international standards of practice, thereby, ensuring their contribution in uplifting the general welfare, economic growth and development of the nation”. However, the implementation of mandatory CPD has led to several oppositions among professionals in the country. There are news reporting that some legislators in the country seek to amend or abolish the CPD law (Terrazola, 2018; Roxas 2019). An online poll conducted by PRC Board News (2018) on its Facebook page revealed that 9 out of 10 agreed to stop the implementation of the CPD Law. Although a study among Filipino librarians revealed positive attitude towards deciding to participate in CPD activities (Abrigo, & Abrigo, 2016), some prior studies disclosed that many professional teachers (Bautista et al., 2017) and civil engineers (Orale et al., 2016) were not supportive of CPD law implementation.

Lack of awareness during change continues to be a top contributor to resistance among those affected by the change (Nevenhoven, 2016). Moreover, having inadequate knowledge of the law may lead to non-compliance to the CPD requirements for license renewal. Little research has been conducted regarding CPD in the country since it is relatively new. Hence, this study was conducted to determine the awareness of nurses about the CPD law and its IRR.

METHODS

This pilot survey utilized a descriptive research design. The participants were 30 conveniently chosen

nurses working in a private tertiary hospital in Iloilo City, Philippines.

A 25-item researcher-made, self-administered instrument was used to gather data in the second quarter of 2019. The items of the instrument were based on the relevant provisions of Republic Act No. 10912 or the Continuing Professional Development Act was enacted in 2016 and Professional Regulatory Commission Resolution No. 2019-1146 series of 2019 or the amended provisions of Resolution No. 1031 series of 2017 otherwise known as the IRR of Republic Act No. 10912. The instrument was content validated by three (3) jurors. Internal consistency of the instrument revealed an acceptable level of Cronbach’s alpha $>.70$.

The pilot study protocol was approved by the Research Ethics Review Committee of the hospital. Informed consent was obtained from study participants before actual data gathering.

Percentage, frequency, mean and median were used to describe the data. Mann-Whitney U was used to examine for differences between variables.

RESULTS

Profile of nurses

Table 1 shows that majority of the participants who participated in the survey were females (56.7%), single (90%) and with a staff nurse position (73.3%). All were with permanent or regular status of employment. The youngest was 23 and the oldest was 35 with a median age of 27 years old. The median monthly salary was ₱ 12,000 with the lowest receiving a monthly salary of ₱ 8,000 and highest receiving ₱ 18,000. The median years of work experience in the hospital was 3.5 years with a range of 1 to 14 years.

Table 1. Profile of nurses.

Demographic and work-related profile	f	%
Sex		
Male	13	43.3
Female	17	56.7
Age (Mean = 27.5 years old; Median = 27 years old)		
28 to 35	11	36.7
23 to 27	19	63.3
Civil status		
Single	27	90
Married	3	10
Position		

Demographic and work-related profile	f	%
Supervisory	8	26.7
Non-supervisory	22	72.3
Salary (Mean = P12,000; Median = P12,000 years)		
₱ 15,000 to ₱ 18,000	10	33.3
₱ 8,000 to ₱ 12,000	20	66.7
Length of work experience (Mean = 4.63; Median = 3.5 years)		
5 years and above	13	43.3
1 to 4 years	17	56.7
Employment Status		
Permanent	30	100

Level of awareness of nurses about CPD law and its IRR

Table 2 shows that nurses were moderately aware (M=2.31) about the CPD law and its IRR. All (100%) nurses were aware that Republic Act No. 10912 or the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Act of 2016 is a law that requires all Filipino professionals including nurses to participate in CPD programs, that CPD means the inculcation of advanced knowledge, skills and ethical values in a post-licensure specialization and that CPD is a mandatory requirement in the renewal of the Professional Identification Cards.

However, more than half were not aware that authorship of books and news articles and educational videos are examples of activities under the Self-Directed CPD (65.6%), that seminars or trainings undertaken abroad conducted by non-accredited CPD Providers may be accredited through Self-Directed

Learning (56.3%) and that nurses can earn CPD credit units through online CPD programs offered by an accredited CPD provider (53.1%).

More than one-third were not aware that excess CPD cannot be carried over to the next three-year period (43.8%) and that only completed post baccalaureate degree programs can be used to earn CPD credit units (37.5%) and that an accredited program (seminar, training, conference, etc.) should be accredited by the CPD Council (34.4%).

One fourth were not aware that examples of structured CPD activities include seminars, workshops, trainings, and conferences (25%), that nurses are required of not more than 15 credit units prior to renewal of Professional Identification (25%) and that seminars, workshops and conferences not approved by the CPD council may be applied for credit units under Self-Directed and Lifelong Learning (25%).

Table 2. Level of awareness of nurses about CPD law and its IRR.

Overall level of awareness = Moderately aware (Mean = 2.31; Median = 2.32)	Not aware	
	f	%
Republic Act No. 10912 or the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Act of 2016 is a law that requires all Filipino professionals including nurses to participate in CPD programs.	0	0
CPD means the inculcation of advanced knowledge, skills and ethical values in a post-licensure specialization.	0	0
CPD is a mandatory requirement in the renewal of the Professional Identification Cards.	0	0
Government agencies and organizations employing professionals shall include the CPD as part of their human resource development plan and program.	2	12.5
Excess Credit Units cannot be carried over to the next three-year period.	14	43.8
Private firms and organizations employing professionals shall include the CPD as part of their human resource development plan and program.	2	6.3

Overall level of awareness = Moderately aware (Mean = 2.31; Median = 2.32)	Not aware	
	f	%
CPD Providers and Programs should be accredited by the CPD Council of Nursing.	5	15.6
The CPD Law aims to enhance and upgrade the competencies and qualifications of professionals for the practice of their professions pursuant to the Philippine Qualifications Framework and the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework.	1	3.1
CPD Programs consist of activities that range from structured to non-structured activities.	2	6.3
Examples of structured CPD activities include seminars, workshops, trainings, and conferences.	8	25
There is a CPD Council that regulates CPD programs for nurses.	7	21.9
Individuals, groups, and organizations may apply for accreditation to become a CPD Provider.	2	6.3
During the transition period of CPD Act of 2016, nurses are required of not more than 15 credit units prior to renewal of Professional Identification Cards.	8	25
Seminars, workshops and conferences not approved by the CPD council may be applied for credit units under Self-Directed and Lifelong Learning.	8	25
Only completed/graduated post baccalaureate degree programs (Masters or Doctorate) can be used to earn CPD credit units.	12	37.5
Authorship of books and news articles and educational videos are examples of activities under the Self-Directed CPD.	21	65.6
CPD Council of Nursing grants CPD units for the different CPD Programs.	4	12.5
Registered and licensed professionals shall complete the required credit units every three (3) years of compliance period.	2	6.3
Nurses can earn CPD credit units through online CPD programs offered by an accredited CPD provider.	17	53.1
Attendance and participation of professionals in conferences and/or conventions sponsored by their Accredited Professional Organization can be given appropriate CPD Credit units.	1	3.1
Seminars or trainings undertaken abroad conducted by non-accredited CPD Providers may be accredited through Self-Directed Learning.	18	56.3
Fraudulent acts relating to the implementation and enforcement of the RA 10912 is punishable by law.	6	18.8
Only programs applied for by an accredited CPD provider can have CPD units.	2	6.3
An accredited program (seminar, training, conference, etc.) should be accredited by the CPD Council.	11	34.4
In-house training programs and capacity-building activities of government agencies and private employers shall be accredited and considered as CPD compliance of their employed professionals.	4	12.5

Differences in nurses' awareness about the CPD law and its IRR

Table 3 shows that there are no significant differences in the awareness of nurses when grouped

according to sex (p=.335), age (p=.272), civil status (p=.556), position (p=.981), salary (p=.582) and length of work experience (p=.111).

Table 3. Differences in nurses' awareness about the CPD law and its IRR.

Variables	Mean Rank	p-value
Sex		
Male	17.27	.335
Female	14.15	
Age		
28 to 35	13.18	.272
23 to 27	16.84	
Civil status		
Single	15.19	.556
Married	18.33	
Position		
Supervisory	15.56	.981
Non-supervisory	15.48	
Salary		
₱ 15,000 to ₱ 18,000	16.75	.582
₱ 8,000 to ₱ 12,000	14.88	
Length of work experience		
5 years and above	12.58	.111
1 to 4 years	17.74	

*significant if < .05

DISCUSSION

This research assessed nurses' awareness of the CPD law and its IRR. This study demonstrated that nurses were generally aware of the CPD law and its IRR. The moderate awareness of nurses included in this study may have been a result of the information dissemination campaigns on CPD law since its implementation in 2016. While all nurses in this study were aware of the law that mandates Filipino nurses to take CPD credit units prior to renewal of their Professional Identification Cards, it is however, significant to note the many nurses in this study were unaware about learning activities under Self-Directed Learning. It also appears that online CPD programs were not a popular platform for delivery of CPD activities among Filipino nurses. Perhaps, this may be because Self-Directed Learning and online CPD are new features in the delivery of CPD in the Philippines compared to traditional ones. It has been suggested in other countries that the provision of online CPD may improve or maximize access to CPD among nurses (Ousey & Roberts, 2013). Additionally, there were some nurses in this study who were unaware that

nurses are only required of not more than 15 credit units prior to renewal of their Professional Identification Card during the transition period. This possibly may be due to the fact that the survey was conducted a few months before the release of the new IRR of CPD law through Professional Regulatory Commission Resolution No. 2019-1146 series of 2019. In the earlier version of the IRR, professional nurses are required of 45 credit units prior to renewal of their Professional Identification Card. By virtue of the new IRR, the Professional Regulatory Commission reduced the requirements for license renewal during the transition period.

Moreover, earlier research found that lack of awareness of educational opportunities and lack of relevance of Continuing Education were considered barriers to CPD participation among nurses (Penz et al., 2007). Among those affected by the change, limited awareness about the proposed change is linked with refusal to accept it (Nevenhoven, 2016). It is suggested that information dissemination and awareness campaigns should be continuously deployed to overcome incorrect information and assumptions about the CPD law.

The finding of this study also shows no variation in the awareness of nurses when grouped according to

certain demographic and work-related characteristics. No significant variation in nurses' awareness in this study may be attributed to the relatively limited sample size of the study involving only one hospital. Nurses in this particular hospital may have been given similar information about the CPD law.

Since this is only a pilot survey involving a relatively small number of nurses in one hospital and the CPD law in the Philippines is still in its transition period, findings are considered preliminary and are not conclusive. Changes in the IRR and standard operating procedures of the CPD law implementation may still be made after this survey.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research indicated that professional nurses included in this study are generally aware of the CPD law and its IRR, although gaps in the provisions of the law were identified. It is suggested to invest in continuous information campaign and regular updating about the CPD law. It is hoped that addressing the knowledge gaps regarding the CPD law identified in this study may assist in reducing resistance in the implementation of the mandatory CPD among nurses.

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Competing Interests

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