

“A well-motivated healthcare workforce is key to meeting the continuous and changing demand of healthcare services” (Buchan, 2000).

Healthcare is highly labour-intensive, with its workforce representing its most essential service component.

The demand for healthcare is continually growing as a result of population growth, an increase in the ageing population, advancements in drug provision, and technological growth (World Health Organization (WHO) (Roberts and Charlesworth, 2012; WHO, 2015).

The current staffing shortages are causing work overload for those still in service, which invariably leads to more burnout and with staff leaving the sector, is adversely impacting quality of care.

“ Burnout, low retention, sickness rates, an inability to attract new talent, and the increasing reliance on agencies are having a profound impact on staff, hospital finances and patient care.

Effective, efficient and good quality healthcare cannot be provided unless organisations take the issue of healthcare employee motivation seriously. (Afolabi et al, 2018)

A well-motivated healthcare workforce is key to meeting the continuous and changing demand of healthcare services (Buchan, 2000). However, where healthcare employees are demotivated, their performance at work deteriorates. This consequently affects the quality of healthcare that is provided – often it is less effective and less efficient (Kasenga and Hurtig, 2014).

Henderson and Tulloch (2008) point out that a significant proportion of the healthcare workforce is demotivated, emphasising the importance of searching for ways to improve motivational states within this group (Kasenga and Hurtig, 2014). The

motivation of employees is defined as a willingness to exert high levels of effort towards organisational goals, conditioned by the ability to make such an effort to satisfy some of their individual needs (Ramlall, 2004). This suggests that to motivate the healthcare workforce, organisations need to help employees achieve their individual needs while they work towards organisational goals.

The organisational factors identified as having a significant effect on healthcare employee motivation can be divided into Financial and Non-Financial.

Financial incentives are a very important and powerful organisational factor in motivating healthcare workers. Such incentives come in the form of adequate salaries and allowances, which are considered an important means of meeting the basic needs of healthcare workers, such as housing and other living costs. According to studies conducted in several countries, North Vietnam (Dieleman et al, 2003), Mali (Dieleman et al, 2006), Ghana (Agepong et al, 2004; Adzei and Atinga, 2012) and the UK (Joshua-Amadi, 2002; 2003), the significance of basic salary in supporting the survival needs of staff beyond subsistence is a critical motivator. Hence, financial incentives are essential for work morale and motivation and sustain higher output levels.

However, a study by Mathauer and Imhoff (2006) stressed how non-financial factors motivated employees.

The research argues that a salary increase is by no means enough to solve the problem of reduced motivation among healthcare workers. Furthermore, it suggests that to motivate healthcare employees and foster increased commitment to their careers, healthcare organisations should place an emphasis on non-financial motivational factors. A systematic review further clarifies this by assessing the same concept in developing and developed nations. The review showed that being appreciated and adequately rewarded greatly motivates healthcare providers and makes them feel valued (Afolabi et al., 2018)

“ Although financial incentives were considered important, they were not enough by themselves to motivate staff motivation among healthcare workers.

Furthermore, there is an absence of practical, non-financial-based approaches to address burnout, low morale, and mental health sickness, resulting in staff shortages, staff leaving the sector, broader productivity issues and a potentially reduced quality of care.

In light of the research and pilots conducted using the HUMAN by ShareGratitude platform initiative at St. Mark's, Stoke Mandeville and Wycombe Hospitals in the UK, and GenesisCare in Australia, this review sets out to highlight the importance of non-financial approaches to motivating healthcare staff to improve morale, wellbeing, restoring their sense of purpose and passion for healthcare, consequently, improving the quality of care.

The HUMAN by ShareGratitude, a non-financial approach to staff motivation designed by patients and healthcare staff, is a realtime patient-to-staff appreciation platform that is safe and compliant, harnessing patient compassion and appreciation in the simplest and most impactful way. It is especially important for those staff who often remain unthanked, including those with more junior and ancillary roles. Secondary benefits include team resilience at all levels, potential for greater retention, lower burnout rates, fewer sick days and a reduced dependency on recruitment and agency cover.

The approach is also congruous with the broader NHS Long Term Workforce Plan, People Promise, National Objectives, Clinical Leadership Competency Policies and Frameworks.

If staff burnout, retention, sickness rates, and quality of care are an immediate concern for you or your organisation, contact us at gratitude@sharegratitude.com

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