



Evaluation of resignation and rating the management by resigned health professionals of Mankweng Academic Hospital, Limpopo, South Africa

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Abstract

Shortages and employee turnover, affect the organisation and the abilities to deliver optimum services in the health-care sector worldwide. Reliable leadership is considered a vital factor for retaining talented employees. Trustworthy leadership positively affects employee attitudes, behaviours, and performance. Support from colleagues and supervisors is important for lowering the intention to leave. In the recent past, some of the health professionals resigned, which affected the service delivery and training programme in Mankweng Academic Hospital. There has been some speculation that health professionals left because the attitude of the manager of Mankweng Hospital towards the employees was not respectable. The main objectives of the study were to understand what factors influence health professionals to resign and to know the perception of attitude of resigned health professionals towards the manager of Mankweng Academic Hospital. The study was an observational retrospective cross sectional descriptive quantitative design associated with all health professionals, who quitted from Mankweng Academic Hospital from January 2018 to December 2022. A total of 139 health professionals resigned. These included medical practitioner, professional nurse, pharmacist, physiotherapists, radiographers, occupational therapists, psychologists. Promotion, lack of prospect advancement and relocation to other areas are some of the main reasons for resignation among all categories of health professionals. Poor working conditions and work-related stress are other important factors for resignation. The majority of health professionals were reasonably happy with management style; however, 11.5% rated them poorly. Approximately 30% of resigned employees suggested increasing number of staff to improve working conditions and work-related stress.

Keywords: Attitude; Health Professional; Resignation; Senior Manager Supervisor

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1. Introduction

Shortages and staff turnover are the big concerns for employer and patient care in the health-care sector worldwide (Aiken et al., 2013). Employee turnover is described to the circumstances in which employees depart the organisation for several reasons and subsequently, affect the organisation and the abilities to distribute the optimum required services (Yankeelov et al., 2009). The relationship between the supervisor and employee is a very important aspect to retain the employee. Reliable leadership is considered a vital factor for retaining talented employees (Jun et al., 2023). Jun et al. (2023) stated that perceived supervisor support mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and employee turnover intention (Jun et al., 2023). Lemoine et al. (2019) demonstrate in their research that a leader's morality can influence their leadership effectiveness in distinct ways. Authentic leadership is strongly associated with several outcomes including turnover and turnover intention (Lemoine et al., 2019). Intentions to quit are associated with factors related to employee job satisfaction (Harvey and Stalker, 2003). Harvey and Stalker (2003) mention that managers use turnover levels as indicators of organisational well-being. Low turnovers signify that employee are satisfied with their working conditions. Conversely, managers know that high turnover generally means that something is going wrong. Gardner et al. (2011) and Lemoine et al. (2019) indicate that trustworthy leadership positively affects employee attitudes, behaviours, and performance (Gardner et al. 2011; Lemoine et al. 2019). Other previous studies stated that leader and employee engagement reduce employee turnover intention by facilitating the relationship between supervisor and employees (Lord et al. 2017; Mumtaz and Rowley, 2020). Mumtaz and Rowley (2020) reviewed the literature systematically between 2010 and 2016 on the link between leader-member exchange and its impacts on employee perceptual, attitudinal, and behavioural outcomes. This article listed performance, job satisfaction, organisation citizenship behaviour, turnover intention, creativity, organisational commitment, and affective commitment as the most significant outcomes of leader-member exchange (Mumtaz and Rowley, 2020).

Azanza et al. (2015) have found that employees' work engagement mediates the direct relationship between true leadership and turnover intention (Azanza et al. 2015). Hom et al. (2012) and Eriksson et al. (2021) indicated in their studies that support from supervisors are important to reduce turnover (Eriksson et al. 2021; Hom et al. 2012). There are debates on authentic leadership which suggest that more research in diverse settings is needed (Gardner et al., 2021).

In the recent past some of the health professionals particularly specialists, resigned. This affected the service delivery and training programme in Mankweng Academic Hospital. There has been some speculation that health professionals left because the attitude of the manager of Mankweng Hospital towards the employees were not respectable.

1.1. Significance of the study

There is a paucity of information concerning factors prompting health professionals to quit from Mankweng Academic Hospital and their relationship with the manager. There is not enough research undertaken regarding the issues of health professionals' resignation from Mankweng Academic Hospital and their attitude towards the manager in this hospital. It is important to know what reasons influencing health professional were triggered to leave Mankweng Academic Hospital. Human Resource Manager (HRM) usually requests all resigned or retired employee to complete the structured self-report questionnaires before their departure for

the purpose of future evaluation. However, no formal analysis was done on those questionnaires particularly for all categories of health professionals. The main objectives of the study are to understand what factors influence health professionals to resign and secondly, to know the perception of attitude of resigned health professionals towards the manager of Mankweng Hospital. Furthermore, it was an objective to gather suggestions from resigned health professionals to plan for retaining the staff. Finally, information from this research can be utilized to improve the retention strategies of health professionals in Mankweng Academic Hospital.

2. Methods

2.1. Study approach and design

The study was an observational retrospective cross-sectional descriptive quantitative design associated with all health professionals, who quitted from Mankweng Academic Hospital in a 5-year period from January 2018 to December 2022.

2.2. Study setting

This study was conducted in the Mankweng Hospital, which is in Limpopo province, South Africa. Mankweng Hospital is one of the tertiary academic hospitals in Limpopo that provides training and clinical services. Overall, a total staff of complement of 1279 including all health professionals (1071) were working in Mankweng Hospital and 98 out of 161 medical officers approved posts. A total of 22 of 84 medical specialist posts filled up in 2023. For professional nurses, 125 of 360 professional nurse's positions were filled.

2.3. Study population

All health professionals who resigned from Mankweng Hospital for a 5-year period from January 2018 to December 2022.

- Inclusion criteria: All participants of health professions (doctor, pharmacist, professional nurse, and allied health professional) those who submitted the questionnaire to HR during January 2018 to December 2022 were included in the study.
- Exclusion criteria: Non health care professional (corporate, finance etc.) and health care professionals who retired at normal retirement age.

2.4. Data collection and analysis

Data of exit interview information sheet for 5-year period from 2018 to 2022 were retrieved from Human resource (HR) management. HR usually requests all employees to fill up exit interview form when they resign or retire. The data collected were documented in a data collection sheet comprising gender, rank, department/section in which the employee was working, first reason of leaving, year of work in the department, rating the perception of attitude towards hospital management style and suggestions for retention of health professionals. Rating of attitude is categorised as: excellent, very good, good, fair, poor, and very poor. An attitude is defined as 'a psychological tendency to view a behaviour with a degree of favour or

disfavour (Elrich and Corbett n.d. 2009). The collected data were transferred to an Excel spreadsheet. The statistical software package Stata version (Stata Corp, USA) was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics used to summarise the data and categorical variables were expressed as frequency and proportions.

2.5. Ethical consideration

Information collected from the questionnaires and employee’ names were not reflected in the datasheet. The database document was protected with only the researcher having the password. Permission for the study was obtained from the clinical Executive Officer of Mankweng Academic Hospital.

3. Result

A Total of 139 health professionals quitted over a 5-year period from January 2018 to December 2022. Male health professionals were 45 and the females 74. They worked in Mankweng Hospital from 1 year to 37 years in different departments from Anaesthesia, General surgery, Gynaecology, Orthopaedics, Ophthalmology, Radiology, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Psychology, and Occupational therapy. Details are listed in Table 1 and Figure 1.

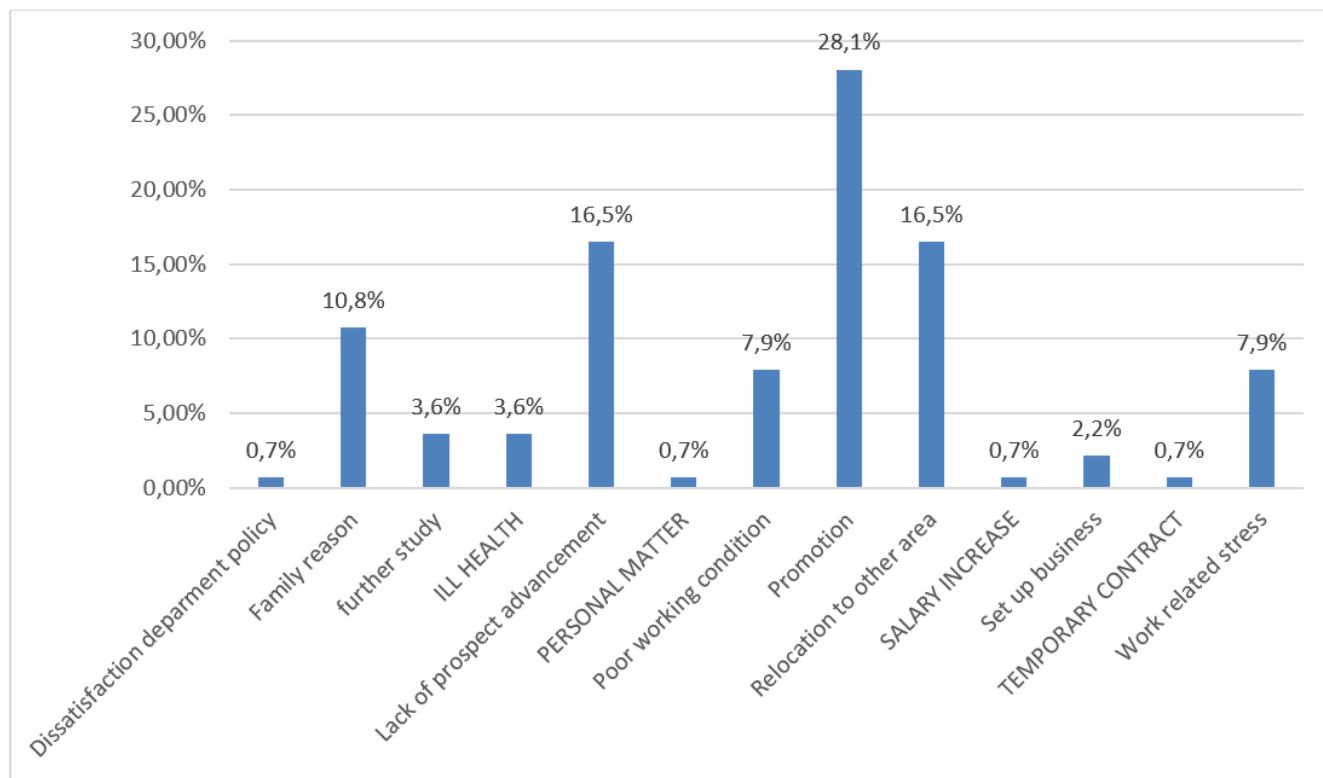


Figure 1. Reason of leaving all categories of health professionals

Table 1. Descriptive summary of health professional resignation

	DEscription	FREQUENCY (%)
Gender	Male	45(32.4%)
	Female	94(67.6%)
RANK (Health Professional)	Medical practitioner (Medical officer and Specialist)	74(52.3%)
	Professional nurse	47(33.8%)
	Pharmacist	5(3.6%)
	Physiotherapist	5(3.6%)
	Radiographer	4(2.9%)
	Occupational therapist	3(2.2%)
	Psychologist	1(0.7%)
	Reasons of resigning	Promotion
Lack of prospect advancement		23(16.6%)
Relocation to other area		23(16.6%)
Family reason		15(10.8%)
Work related stress		11(8%)
Poor working condition		11(8%)
Further study		5(3.6%)
Ill health		5(3.6%)
Set up business		3(2.2%)
Other: (personal matter, temporary contract etc.)		4(2.9%)
suggestion MADE FOR retention	Improve staffing	41(29.5%)
	Employee support	15(10.8%)
	Offer registrar post	9(6.5%)
	Salary adjustment	9(6.5%)
	Respect employee	8(5.8%)
	Enhance promotion	6(4.3%)
	Appoint permanently	3(2.2%)
	Advertise post	3(2.2%)

	Other (provide resource, Internet, accommodation, increase theatre time etc)	45(32%)
RATING MANAGEMENT STYLE	Outstanding	6(4.3%)
	Very good	16(11.5%)
	Good	56(40.2%)
	Fair	45(32.4%)
	Poor	10(7.2%)
	Very poor	6(4.3%)

Promotion is top on the list (28%), relocation and lack of prospect development second (16,5%), followed by poor working conditions and work-related stress.

4. Discussion

This study explored the audit of health professional resignation from Mankweng Academic Hospital. A total of 139 health professionals resigned in a 5-year period from different departments. Over 67% (94) were female and 32.4% (45) male health professionals. In this study, in determining the reasons for resignation, we found promotion (28%), lack of prospect advancement (16.5%) and relocation to other areas (16.5%) to be the main reasons for resignation among all health professionals. Poor working conditions (8%) and work-related stress (8%) are other important factors responsible for quitting the jobs.

In this study, mainly two categories of health professionals quitted the most, namely medical practitioners (53.3%) and professional nurses (33.8%). When evaluating the reason for leaving from the group of medical practitioners, lack of prospects (25.7%) and relocation (25.7%) were at the top of the list (Figure 2). In Mankweng Hospital, some of the departments were not accredited or were partially accredited for the M.Med training programme due to a shortage of specialists. Hence, few medical officers left for other hospitals where training is accredited. It is of paramount importance for the management to engage the specialist to retain them and recruit more in order to maintain the accreditation status of relevant departments.

However, when evaluating the reason for resignation with the professional nurses, promotion was at the top of the list (Figure 3) and 34% of professional nurses left because of lack of promotions in this hospital. Enhance promotion is one of the important factors to address to retain the staff particularly for nursing staff. Poor working condition and work-related stress are the other important factors among professional nurse to quit job from Mankweng Hospital.

There are many grounds for resigning including personal factors, organisational factors, geographical distance to work or an individual for career opportunities which may not be possible to achieve within the existing organisation and it is not possible to prevent all staff from leaving (Chiu et al., 2002; Hasselhorn et al., 2005; Hom et al., 2012). According to Aluminati (2022), some employees reallocate themselves into better positions that associate more closely with their career goals (Aluminati 2022). Professional promotion is one

of the important associated factors to employee’s turnover in hospitals (HealthStream, 2021). The same trends were observed in Mankweng Hospital, some were relocated to other area, some for the prospect development and some left for promotion. Different health professions have various unique issues for the reason of resignation.

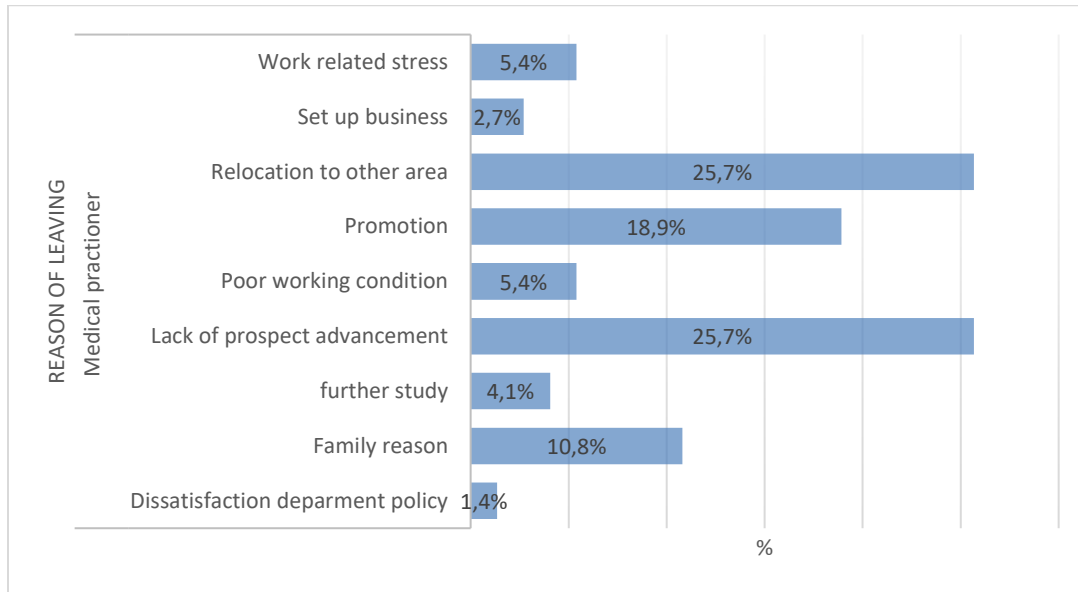


Figure 2. Reason of leaving medical practitioner: Lack of prospect (25.7%), relocation (25.7%), promotion 18.9%.

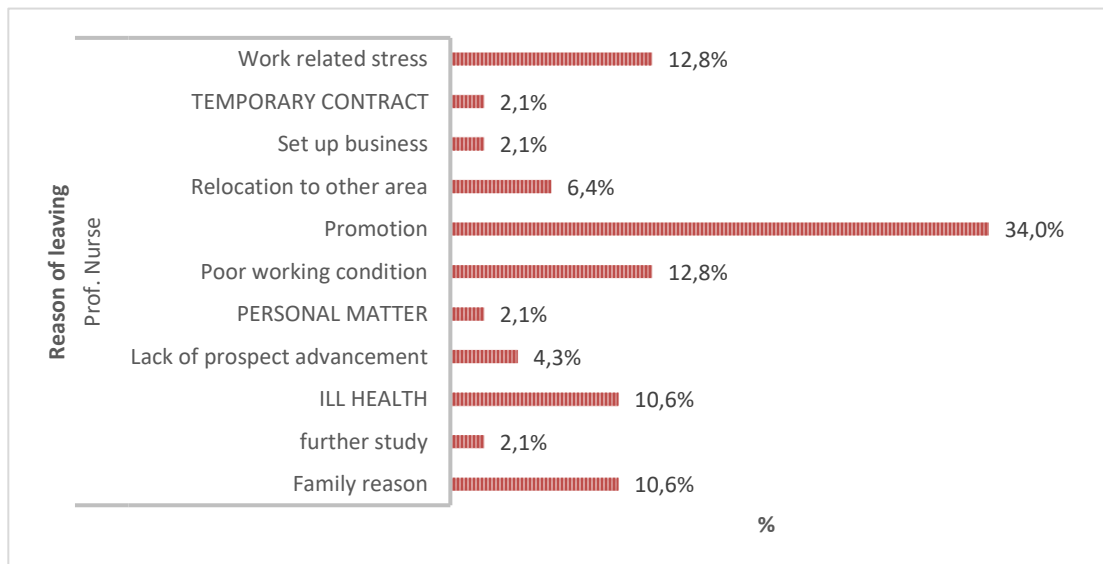


Figure 3. Reason of leaving professional nurses: Promotion (34%), poor working conditions (12.8%), work related stress (12.8%).

Burnout and fatigue are some other important factors that are linked to leaving the job. In the healthcare sector, burnout is primarily caused by staffing shortages. Shortage of staff is a big concern, and that makes working conditions more stressful which leads to fatigue and burnout. In this study, 25% of the nursing staff resigned because of poor working conditions and work-related stress combinedly. Around 10% of medical officers left because of poor working condition and work-related stress. These resignations make the conditions worse with already many existing vacant posts. Interestingly one important finding observed that many health professional left because lack of promotion, however almost 30% of resigned employees suggested to increase the staff number rather than promotion (4%). Increased staff is very much important, and it will reduce burnout, fatigue, and stress and which will improve the working condition and decrease the turnover. Indeed, increased staff is crucial and advocated in many literatures. Increase health financing and the recruitment and retention of the health workforce in developing countries important to achieve the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 3 to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (SDG 3 Legal guide, 2019). Bergmann and Scarpello (2001) state that vacant posts need to be filled to improve the service delivery and reduce the burnout and fatigue. Employees are more interested to stay and work when the institution has a friendly working environment (Bergmann and Scarpello, 2001).

Concerning the attitude of resigned health professionals to the hospital management style was found to be reasonably good. About 56% staff of employees rated their manager of the hospital good, very good and outstanding; 32.4% mentioned fair and 11.5% mentioned poor and very poor (Figure 4).

Literature reviews of previous studies stated that true leadership contributes to the retention of employees by reducing employees' emotional enervation, which increases the levels of job satisfaction and work engagement, thereby increasing their levels of emotional commitment and creating a good work environment (Ausar et al., 2016; Azanza et al., 2015; Kiersch and Byrne, 2015; Laschinger and Fida, 2014). One study from Korea showed a negative relationship between authentic leadership and turnover intention from the data collected from several different organisations in Korea. Authentic leaders can develop good relationships with employees and could enhance employees' perceived support from supervisors (Jun et al. 2023).

According to Avolio et al. (2004), authentic leadership is the important concept of positive forms of leadership and authentic leaders show persistent truthfulness in their relationships with employees (Walumbwa et al., 2008). One of the positive factors in the relationship between authentic leadership and employee outcomes is having a trustworthy leader (Maximo et al., 2019; Qiu et al., 2019). Some other literature has shown that faithful leadership is associated with reduction of employee turnover (Ausar et al., 2016; Oh and Oh, 2017).

According to Noe et al. (2006), relationships between supervisor and employee are very important to retain the employee. Many supervisors are unaware of the relationship between their actions and decisions they make with their subordinates (Noe et al., 2006). Staff engagement is of paramount important to enhance good relationships with the employee. (Gardner, 2009; Lord et al., 2017; Mumtaz and Rowley, 2020).

In this study, other important suggestions were made by resigned employee to support (10.8%) the employee and respect the employee (5.8%) to retain the staff.

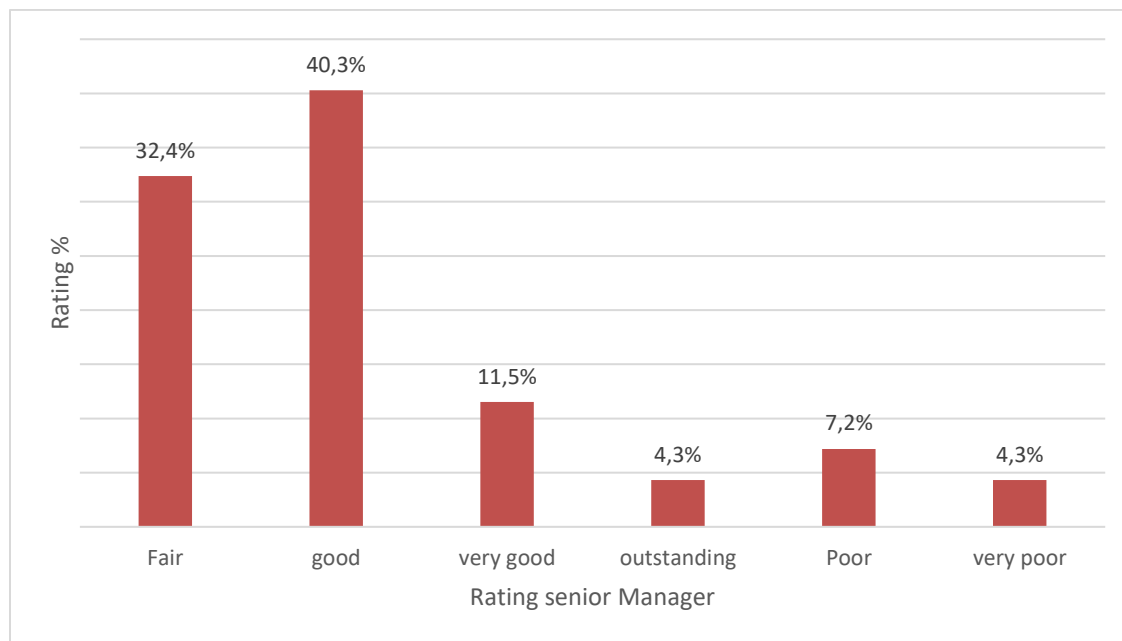


Figure 4. Rating hospital management: 56% rating good, very good and outstanding; 32.4% fair and 11.5% with poor and very poor

5. Conclusions

Promotion, lack of prospect advancement and relocation to other areas are among the primary reasons for resignation among all health professionals. Poor working conditions and work-related stress are other important factors for resignation. The majority of health professionals were reasonably happy with management style, however, 11.5% rated them poorly. Approximately 30% of resigned employees suggested increasing the number of staff to improve working conditions and work-related stress.

5.1. Recommendation

Increasing the number of health professionals is crucial at present. Enhancing promotion and prospect advancement are the other important factors to address to retain the staff. In the future, there is room for further research with precise relevant questions related to the specific category of health professionals.

5.2. Limitations and future research

Although this study shows some meaningful information, it has some limitations. One of the limitations was that the self-report questionnaires forms used a generic format for all the staff (health professional and non-health professional). Another limitation was that the submission of the questionnaires was not mandatory. As a result, some exit interview questionnaires may not be returned. Thus, not all resigned health professionals were included in the study. In the future, there is room for further research and questionnaires should be instituted with precise relevant questions related to the specific category health professional for instance medical practitioner, nurse or pharmacist.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in relation to this paper, the published research results, the financial aspects of conducting the research, obtaining and using its results nor any non-financial personal relationships.

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Data availability

Data will be made available upon reasonable request.

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