

# IMPLEMENTING A NURSING COUNCIL: WHAT DO STAKEHOLDERS REALLY WANT?

## Background

Empirical research emphasizes the benefits of a nursing council (Porter-O'Grady, 2019). However, before implementation, contextual elements should be taken into account. Receptiveness by all stakeholders is a first step in the process of shared governance.

## Aim(s)

To explore the perspectives of various stakeholders regarding the implementation of a nursing council in a tertiary hospital in Belgium.

## Methods

An exploratory interview study was conducted between November 2022 and March 2023. Semi-structured interviews (n=30) were held with a purposive sample of nurses, nurse managers, physicians, physician managers, paramedics, members of the board of directors, and members of unions. Data collection and analysis were performed according to principles of the grounded theory, including a cyclical process of data collection and analysis, a constant comparative analysis, thematic saturation and researcher triangulation.

## Results

Stakeholders hold different perspectives on the objectives and responsibilities of a nursing council. The envisioned composition varies accordingly. Receptiveness towards a nursing council depends on how the participants interpret the nursing council. Receptiveness was greater among nurses and healthcare managers compared to physicians, executives and board members, and members of unions. A process of power (im)balances was underlying.

## Discussion

Empirical research emphasizes the benefits of a nursing council. Implementing a nursing council in the study hospital could be beneficial, provided that the objectives, responsibilities and operational processes are clearly defined.

## Implications and future perspectives

To realize the implementation taking into account the different perspectives that demonstrate varying receptiveness is needed. Implementing a nursing council in the study hospital could be beneficial, provided that the objectives, responsibilities and membership are clearly defined. A process of involvement and co-design is advisable.

## References

Porter-O'Grady, T. (2019). Principles for sustaining shared/professional governance in nursing. *Nursing management*, 50(1), 36-41. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NUMA.0000550448.17375.28>