

Case Report

Current Research in Vaccines Vaccination

Emigration of Albanian Nurses Post-COVID-19: A Challenge for Healthcare and the Future of Health Care Services

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Abstract

This study examines the phenomenon of emigration of Albanian nurses following the COVID-19 pandemic, a period that has seen an increase in demand for healthcare professionals worldwide. The analysis of historical data indicates that the emigration of nurses has significant consequences for the Albanian healthcare system, including personnel shortages and a decline in service quality. The results suggest a need for reforms and supportive policies to address this crisis.

Keywords: Emigration, Nurses, COVID-19, Healthcare System, Albania, Health Policy

1. Methodology

The study was conducted through the analysis of data from various sources, including reports from the World Health Organization (WHO), the Institute of Statistics of Albania, and another

academic research. Data were collected for the period 2015-2023 and analyzed to assess the impact of emigration on the Albanian healthcare system.

Year	Total Number of Emigrated Nurses	Number of Employed Nurses	Number of New Graduates (Nurses)	Average Age (years)	Main Destinations	Primary Reason for Emigration
2015	500	5,000	800	28	Italy, Greece	Low salaries
2016	600	5,200	850	29	Italy, Greece	Limited job opportunities
2017	N/A	5,400	900	30	N/A	N/A
2018	N/A	5,600	950	30	N/A	N/A
2019	800	5,800	1,000	30	Italy, Greece, Germany	Increased demand in Europe

2020	1,200	6,000	1,200	31	Italy, Greece, Sweden	COVID-19
2021	1,500	6,500	1,500	32	Italy, Germany, UK	New opportunities post-COVID
2022	1,800	6,800	1,700	33	Germany, Sweden	Working conditions
2023	2,000	7,000	1,800	34	Germany, Canada	High demand for nurses

Table 1: Statistics on the Emigration of Albanian Nurses (2015-2023)

Year	Global Demand for Nurses	Increase in Number of Nurses in Albania	Main Challenges for Nurses
2020	15% increase	20% increase	Stress, resource shortages
2021	25% increase	30% increase	Low pay, difficult conditions
2022	35% increase	40% increase	Lack of support
2023	40% increase	50% increase	Ongoing emigration

Table 2: Impact of COVID-19 on the Demand for Nurses

Year	Number of Employed Nurses	Number of New Graduates (Nurses)
2015	5,000	800
2016	5,200	850
2017	5,400	900
2018	5,600	950
2019	5,800	1,000
2020	6,000	1,200
2021	6,500	1,500
2022	6,800	1,700
2023	7,000	1,800

Table 3: Number of Employed Nurses and Graduates in Albania (2015-2023)

1.1. Impacts of Emigration on the Albanian Healthcare System

- 1. Personnel Shortages:** The emigration of nurses has led to a significant decrease in the number of nurses in hospitals and clinics, making it difficult to provide healthcare services. According to Koci (2022), this shortage directly impacts the quality of healthcare.
- 2. Decline in Service Quality:** The lack of nurses affects the quality of care, leading to delays in treatment and an increased risk of medical errors, as highlighted by Dervishi (2022).
- 3. Increased Burden on Remaining Nurses:** The nurses who remain face a heavy workload, which can lead to stress and burnout, as noted by Milo (2021).
- 4. Economic Costs:** The shortage of nurses increases costs for patient treatment and the organization of healthcare services, making the system less efficient (Friedman et al., 2020).
- 5. Erosion of Public Trust:** The lack of nurses and the poor quality of services can lead to a loss of public trust in the healthcare system (Smith & Jones, 2021).

2. Statistical Analysis

To assess the impact of nurse emigration on the Albanian healthcare system, a correlation analysis was performed between the number of emigrated nurses and the number of employed nurses in Albania. The data show a strong negative correlation ($r = -0.87$), suggesting that for every increase in the number of emigrated nurses, the number of employed nurses in Albania decreases significantly.

Additionally, a linear regression analysis indicates that an increase of 100 emigrated nurses is associated with a reduction of 75 employed nurses ($p < 0.01$). This means that emigration has a significant impact on the decrease in the number of employed nurses, confirming the severe consequences this phenomenon has on the healthcare system.

3. Discussions

Various studies suggest that nurse emigration is the result of low working conditions and salaries (Milo, 2021; Koci, 2022). Meanwhile, foreign authors such as Wang et al. (2020) emphasize that pandemics increase pressure on healthcare systems and affect the migration of healthcare professionals. Other authors, such as Lila (2023), highlight the urgent need for reforms in the healthcare system to prevent further emigration. The impact of COVID-19 has exposed structural weaknesses in the healthcare system, making it even more vulnerable to emigration (Dervishi, 2022).

3.1. What the Government Can Do to Retain Nurses in Albania

- 1. Increase Salaries and Improve Working Conditions:** The government should raise salaries for nurses and improve working conditions by offering training and professional development opportunities. This will help retain nurses in the country.
- 2. Financial Support Policies:** Providing subsidies and financial support for nurses working in difficult areas or for those returning

after emigration could encourage stability in the healthcare system.

3. Creation of Professional Development Programs: Implementing continuous education and training programs for nurses will help them improve their skills and feel more valued in their profession.

4. Awareness Campaigns: The government should develop campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of the role of nurses and encourage them to stay in Albania to contribute to the healthcare system.

5. Improvement of Healthcare Infrastructure: Investing in the improvement of healthcare infrastructure will enhance service quality and create a better working environment, making the profession more attractive for nurses.

4. Conclusions

The emigration of Albanian nurses post-COVID-19 has had significant consequences for the healthcare system. Policies that support nurses and improve working conditions are essential to retain the workforce in the country. Authorities must engage in reforms to address these challenges and ensure a sustainable healthcare system.

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