

Commentary

# The human resource and workforce shortage of male nurses and nursing professionals: the challenges in the Asian region

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The long-term and ongoing human resource and workforce shortages in the nursing profession continue to impact the quality of medical services and treatments before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic internationally. Although many government departments and nursing colleges establish scholarships for potential nursing students, the workforce issues still cannot be solved in the short term, particularly for male nurses. The nursing profession is still considered a female-dominated profession, where men may experience discrimination and bias due to their gender and face limitations on their practice due to cultural and religious reasons [1]. As a result, some potential male applicants tend to apply to other medical programmes instead of nursing.

Currently, the Asian region has experienced a significant turnover of nursing professionals due to stress, burnout, and unbalanced responsibilities before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many government departments, hospital leaders, medical union workers, and human resources planners need to figure out the short-term and long-term solutions for pre-service, in-service, and post-service nursing students, nurses, and nursing professionals [2,3]. Recruiting and retaining men in nursing has to be seen as part of the solution.

In 2020, the *Journal of Men's Health* published a study named Shortage of male nursing students: The experience of a growing nursing program [4]. This study provided recommendations to nursing college leaders and researchers to explore male nursing students' experiences and to improve workforce policies for male nurses. The author also recommended public health researchers read a recent study [5] about South Korean nursing students' experiences and sense of belonging during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study suggested that many male students decided to leave the nursing profession after university graduation due to stress, unbalanced responsibilities, low salary, and workplace conditions [3]. The author hopes this letter will encourage the editors and the readers for additional research studies and projects in human resource and workforce shortages of health, social, and nursing professionals, particularly male nurses.

## Ethics approval and consent to participate

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## Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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