



# Nursing Manpower Retention Strategy: The Nurse Pool Initiative

Singapore Healthcare  
Management 2024

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## Introduction

- Nursing profession faces significant challenges in recruiting and retaining nurses due to the challenges of shift work, leading to resignation and persistent shortage of nurses worldwide.
- During the COVID situation, staff were infected & went on medical leave for 7 days to 10 days resulted in high absenteeism.
- After the pandemic, attrition rate was high among nurses. In Jan 2022, with the opening of borders we saw a surge in resignation.
- Nurses were also leaving the profession as they need to care for young children at home.
- Nursing together with our Human Resource colleagues came together to see how best to introduce the well sought regular work hours among the nurses in the inpatient wards without disrupting the 3 shifts work schedules.

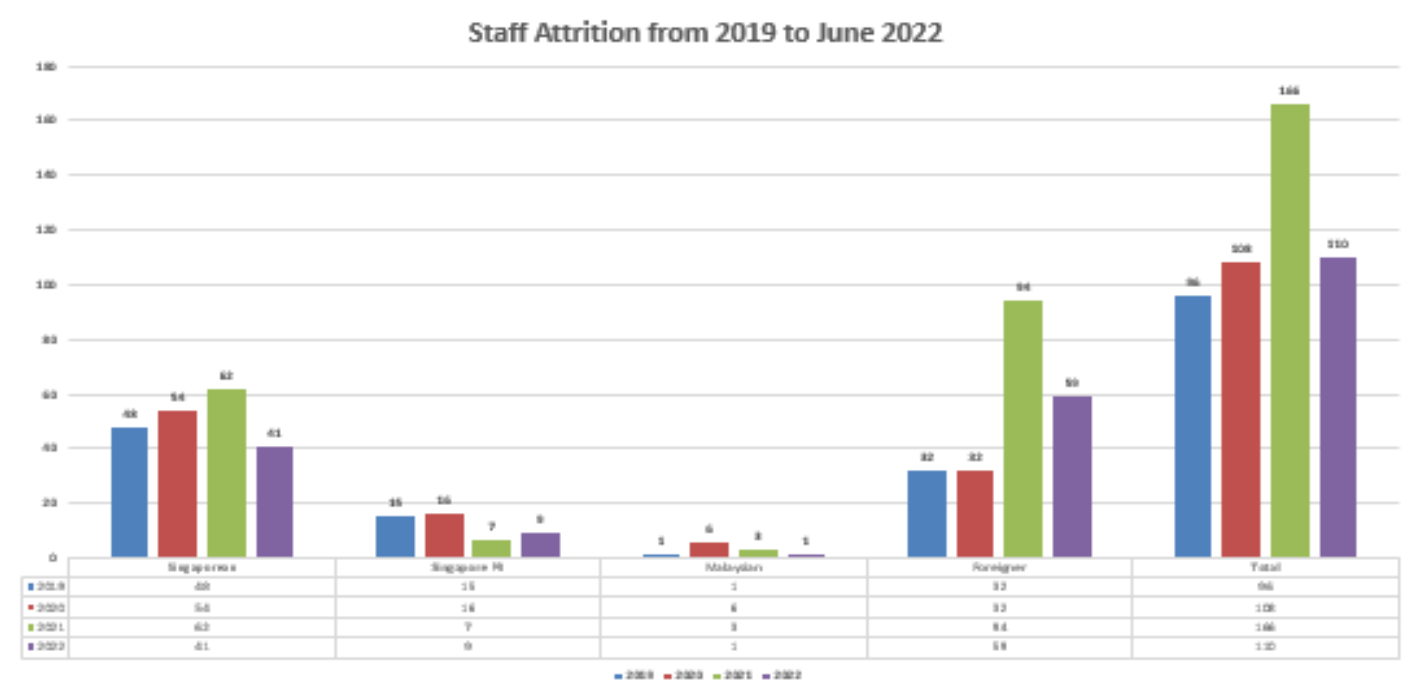
## Objective

- To offer an alternative for nurses with intention to resign an avenue to remain at KKH
- To provide nurses with family issues and young children the flexibility in their work shifts schedule
- To introduce regular hours duties and explore other shift patterns that may be suitable for some staff in the inpatient wards
- To create greater satisfaction among nurses who may be able to spend more quality time with their families.

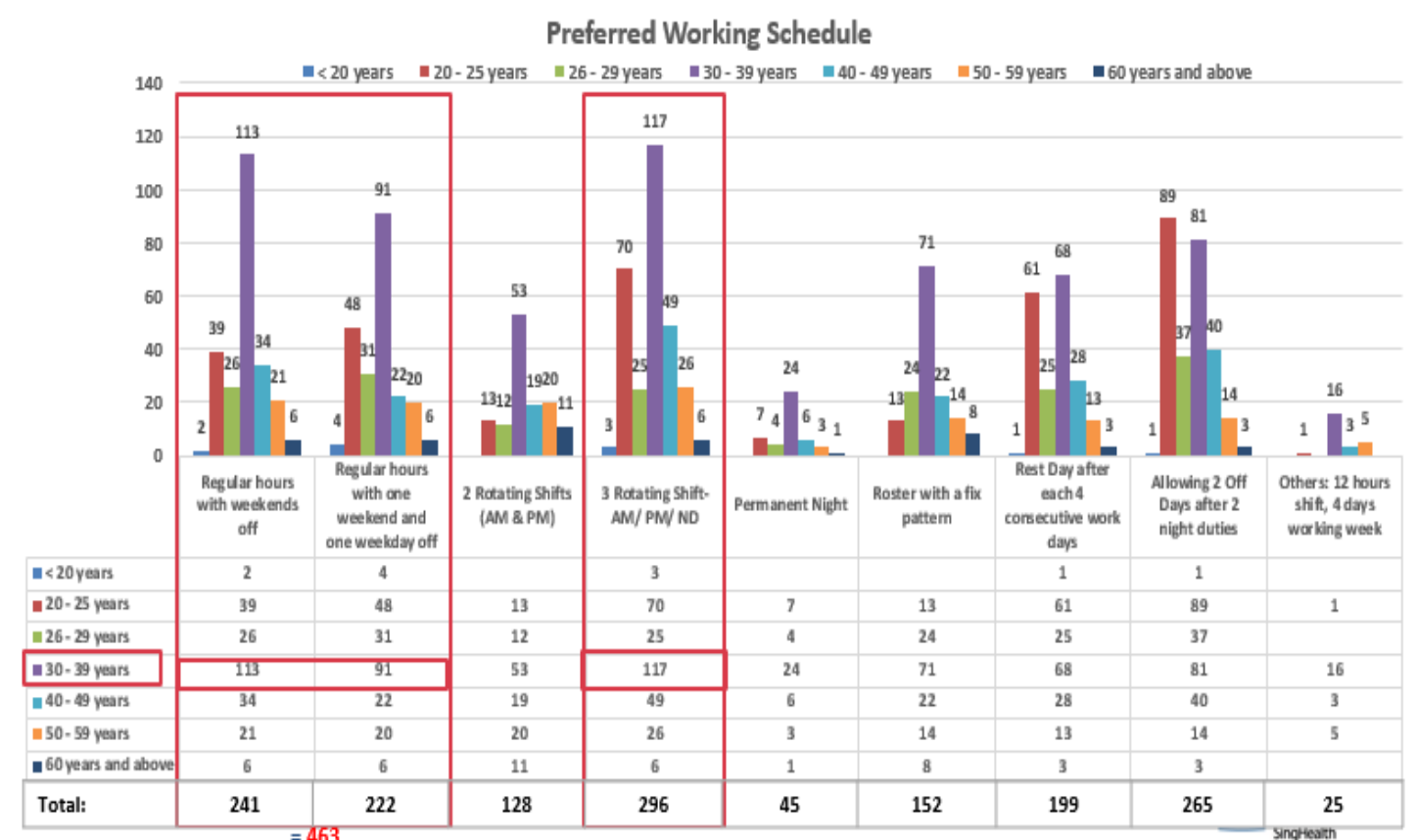
## Methodology

- A Root Cause Analysis (RCA) was done, some of the issues faced by nurses are, they would like to spend more time with their families, and they prefer not to do daily rotation.
- Flexi Work Arrangement Survey was conducted from 30 September to 13 October 2022, to understand nurses preferred work schedule. It was intentionally done after the SingHealth 11th Collective Agreement that saw improvements in employee shift and ward allowances for the 2 and 3 rotating shift schedules.
- A total of 721 nurses from the Women, Children and specialized areas participated in the survey.
- 463 participants preferred the regular hours with weekends or either one weekend off. The highest reason cited from most respondents from the 30-39 years age group who preferred this work schedule was to have family time, work life balance and personal commitment.
- Nursing with HR colleagues came together to explore and carefully introduced the regular hour duties within the inpatient wards.
- A criteria was set, and staff must be agreeable for deployment to areas where there is manpower constraint e.g. to replace staff on long maternity leave, hospitalisation and Non-pay leave. Deployment may be from one month to 6 months. It is open to any nurse who is unable to commit to the 2 or 3 rotating shift schedules due to Medical reason/Childcare/Eldercare issues).
- The Nurse Pool initiative was implemented in Children Services in January 2023, managed by a Senior Nurse manager.
- Recruited staff were transferred to one cost centre and deployed to areas of need.

## KKH Nurses Attrition Rate



## 1. Flexi Work Arrangement Survey Result



## Results

- Regular work hours were offered (8 to 5.30pm or 7 to 4.30pm with both or alternate weekends off).
- To date 9 nurses were recruited in the Nurse Pool and deployed to the paediatric wards.
- Two nurses who left the organisation returned to join the nurse pool.
- Received several good feedback from the Ward Nurses Clinicians and Nurses as they were able to get replacement when two or more staff goes on long leave,
- Nurses in the Nurse pool also shared their satisfaction as they were able to manage their family needs better, have positive work life balance and enhanced support from management.

## Conclusion

- The Nurse Pool Initiative represents a promising approach to nursing workforce retention, aligning organisational goals with the professional aspirations and well-being of nurses.
- Continued evaluation and refinement of this initiative and exploring many other shift patterns that suit our nurses will be studied to sustain its effectiveness and adaptability across diverse healthcare settings which is evolving.