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An investigation of the factors that influence the retention of physiotherapists in the South African public sector

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2008-07-16T13:31:05Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/5079

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INFORMATION SHEET

Dear colleague,

I am conducting a study in partial fulfilment of my Masters in Public Health at the University of the Witwatersrand. The title is: **A Study to Investigate the Factors Influencing the Retention of Physiotherapists in the South African Public Sector**

As you all might be aware, the South African (SA) Public Sector is, and has been for a long time, faced with problems of high turnover rates amongst physiotherapists. However, there are several physiotherapists that decide to remain in, or return to, the Public Sector, and it is the primary objective of this study to investigate the factors that influence these decisions.

- **Why the Interest in Those that Remain in the Public Sector?**

There is a great need for physiotherapists in the SA Public Sector, and in an effort to try to ensure their retention; the government has introduced a scarce skills allowance. However, I would like to find out if this and other methods of staff retention, are achieving what they are intended to achieve. Furthermore, the author hopes to find out if there are any other specific retention strategies that health and Physiotherapy managers are using

- **Role of Participants**

Participants will be requested to set aside approximately 30 minutes of their time in order to complete a simple self-administered questionnaire. All participants are urged to provide responses that are as frank and honest as possible. Participation in this study is purely voluntary, and should any participant wish to withdraw, they may do so. There will be no penalties or other adverse consequences for participants who do not wish to participate.

- **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality will be strictly maintained throughout the study, and in order to ensure this, *names of participants and those of their institutions will not be required.* These are not essential for research purposes.

- **Benefits to Participants**

Although this study in itself cannot promise to initiate major changes to this situation, it will certainly be one of very few published in depth evidence-based studies, which look into specific Human Resource issues pertaining to physiotherapists. Furthermore, as this study is being conducted following a specific request from the Gauteng Department of Health, the information gathered should be used to increase the awareness of the profession, as well as to inform policy and decision-making processes at government level.

- **Permission to Conduct Study and Feedback**

Permission and support to conduct this study have been granted by Ms Elma Burger, Deputy Director: Hospitals and Specialised Services, Gauteng Department of Health.

Feedback on the final results of the study will be presented at the various Gauteng Physiotherapy meetings, as well as SA Physiotherapy publications.

It is sincerely hoped that all participants will appreciate the benefits of this study and co-operate fully with the instructions and indicated deadlines.

Please note: The proposal for this research study has been passed by the Research Committee for approval. Should you wish to contact the relevant office, the telephone number is: (011) 717-2543

Should you wish to contact me, please feel free to do so on: 0829338598 (cell)

Thank-you,
Lintle Rakgokong

REQUEST TO CONDUCT MASTERS RESEARCH

c/o Wits School of Public Health

To: The Head of Institution

This is an earnest request to be allowed the opportunity to conduct my research study in the premises of this institution. This is in partial fulfilment of the Master of Public Health Degree, which is offered by the School of Public Health at University of the Witwatersrand.

My research report focuses on the factors that influence the retention of physiotherapists in the South African Public Sector. As you know, physiotherapists are classified as scarce skill professionals in this country, and upon the request of the Gauteng Department of Health, I have agreed to look into the factors that influence those that decide to stay to do so, hopefully in order to provide valuable information to health managers in their efforts to develop or strengthen existing retention strategies.

I shall be visiting various Physiotherapy departments within Gauteng to distribute questionnaires that ask various questions that are relevant to this study. Participation will be on a voluntary basis only and completely anonymous in order to ensure confidentiality. The purpose and aims of this study will be explained to each participant and they will be required to sign an informed consent form prior to participating in this study.

Under no circumstances will I allow this study to interfere with the participants' duties and in order to ensure that this does not happen, I shall request that they fill in their questionnaires when they are not busy with patient care or other departmental activities.

I certainly hope that this will prove to be a useful study, which can assist health managers in their staff recruitment and retention planning activities.

Yours truly,
Lintle Rakgkong

Permission Granted / Not Granted

Signature_____