

ASSESSMENT OF NURSING ASSISTANT TURNOVER IN  
OREGON'S GERIATRIC NURSING HOMES

by

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A Thesis

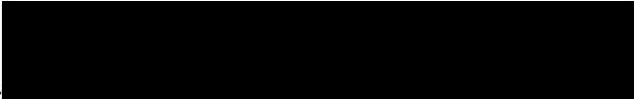
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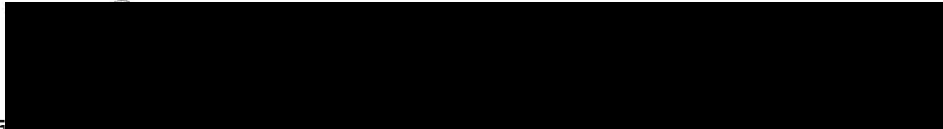
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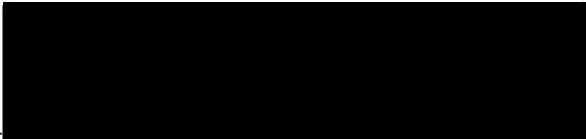
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## DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my parents. Without their continual emotional support and joking, my efforts towards this study may have ceased. In my deepest appreciation for my father and mother, I contribute this research project to the wealth of nursing knowledge.

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The Nursing Assistants Who Returned Questionnaires

The Members of OAHA

The Nursing Homes That Participated

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Renewed attention has recently been focused on the multiple problems facing geriatric long-term care facilities. One of the most serious problems affecting these nursing homes is the high turnover rate among nursing assistants. Estimates of annual turnover rates within individual nursing homes range from 75% to over 100% (Joint Legislative Interim Task Force, 1978). Additionally, the nursing assistant turnover rate is substantially higher than that of other personnel within individual nursing homes. According to the United States Senate Subcommittee on Long-Term Care, the annual turnover rates for R.N.s and L.P.N.s are 8% and 35%, respectively (Joint Legislative Interim Task Force, 1978). Another problem effecting nursing homes is the short tenure of employment for nursing assistants. In a study of 110 Minnesota nursing homes, 45% of the nursing assistants left during the first 3 months, 30% left between the 4th and 12th months, 20% left between the 1st and 3rd years, and 5% left after 3 years (Stryker, 1981). Similar findings were reported in studies by Halbur (1982) and Kasteler, Ford, White, and Carruth (1979).

A large proportion of the total patient care in nursing homes is provided by nursing assistants. The United States Senate Special Committee on Aging (1974) found:

Of the 815,000 registered nurses in this Nation, only 56,235 are found in nursing homes, and much of their time is devoted to administrative duties. From 80 to 90 percent of the care is provided by more than 280,000 aides and orderlies [nursing assistants], . . . (p. 8).

The need to reduce turnover among this group of nursing assistants who provide the majority of patient care in nursing homes is becoming increasingly important as the size of the elderly population enlarges.

Holtz (1982) reports:

Demographic projections show that there will be an overall increase that will peak around 2030 A.D. when 17% of our population will be over 65. Many of the aged infirm will be placed in nursing homes where much of the direct care will be provided by nurses' aides (p. 265).

While some turnover is unavoidable and even desirable, the high rates of nursing assistant turnover can adversely effect patients, staff and the nursing home administrators. These effects are referred to in Stryker-Gordon (1979) as the costs of turnover and include:

1. Financial cost of recruitment, selection, repeated training, and increased need for supervision;
2. Emotional cost to staff from poorly integrated, low performing, and constantly changing personnel; and
3. Quality cost to residents from uneven standards of care and repeated breaking of staff-resident relationships (p. 17).

The purpose of this study is twofold: (a) to investigate the relationship of self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates to nursing home location, size, and ownership; and (b) to investigate self-terminated nursing assistants' responses to questionnaire items pertaining to job-related and personal variables thought to influence turnover rates. An understanding of the significant variables influencing high turnover among nursing assistants is essential in order to propose possible solutions to this problem.

#### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature review covered the following topics: (a) a description of the nursing assistant in geriatric nursing homes,

(b) measurement of turnover, (c) organizational variables influencing labor turnover, (d) job-related variables influencing labor turnover, and (e) personal variables influencing labor turnover.

#### The Nursing Assistant In Geriatric Nursing Homes

In the state of Oregon, over 6,400 nursing assistants are employed in nursing and personal care facilities (Oregon Employment Division, 1982). Within Oregon's geriatric nursing homes, nursing assistants constitute nearly 80% of nursing personnel (Joint Legislative Interim Task Force, 1978). Nursing personnel in these nursing homes consists of licensed staff and non-licensed staff. The licensed nursing personnel includes registered nurses (R.N.) and licensed practical nurses (L.P.N.). The non-licensed nursing personnel includes nursing assistants and supportive nursing staff. The generic term of "nursing assistant" includes certified medication aides (C.M.A.), certified nursing assistants (C.N.A.), and nursing assistants in certification programs (N.A.). Supportive nursing staff can include restorative aides to assist with physical therapy, ward assistants to assist with staffing and appointment scheduling, and social services or medical records personnel to assist the nursing administrative staff.

Nursing assistants in Oregon are required to complete a standardized certification program. If an employer hires a non-certified nursing assistant, the nursing assistant must enroll in a certification program within the first 8 weeks of employment. The basic certification program consists of 60 classroom hours. The program must include the standardized material, but may be conducted in nursing homes or at local community colleges. There are no educational requirements for enroll-

ment in a certification program. Thus, certified nursing assistants have all completed a standardized program, but may have varied formal education backgrounds (Oregon Administrative Rules, 1980).

#### Measurement of Turnover

Turnover is generally measured as the percentage or proportion of leavers to the total number of individuals originally employed (Wieland, 1969). In a broader sense, Asis (1967) refers to turnover as "the movement of wage and salary workers into and out of employment status with respect to individual establishments" (p. 11). Therefore, turnover can encompass accessions or additions to employment and separations or terminations of employment.

One difficulty of interpreting turnover studies is the variation of the classifications for specific types of turnover. Voluntary reasons for turnover in some studies are considered involuntary reasons in other studies. Pregnancy is an example of a reason for turnover classified as both voluntary and involuntary (Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979). Many studies also group employer-initiated reasons for terminations with employee-initiated reasons. Such a grouping fails to differentiate between terminations due to discipline or competence and those due to personal situational characteristics (Peskin, 1973; Price and Mueller, 1981; and Wieland, 1969). This lack of consistency among classifications and the failure to separate employer- from employee-initiated reasons for terminations makes comparisons between studies difficult.

Another difficulty in interpreting turnover studies is the different methods used for calculating the actual turnover rate (Asis, 1967;

Peskin, 1973; Stryker, 1981; Waxman, Carner & Berkenstock, 1984; and Wieland, 1969). In some studies, turnover rates are computed by dividing the total number of terminations over a span of time by the average number of employees. This method could result in employee turnover rates greater than 100%. Other studies compute turnover rates by subtracting stability rates from 100. Stability rates, however, reflect the number of employees who remained in their position during the period of time in question. This method, however, does not reflect multiple terminations within a given position. The two turnover rates are, therefore, not comparable.

#### Organizational Variables Influencing Labor Turnover

Organizational variables recognized as important for understanding nursing home personnel turnover rates are nursing home location, size and ownership (Halbur, 1982; Mobley et al., 1979; Porter & Steers, 1973; and Stryker-Gordon, 1979). The contribution of each variable to turnover is, however, not clear. Organizational variables are defined by Porter and Steers (1973) as "those variables affecting the individual that are primarily determined by persons or events external to the immediate work group" (p. 155).

#### The Influence of Nursing Home Location on Turnover Rates

Nursing home location is defined by various criteria. Some studies define rather than refer to location in relation to the population of the community (Anderson, 1981; Kasteler et al., 1979; Petersen, 1979; and Stryker-Gordon, 1979). Another study discussed location as either urban or rural, yet did not operationalize the terms (Pecarchik and Nelson, 1973). Lastly, the Oregon Center for Population Research and

Census defines urban and rural in relation to the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (S.M.S.A.). The inconsistent use of terms for nursing home location is important when comparing research.

Conflicting findings have been reported in respect to the influence of nursing home location on nursing assistant turnover rates. Petersen (1979) surveyed 247 (69%) Minnesota nursing homes and found nursing homes located in more densely populated communities had significantly higher nursing assistant turnover rates. His findings were not supported by Anderson (1981), Kasteler et al. (1979), or Stryker-Gordon (1979). Anderson (1981) found no relationship between nursing home location and nursing assistant turnover rates. In a study of 83 (74.1%) Utah nursing homes, Kasteler et al. (1979) reported a generally higher total nursing home personnel turnover rate among nursing homes located in communities with 25,000 or more people. He did not, however, find a significant relationship between nursing home location and nursing assistant turnover rates. Lastly, Stryker-Gordon (1979) found a significant relationship between nursing homes located in communities with more than 25,000 people and the total facility turnover rates. However, this relationship was not significant for nursing assistant turnover. The reason for different findings is not clear. However, one reason may be the use of inconsistent definitions of location.

#### The Influence of Nursing Home Size on Turnover Rates

Another organizational variable thought to influence nursing home personnel turnover rates is facility size. Nursing home size is referred to as the licensed bed capacity for providing patient care. Conflicting findings were also reported in reference to the relationship



between nursing home size and nursing assistant turnover rates. Stryker-Gordon (1979) surveyed 110 (25%) Minnesota nursing homes and found nursing homes with more than 100 beds had significantly higher nursing assistant turnover rates. This relationship was supported by Kasteler et al. (1979). Contrary findings were reported by Pecarchik and Nelson (1973) in a survey of 83 Pennsylvania nursing homes. Nursing personnel turnover rates were generally higher in smaller nursing homes. They did not, however, define "smaller" or separate the nursing assistants from the total group of nursing home personnel. Anderson (1981) and Petersen (1979) reported no significant correlation between nursing assistant turnover rates and nursing home bed size. The reason for different findings is not clear, but may be influenced by the inconsistent definitions for large and small nursing homes.

#### The Influence of Nursing Home Ownership Status on Turnover Rates

Organizational ownership is also thought to influence nursing home personnel turnover rates. In the literature, ownership is classified as nonprofit and proprietary. Nonprofit organizations reinvest surplus revenues from the facility income back into the facility operations, whereas proprietary organizations transfer the surplus revenues into dividends and profit-sharing funds for owners and/or stockholders.

Conflicting findings were also reported in reference to the influence of nursing home ownership on nursing assistant turnover rates. In a study of 83 Pennsylvania nursing homes, Pecarchik and Nelson (1973) found proprietary ownership was significantly related to high nursing personnel turnover rates. They did not, however, separately evaluate the relationship for nursing assistants. In two studies specific to

nursing assistants, a significant relationship was found between proprietary nursing homes and high nursing assistant turnover rates (Anderson, 1981; and Petersen, 1979). Anderson's (1981) study was a survey of 56 (62.9%) Oregon intermediate care nursing homes. Contrary findings were reported by Stryker-Gordon (1979), who found nursing assistant turnover rates were not significantly related to ownership status. The reason for different findings is not clear, but it may be due to inconsistent methods used for calculating turnover rates.

In summary, the literature suggests the influence of organizational variables of (a) location, (b) size, and (c) ownership on nursing assistant turnover rates is not clear. Lack of consistent definitions for location, turnover rates, and size make comparisons and conclusions difficult. However, of the three organizational variables discussed, there seems to be the most support for a significant relationship between proprietary ownership and nursing assistant turnover rates.

#### Job-Related Variables Influencing Labor Turnover

The duties and activities required for the successful performance of an individual's particular job can have a significant impact on his decision to remain with, and participate in, the employing organization. Four job-related variables thought to influence turnover are routinization, pay and benefits, instrumental communication, and perceived job autonomy (Lawler, 1971; Porter & Steers, 1973; and Price & Mueller, 1981). Each of these variables is described in the following sections.

#### The Influence of Routinization on Turnover

Routinization can be defined as the degree to which a job is repetitive. The repetitiveness of job tasks, along with other factors, may

contribute to increased job stress and employee turnover rates. The stress resulting from the routine nature of the required job tasks was cited as the primary factor prompting voluntary turnover rates among unskilled and semi-skilled employees (Guest, 1955; Lefkowitz and Katz, 1969; and Wild, 1979). However, when a comparison was made between remaining and terminating hospital staff registered nurses, Price and Mueller (1981) reported no significant relationship between job routinization and turnover rates. This discrepancy could be a result of the different populations and respective job tasks used for the study samples.

There was no literature specific to the influence of routinization on nursing assistant turnover in nursing homes. However, the nursing assistant's job could be considered to have a high degree of routinization similar to that of unskilled and semi-skilled workers. The nursing assistant helps the licensed nurse in the provision of patient care. Each day on the job the nursing assistant helps patients with bowel and bladder management, hygiene, adequate food and fluid intake, and exercise. The performance of the same tasks each day along with the high degree of routinization of the job may influence self-initiated terminations.

#### The Influence of Pay and Benefits on Turnover

Pay refers to "money and its equivalents, such as fringe benefits, which individuals receive for their services to the organization" (Lawler, 1971, p. 1). The importance the individual attaches to pay can influence turnover. For instance, if an employee is aware of another

job with a better wage and places a high level of importance on income, he may leave the organization. Lawler (1971) reports:

1. Organizations that pay higher than average wages seem best able to attract and retain high quality labor.
2. Turnover is high in organizations where wages are low relative to other organizations in the area.
3. The stimulus to leave an organization is greatest when employees in other organizations seem to be making more money (p. 187).

These findings were also supported by Donovan (1980); Dyer, Schwab, and Fossum (1978); Price and Mueller (1981); and Stryker (1981).

The United States Senate Special Committee on Aging (1974) found most nursing assistants are grossly overworked and paid at, or near, the minimum wage. Nursing homes have continued to: (a) pay their nursing assistants low hourly wages, (b) vary on the provision of fringe benefits, and (c) pay low wages in relation to the work required. In a study of 83 representative Pennsylvania nursing homes, Pecarchik and Mather (1971) evaluated the relationship between nursing assistant turnover rates and nursing assistant wages and employee benefits. When comparing proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes, the nonprofit facilities had higher nursing assistant wages, substantially more employee benefits, and lower turnover rates. Pecarchik and Mather, therefore, suggested the difference in pay and benefits may have accounted for the difference in labor turnover rates, since size, location, and available services by themselves did not have a significant effect on turnover.

#### The Influence of Instrumental Communication on Turnover

According to Price and Mueller (1981), "instrumental communication is the degree to which information about the job is transmitted by an organization to its members" (p. 15). If instrumental communication is

high and the employee is attentive to the transmitted information, the role clarity of the employee should be high. Studies report employees who are well informed about their job, prior to and during employment, have an increased intent to stay and a resultant decrease in turnover (Kasteler et al., 1979; Porter & Steers, 1973; Price & Mueller, 1981; and Weitz, 1956). In a survey of hospital staff nurses, the nurses categorized as those most likely to terminate their jobs reported: (a) work rules and regulations in their organization were not clear, (b) the limits of authority were not clear, (c) they could not easily get together and exchange information with people from other departments, and (d) decisions affecting their work were not adequately explained (Lyons, 1968).

One study specific to nursing personnel in nursing homes regarding the influence of instrumental communication on turnover was reported by Kasteler et al. (1979). The nursing homes that had a Director of Nursing Services who carefully explained the full implications of nursing home work before the employee was hired had lower turnover rates. In addition, job satisfaction of the nursing employees was increased and turnover was decreased by having well designed orientation sessions and informative in-service programs. It is not known whether intervening organizational, job-related, and personal variables were controlled.

The influence of adequate instrumental communication on an individual's role clarity and also on turnover is summarized by Porter and Steers:

The degree of role clarity on the part of the individual can apparently affect turnover in two ways. First, an accurate picture of the actual tasks required by the organization can

function to select out, prior to employment, those who do not feel the rewards offered justify doing such tasks. And, secondly, accurate role perceptions can serve to adjust the expectations of those already employed to more realistic levels as to what is expected of them in terms of performance. The resulting increased congruence between expectations and actual experience apparently can serve to increase satisfaction and continued participation (1973, p. 164).

### The Influence of Perceived Job Autonomy on Turnover

Perceived job autonomy is the amount of independence or power an individual perceives he or she has on job-related decisions and activities. Price and Mueller (1981) refer to this as "participation." The literature revealed perceived autonomy was inversely related to absenteeism and turnover (Guest, 1955; Halbur, 1982; Slavitt, Stamps, Piedmont & Haase, 1979; Waxman et al., 1984; and Wolf, 1981).

Given a list of six components of job satisfaction, hospital nurses ranked autonomy as the most important. The six components of job satisfaction in the questionnaire survey were autonomy, job status, pay, task requirements, interaction, and organizational requirements (Slavitt et al., 1979). In reference to nursing homes, Halbur (1982) found minimal nursing personnel involvement in work-related decisions to be a major factor of high turnover in North Carolina nursing homes. Waxman et al. (1984) supported these findings in a study of nursing assistants from seven Philadelphia homes. Nursing assistants reported a higher degree of comfort in more informal, less disciplined, less "centralized" homes where they had more autonomy and decision making power, as well as greater control over their job duties.

In summary, job-related variables have been shown to influence turnover rates. Of the four variables described, routinization of the

job has not been studied in reference to nursing assistant turnover. Low wages, minimal employee benefits, inadequate instrumental communication, and minimal employee involvement in work-related decisions are associated with increased nursing assistant turnover.

#### Personal Variables Influencing Labor Turnover

Characteristics unique to the individual also appear to impact turnover. Variables frequently noted as personal characteristics are age, family considerations, and gender (Halbur, 1982; Mobley et al., 1979; Porter & Steers, 1973; and Price & Mueller, 1981). Each of these variables is described in the following sections with reference to the influence on labor turnover.

#### The Influence of Age on Turnover

Turnover generally is inversely associated with age. Porter and Steers (1973) found, "existing empirical evidence generally agrees that there is a strong negative relationship between increased age and turnover" (p. 164). This finding was supported by McCloskey's (1974) hospital study specific to registered nurses who had left staff nurse positions in general medical-surgical hospitals. Results showed younger nurses left jobs sooner than older nurses, when operationalizing "younger" to be 18-25 years old and "older" to be over 25 years old. According to her, the category of "older age" needs to include individuals over 25 years of age, rather than the previously reported age of 40. Research, specific to nursing assistants, which supports both the negative relationship between age and turnover, as well as the need to lower the previously reported age for "older" was reported by Molberg (1978). Nursing assistants under the age of 28 contributed to nursing assistant

turnover more than those who were 28 or older. It is thought that nursing assistants are generally young; however, no studies were found in the literature and the data is not available from the Oregon Employment Division.

#### The Influence of Family Considerations and Gender on Turnover

Price and Mueller (1981) categorized family considerations as "kinship responsibility" and defined it as "the degree of an individual's obligation to relatives in the community in which the employer is located" (p. 21). It is thought that a combination of family considerations and gender have an influence on turnover rates. However, the review of literature revealed conflicting results regarding this relationship.

Separate studies of female clerical workers and male and female physical therapists cited in Porter and Steers (1973), reported family size and family responsibilities were positively related to turnover for the females, while the impact on men appeared to be mixed. These findings were not supported by Price and Mueller (1981) or Molberg (1978). Price and Mueller found female R.N.s who had successively higher amounts of family considerations had successively higher amounts of intent to stay, and thus decreased the likelihood of turnover. Molberg also reported an inverse relationship between family considerations and turnover. In a study of nursing assistants working in 12 Minneapolis nursing homes, the single females generally were found to contribute to high turnover rates.

In summary, studies reporting the influence of personal characteristics on turnover are limited but suggest that variables such as age, family considerations, and gender can influence turnover. High turnover



among nursing assistants appears to be related to both male and female nursing assistants who are young and single.

#### Summary to the Review of the Literature

As described in the introduction of the paper, nursing assistant turnover is high and can jeopardize the emotional well-being of staff and patients, the quality of patient care, and the financial equilibrium of nursing homes. In reference to the emotional well-being of the remaining staff, turnover can potentially create an inadequate number of staff to provide the required services and result in a shortage of personnel, thus contributing to the employee dissatisfaction level. A higher level of employee dissatisfaction may result in additional turnover and create a vicious circle. The quality of patient care is effected from uneven standards of care and repeated breaking of staff-resident relationships. Lastly, from an organizational standpoint, some turnover may be desirable to provide opportunities for change and to eliminate ineffective performers. However, the high turnover of nursing assistants in Oregon is above a desirable level.

Several explanations offered in the literature for the high turnover were: (a) organizational variables of location, size, and ownership; (b) job-related variables of routinization, pay, benefits, instrumental communication, and perceived job autonomy; and (c) personal variables of age, family considerations, and gender. Nursing homes can be classified according to organizational variables and nursing assistants according to job-related and personal variables. Once the respective influence of each variable is identified, appropriate changes may possibly be implemented in an attempt to decrease turnover rates.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

It is apparent from the literature that the percentage of infirmed elderly in the United States population is projected to increase annually, increasing the demand for nursing homes. Presently, one major problem for nursing homes to provide quality care to the infirmed elderly is high nursing assistant turnover rates. Nursing assistants who provide 80-90% of the daily patient care, have an annual turnover rate of 75% (United States Senate Special Committee on Aging, 1974). Despite the increasing need for nursing assistants and noted high turnover rates, very little substantive research has been conducted on the problem. Nursing home assistants are a valuable source of information and have not been adequately surveyed to gain an understanding of their own perceptions of the variables that may influence turnover rates.

Conflicting results were found in reference to the significant influence of organizational location, size and ownership on nursing assistant turnover rates. Job-related variables of low wages, minimal employee benefits, inadequate instrumental communication, and minimal employee involvement in work-related decisions seemed to be associated with high nursing assistant turnover rates. Also, high turnover rates seemed to be associated with nursing assistants who are young males or young single females. Although job routinization was not studied specific to nursing assistants, it is expected to be associated with high nursing assistant turnover rates.

The intent of this research is twofold: (a) to investigate whether there is a significant relationship between self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates and nursing home location, size, or ownership;

and (b) to investigate self-terminated nursing assistants' responses to questionnaire items pertaining to job-related and personal variables thought to influence turnover rates. In addition to separately investigating the influence of nursing home location, size, and ownership on nursing assistant turnover rates, this study will control for the combined influence of location and size on turnover rates. The nursing assistant responses to a mail questionnaire will be described in relation to significant organizational variables. A schematic model of the expected relationships between organizational, job-related and personal variables to turnover is illustrated in Figure 1. While there may be relationships between the independent variables, these relationships will not be tested in this study.

#### Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant difference between the self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates of urban and rural nursing homes.
2. There will be no significant correlation between the self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates and the number of beds in a nursing home.
3. There will be no significant difference between the self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates of proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes.
4. When controlling for size, there will be no significant difference between the self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates of proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes.

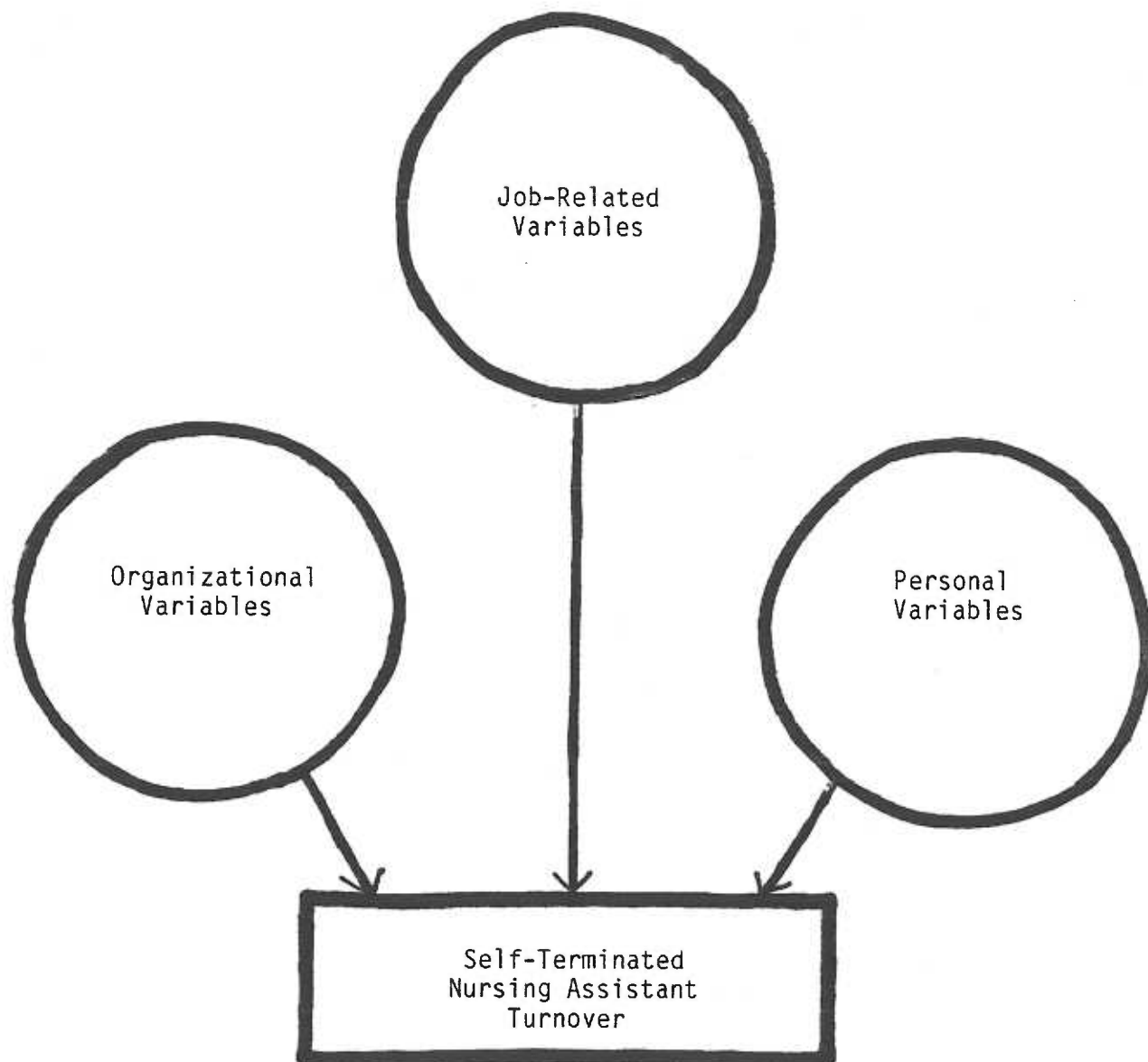


Figure 1: Conceptual relationship between nursing assistant turnover and influential variables.

5. When controlling for size and location, there will be no significant relationship between the self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates of proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes.

### Research Questions

Two additional questions were addressed in this study to investigate the influence of personal and job-related variables on nursing assistant turnover rates.

#### Research Question 1

Since personal variables are thought to influence nursing assistant turnover rates, what are the personal characteristics of nursing assistants who self-terminated employment from nursing homes?

#### Research Question 2

Since job-related variables are thought to influence nursing assistant turnover rates, what are the self-terminated nursing assistants' responses to questions pertaining to the (a) degree of routinization of job activities, (b) amount of employee pay and benefits, (c) level of instrumental communication, and (d) degree of perceived job autonomy?

### Variables

#### Independent Variables

1. Organizational location:
  - a. Rural: Communities located outside the 1980 Oregon census boundaries of Multnomah, Washington, Clark, and Clackamas counties.
  - b. Urban: Communities located within the 1980 Oregon census boundaries of Multnomah, Washington, Clark, and Clackamas counties.
2. Organizational size: The number of beds the nursing home is licensed for provision of patient care.

3. Organizational ownership:

a. Nonprofit: Organization in which surplus revenues from the facility income are reinvested into the facility operations.

b. Proprietary: Organization in which surplus revenues from the facility income are transferred into dividends and profit-sharing for owners and/or stock holders.

4. Routinization: The degree to which the job is repetitive.

5. Pay and benefits: The amount of money, prior to tax deductions, that a certified nursing assistant without experience beyond certification receives for 1 hour of work in a nursing home. Also, the fringe benefits that are available to the nursing assistant, such as medical insurance, life insurance, retirement benefits, educational opportunities, vacations, sick leave, paid holidays, and weekends off.

6. Instrumental communication: The degree to which information about the job is transmitted by an organization to its members.

7. Perceived job autonomy: The amount of independence or power an individual perceives he or she has on job-related decisions and activities.

8. Age: The chronological age in years the respondent indicates on the mail questionnaire for himself or herself.

9. Family considerations: The respondent's reported degree of obligations to relatives in the community in which the employer is located, such as number of children or marital status.

10. Gender: Male or female as identified by the respondent on the mail questionnaire.

Dependent Variable

Self-terminated nursing assistant turnover: The percentage of nursing assistants who self-initiated termination of employment, as compared to the number of nursing assistants employed in that organization at the start of this study. An employee was considered a self-terminated nursing assistant if: (a) he or she was a certified medication aide, certified nursing assistant, or nursing assistant in a certification program; and (b) he or she self-initiated termination of employment for either a reason found in question 48 of the mail questionnaire (see Appendix E) or if the employer had counseled this individual on performance and the individual decided to quit. The nursing assistants who did not report to work for their scheduled shifts, thus self-terminating themselves, were not included in this study. These employees are known as "no-call, no-show" employees, and facilities generally have a policy of two no-call, no-show absences resulting in termination of employment. Conceptually, it is questionable whether the no-call, no-show employees are the same as self-terminated employees. There may be a difference between the two, for the no-call, no-show employees did not responsibly terminate employment. The group of no-call, no-show employees should be studied separately from the self-terminated employees.

Self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates were calculated for the 3-month period of this study by the equation:

$$\frac{\text{\# of self-terminated nursing assistants}}{\text{\# of nursing assistants employed by the nursing home at the start of this study}} \times 100 = \% \text{ for the 3-month period}$$

This method of calculation does not account for stability of any one position that may have been vacated more than once during the 3 months of data collection. However, the problem of the frequency of turnover resulting in changes of personnel and increased costs to the facility for hiring and training personnel are addressed by this calculation method.

Independent variables for the study were measured in the following manner:

1. Organizational location was measured by matching the county in which the nursing home was located with the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (S.M.S.A.) classification for rural and urban areas.

2. Organizational size, ownership, certified nursing assistant pay, raise after probation, tenure, and mailing address were measured by the telephone questionnaire. The telephone questionnaire (see Appendix C) is described in the data collection section.

3. Self-terminated nursing assistants' responses to facility employee benefits, level of job routinization, facility instrumental communication, perceived job autonomy, work status, personal age, personal gender, family considerations, and reasons for self-termination were measured by the mail questionnaire. The mail questionnaire (see Appendix E) is described in the data collection section.



## CHAPTER II

### METHODS

This study was part of a larger study on nursing personnel turnover in Oregon geriatric nursing homes. The investigator collected the data for the larger study and extracted the data specific to self-terminated nursing assistant turnover for this study.

#### Design

Correlational and descriptive research designs were used in this study.

#### Setting and Sample

The setting for this study was the state of Oregon. There were two samples for the study, one of geriatric nursing home organizations and the other of nursing assistants who self-terminated employment from these nursing homes.

The sample of geriatric nursing home organizations was selected from the 1984 Oregon Foundation for Medical Care (O.F.M.C.) list of long-term care facilities ( $N = 177$ ). This list was easily accessible and obtained from O.F.M.C. on May 18, 1984. The information for the list is provided by the Oregon State Health Division and the Senior Services Division. The list included the Oregon nursing homes who were under contract with the Oregon Senior Services Division to take Medicaid-Welfare patients. The State of Oregon had contracted with the O.F.M.C. to do utilization reviews of these respective nursing homes for purposes of financial reimbursement. A disproportionate stratified random sample was chosen for the study. This sampling method was chosen to assure representativeness of organizational location, size, and ownership for

the nonprofit and proprietary nursing homes. The nursing homes were subdivided by ownership, resulting in 37 nonprofit nursing homes and 140 proprietary nursing homes. The stratum of ownership was chosen based on the significant relationship between high nursing assistant turnover rates and proprietary nursing homes found in the literature. One nonprofit nursing home was eliminated because it was a long-term care facility for children. All of the remaining nonprofit nursing homes ( $n = 36$ ) were selected for this study. A 50% ( $n = 70$ ) random sample of the proprietary population was chosen to limit the sample size while maintaining representativeness of proprietary ownership. Of the 106 nursing homes contacted, 31 (84%) nonprofit and 57 (41%) proprietary homes agreed to participate. Of the 88 agreeing to participate, 8 were eliminated from the study due to inadequate data for calculating turnover rates. Analysis was conducted on a sample of 29 nonprofit and 51 proprietary nursing homes. This sample represents 78% and 36%, respectively, of the nonprofit and proprietary nursing homes on the O.F.M.C. list. A comparison of the participating ( $N = 80$ ) and nonparticipating ( $N = 26$ ) nursing homes (see Table 1) in relationship to selected organizational characteristics revealed (a) a higher percentage of participating nursing homes had mixed-level of patient care; (b) a lower percentage of participating nursing homes had intermediate level of patient care; (c) a similar proportion of rural and urban nursing homes; (d) a higher percentage of participating nursing homes located in the Portland and Salem areas; (e) a lower percentage of participating nursing homes in the Eugene, Medford, and Central Oregon areas; and (f) a similar proportion of nonprofit and proprietary homes; and (g) a similar proportion

Table 1  
Selected Organizational Characteristics of Participating and Nonparticipating Nursing Homes

Structural Aspect	Participating Nursing homes N = 80		Nonparticipating Nursing homes N = 26	
	<u>n</u>	% of participants	<u>n</u>	% of nonparticipants
Level of patient care				
Skilled	4	5.0	0	0
Intermediate	33	41.2	16	61.5
Mixed <sup>a</sup>	43	53.8	10	38.5
Location				
Rural	53	66.2	20	76.9
Urban	27	33.8	6	23.1
Cluster area of state				
Portland	19	23.7	3	11.5
Suburban Portland	11	13.7	3	11.5
Coastal	9	11.2	2	7.7
Salem	15	18.8	3	11.5
Eugene	6	7.5	4	15.4
Medford/South Central	7	8.8	4	15.4
Central Oregon	3	3.8	2	7.7
Northern Central Oregon	2	2.5	2	7.7
Eastern Oregon	8	10.0	3	11.5
Ownership				
Nonprofit	29	36.3	7	26.9
Proprietary	51	63.7	19	73.1
Specific type of ownership <sup>b</sup>				
Corporate chain	10	12.5	-	-
Fraternal	1	1.3	-	-
Government	5	6.2	-	-
Hospital district	6	7.5	-	-
Private incorporated	30	37.5	-	-
Private nonincorporated	17	21.2	-	-
Religious	11	13.8	-	-
Size <sup>c</sup>				
1-49 beds	21	26.2	4	15.4
50 or more beds	59	73.8	22	84.6

<sup>a</sup>Nursing homes categorized as having mixed level of care had some combination of acute, skilled, intermediate, residential care, or retirement levels of care.

<sup>b</sup>This data was obtained from the telephone questionnaire and therefore is missing data for the nonparticipants.

<sup>c</sup>The size range for participating nursing homes was 20-325 beds, M = 92.

of homes with 1-49 beds and 50 or more beds. The participating and nonparticipating nursing homes were not compared according to the specific type of ownership. The locations of the participating nursing homes were marked on an Oregon map (see Figure 2) to present a visual interpretation of the cluster areas.

The sample of self-terminated nursing assistants was obtained from a list provided by the participating nursing homes. Only self-terminated nursing assistants that met the study criteria were on the list. The criteria was included in the description of the dependent variable in the previous section. Mail questionnaires were sent to 100% ( $N = 483$ ) of the self-terminated nursing assistants. The response rate for the mail questionnaire was 35.8%. A comparison of the nursing assistants who returned the mail questionnaire with those who did not respond (see Table 2) revealed (a) a higher percentage of participants from urban areas; (b) a higher percentage of participants from Portland and the Coastal areas; (c) a lower percentage of participants from the Medford area; (d) no participants from North Central Oregon; (e) similar percentages representing nursing home ownership, size, and employee work status; and (f) a lower percentage of participants terminating before six months of employment.

#### Data Collection

Data collection was conducted on two levels--nursing home and nursing assistant. The nursing home provided the facility-based data, the data regarding nursing assistant turnover, as well as the addresses of the nursing assistants who met the study criteria. For a description

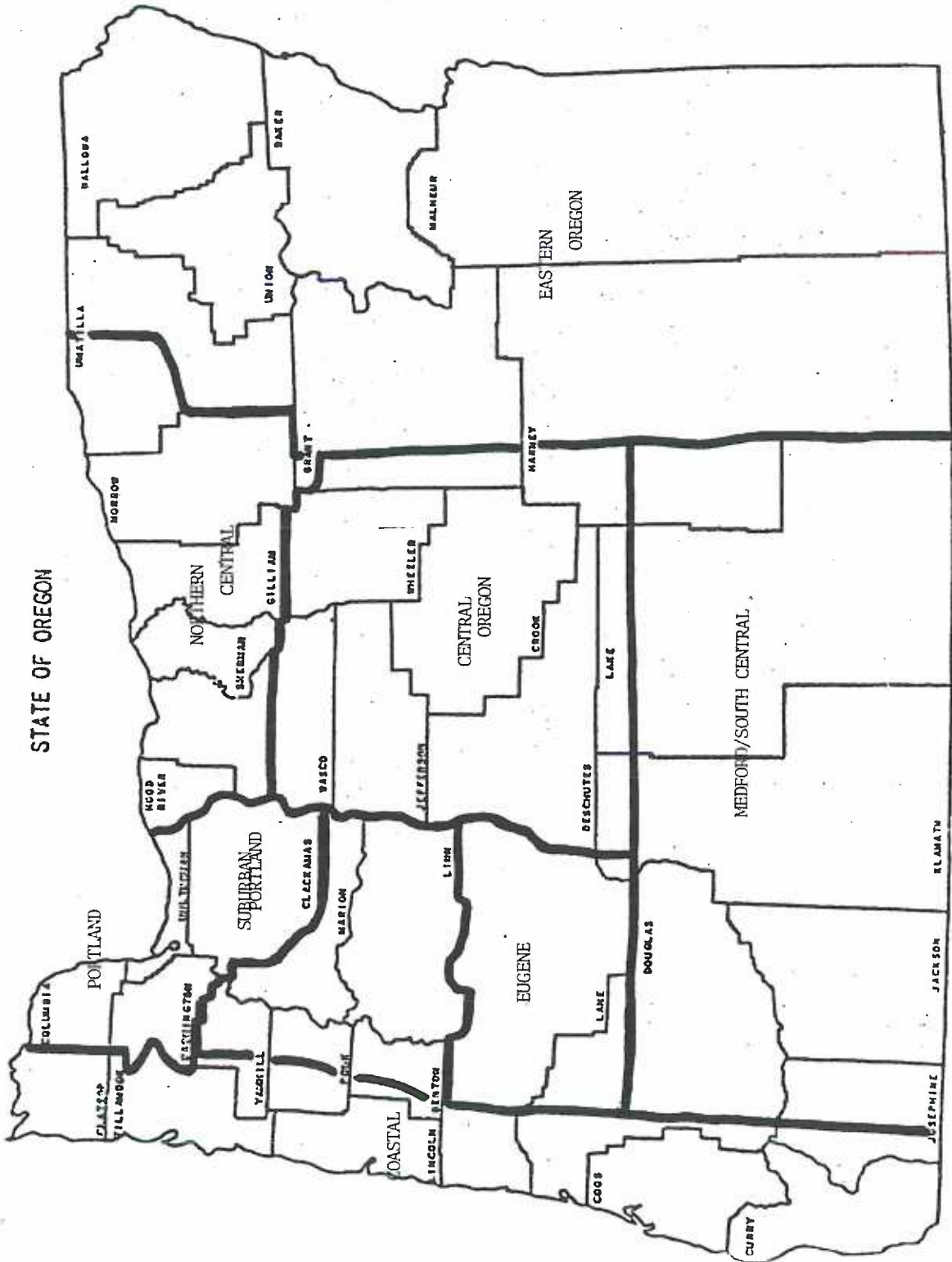


Figure 2: Nursing Home Sample According to Cluster Area Location Within Oregon

Table 2  
Selected Employment Characteristics of Participating and Non-  
participating Nursing Assistants

Employment Characteristics	Participants N = 173		Nonparticipants N = 242 <sup>a</sup>	
	<u>n</u>	% of participants	<u>n</u>	% of nonparticipants
Nursing home location				
Rural	101	58.4	159	65.7
Urban	72	41.6	83	34.3
Cluster area of state				
Portland	54	31.2	55	22.7
Suburban Portland	20	11.6	28	11.6
Coastal	27	15.6	26	10.7
Salem	25	14.5	38	15.7
Eugene	16	9.2	21	8.7
Medford/South Central	15	8.7	37	15.3
Central Oregon	3	1.7	6	2.5
Northern Central Oregon	0	0	2	0.8
Eastern Oregon	13	7.5	29	12.0
Nursing home ownership				
Nonprofit	80	46.2	101	41.7
Proprietary	93	53.8	141	58.3
Nursing home size				
1-49 beds	18	10.4	21	8.7
50 or more beds	155	89.6	221	91.3
Employee work status <sup>b</sup>				
Fulltime	133	76.9	187	77.3
Parttime	31	17.9	55	22.7
Hired for temporary work	4	2.3	-	-
Unknown	5	2.9	0	0
Employee length of employment				
Up to 3 months	56	32.3	97	40.1
3-6 months (inclusive)	26	15.0	52	21.5
Over 6 and up to 12 months	24	13.9	24	9.9
12 months and over	42	24.3	64	26.4
Unknown	25	14.5	5	2.1

<sup>a</sup>Data is missing for 68 nonparticipants.

<sup>b</sup>Employee work status was obtained by the mail questionnaire for the participants and by the telephone questionnaire for the nonparticipants.

of the data that was collected, refer to the explanation of the instruments below. Data collection extended over a 3-month period: June, July, and August, 1984.

Initially, Keren Wilson, PhD., Director of Education and Special Projects of the Oregon Association of Homes for the Aging, made phone contacts to the administrators of the nursing homes in the sample for their approval of participation in the study. A packet of information was then mailed to the respective participating administrators by the investigator. The purposes of this packet were to further explain the study, provide the contact person with a copy of the telephone questionnaire, and provide the facility with the information that would be mailed to the nursing assistants who qualified for a mail questionnaire. This packet included:

1. An introductory cover letter (Appendix A);
2. A copy of the research plan (Appendix B);
3. A structured, open-ended telephone questionnaire used to gather data regarding characteristics of the facility and nursing personnel turnover (Appendix C);
4. A copy of the letter used for the mail questionnaire sent to nursing assistants who self-terminated employment during June, July, or August, 1984 (Appendix D); and
5. A copy of the mail questionnaire sent to the respective nursing assistants (Appendix E).

The items in the appendices are those used for the collection of data for the larger study on nursing personnel turnover in Oregon's geriatric nursing homes. The data for this study specific to self-

terminated nursing assistant turnover was extracted from the larger data base. The items extracted for this study are described in the following section of this report.

A week after the informational packet was mailed, a telephone call to the designated facility contact person was made for the purpose of clarifying any questions and to begin data collection of the telephone questionnaire (see Appendix C). Follow-up telephone calls were made to the contact people on an every-other-week or every-third-week basis, depending on the preference of the contact person. Data was collected during June, July, and August, 1984.

The addresses for the mail questionnaires were obtained from the nursing home contact person. This included addresses of certified medication aides, certified nursing assistants, and nursing assistants who self-terminated employment during June, July, or August, 1984. The administrators of 15% ( $n = 12$ ) of the participating nursing homes stated a preference not to release the addresses of candidates for the mail questionnaire. For these specific cases, the investigator mailed the contact person of the respective nursing homes the appropriate number of prepackaged, stamped, yet unsealed questionnaires. Directions for appropriately addressing these questionnaires with a note of appreciation to the contact person were included with the questionnaires. The investigator mailed the explanatory letter, questionnaire, and self-addressed, stamped envelope to the potential respondents as appropriate addresses were obtained. Questionnaires were coded to provide for confidentiality of the respondents, yet to also allow the investigator the ability to determine those that were returned and those that were not



returned. (See Appendices D and E for copies of the nursing assistant explanatory letter and the questionnaire).

Various techniques by Dillman (1978) were utilized in an effort to increase the mail questionnaire response rate. To avoid the appearance of a form letter, the name of each administrator or nursing assistant was typed as the salutation on all correspondence in the study. Also, to personalize all correspondence, each letter was individually signed. The questionnaire format did maximize white space, but it was lengthy. Questionnaire items followed a theme and were simply worded. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was included in each mailing. The usual assurances of confidentiality, pleas for cooperation, and appreciation for participation were worded in a direct, personal manner. The follow-up mailing included a different form letter with a second mail questionnaire and self-addressed, stamped envelope. Mail questionnaires were returned to the Oregon Association of Homes for the Aging. (See Appendix F for the follow-up form letter.)

If the questionnaire was not returned within 3-4 weeks, a follow-up mailing as described above was sent. Follow-up mailings were not sent to those individuals that the contact person had identified as having moved, nor to those individuals from facilities which mailed the questionnaires. For the latter group, the investigator was unable to match the returned questionnaires with initial subjects. Therefore, it was not feasible to do follow-up mailings for these subjects. It was decided to mail initial questionnaires but not to do follow-up mailings to the subjects from August 15-31, 1984. This decision was based on the low return rate of the follow-up mailings (8%) and time constraints.

### Instruments

As described above, this study is part of a larger study. The description of the telephone questionnaire instrument will only address items used for this study. The description of the mail questionnaire will include specific references to items used for this study.

#### Telephone Questionnaire

The structured, open-ended telephone questionnaire was divided into two parts--facility-related questions and questions related to nursing assistants. The facility-related questions that were answered by telephone contacts pertained to nursing home size, ownership, certified nursing assistant pay, and budgeted fulltime equivalents for nursing assistants. Once the facility-related questions were answered, they were not readdressed. The questions specific to nursing assistants pertained to the work status, tenure, reason for termination, and mailing address of the self-terminated nursing assistants. These questions were addressed with each phone contact to gather successive data from the last phone contact. The level of measure for this tool was nominal and interval. The obtained data was of factual context. (See Appendix C for a copy of this telephone questionnaire.)

It is assumed that the contact person gave accurate responses to the telephone questionnaire. The purposes of the study were explained to the contact person and confidentiality was assured in an effort to encourage complete responses. They had the opportunity not to participate if desired.

### Mail Questionnaire

The Price and Mueller (1981) questionnaire for assessing 13 predictive variables of professional nursing staff turnover was adapted to the purposes of this study. The instrument is a self-administered questionnaire with 51 questions, some questions having several items. Because the focus of this study was on self-terminated nursing assistants, and not professional nurses, the questions relating to the variable of professionalism were deleted. In addition, the tense of the verbs was changed, and the questions measuring the intent to stay were deleted. In all, there were 10 questions deleted from the Price and Mueller questionnaire, and their numbers were reassigned. The deleted questions were, 5, 6, 27, 30-33, 39, 50, and 52. Seven questions were added to the questionnaire for the purposes of this study. Five of the additional questions were nominal level of measure regarding gender, status of previous employment, specific reasons for leaving employment, and information regarding present employment. One additional question referred to years of education and was an interval level of measurement. An open-ended final question was added and requested any further remarks from the respondents. The added questions were 9, 34, 45, and 47-50. The revised questionnaire contained nominal, ordinal, and interval levels of measurement. For the purpose of this study, questions 6-8, 10, 13, 15, 17, 27-28, 33-34, 36, 37, 45 and 48 were utilized. (See Appendix E for the mail questionnaire.)

The Price and Mueller questionnaire has been evaluated for convergent, discriminant, and face validity of the variables as well as the reliability of the variables (Price and Mueller, 1981). The convergent

validity was assessed by using factor analysis on 9 of the 13 variables, and the average loading was .75. The other four variables were accepted based on their face validity and discriminatory power. Reliability was assessed by Cronbach's coefficient alpha, and the average alpha was .83. It is recommended that an instrument for basic research have an alpha of .80; therefore, this instrument appears to possess satisfactory internal consistency.

#### Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of: (a) calculation of self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates for the 80 participating nursing homes for the 3-month period; (b) comparison of the turnover rates in relationship to the variables of nursing home location, size, and ownership; (c) measures of central tendency on the responses from the mail questionnaire of the self-terminated nursing assistants from the participating nursing homes; and (d) comparison of the data from the self-terminated nursing assistant respondents, in relation to nursing home ownership. The degree to which turnover rates were related to the dichotomous variables of nursing home location and ownership was assessed by using the F and t tests with either separate or pooled variance estimates. Pearson's product moment correlation test was used to examine the relationship of turnover to the continuous variable of nursing home size.

CHAPTER III  
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Hypotheses Findings

The hypotheses in this study addressed the influence of nursing home location, size, and ownership status on self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates. For the 80 nursing homes participating in this study (see Table 3), the self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates for a 3-month interval ranged from 0-186.2%. Turnover rates most frequently occurred in the range of 10.00-19.99%. The mean, median, and standard deviation were 18.97%, 14.65%, and 23.40, respectively. This finding may seem low compared to the annual average turnover rate of 75 to over 100% reported in the literature; however, this finding represents turnover rates for only one-quarter of a year. Based on the mean turnover rate ( $\bar{M} = 18.97\%$ ) revealed by this 3-month study, the estimated average annual turnover rate for self-terminated nursing assistants would be 75.88%. Therefore, the finding from this study is consistent with the literature. The turnover rates for this study were limited to the self-terminated nursing assistants excluding those who were classified as no-call, no-show. Nursing assistants who were terminated by the nursing homes were also excluded. This may account for the estimated average annual turnover rate of this study being in the lower portion of the reported range of such rates.

Hypothesis 1

There will be no significant difference between the self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates of urban and rural nursing homes.

In the sample ( $N = 80$ ), there were 27 (33.8%) urban and 53 (66.2%)

Table 3  
The Range of Turnover Rates for the Participating Nursing Homes

Quarterly turnover rate	Participating nursing homes <u>N</u> = 80	
	<u>n</u>	%
0-9.99	27	33.8
10.00-19.99	28	35.0
20.00-49.99	21	26.2
50.00-186.2	4	5.0

rural nursing homes. The ranges for turnover rates of the 27 urban homes and the 53 rural homes, respectively, were 0-78.6 and 0-186.2%.

When a t-test was used to examine a combination of large and small nursing homes of both proprietary and nonprofit ownership status, there was no significant difference between the self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates of urban and rural nursing homes.

The hypothesis was also tested excluding the nursing home with the outlying turnover rate of 186.2%. The t-test results (see Table 4), remained nonsignificant, thus the null hypothesis was accepted. Location of the nursing home (urban or rural) is not significantly related to the self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates.

#### Hypothesis 2

There will be no significant correlation between the self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates and the number of beds in a nursing home.

For the nursing home sample (N = 80) (see Appendix G), the bed capacity ranged from 20-325, M = 92, median = 81, SD = 53.4. The

Table 4  
The Relationship of Self-Terminated Nursing Assistant Turnover Rates to  
 Nursing Home Characteristics

Nursing home characteristic	Sample size <u>n</u>	Turnover mean <u>M</u>	Standard deviation <u>SD</u>	Significance of difference
<u>Hypothesis 1</u>				
Location-S.M.S.A. <sup>a</sup>				
Urban	27	17.3	15.8	<u>t</u> = 0.268
Rural	52	16.6	12.8	
<u>Hypothesis 2</u>				
Size <sup>b</sup>	80	18.8	23.4	<u>r</u> = .054
<u>Hypothesis 3</u>				
Ownership				
Proprietary	50	18.7	15.7	<u>t</u> = 1.806*
Nonprofit	29	13.7	8.7	
<u>Hypothesis 4</u>				
Ownership when controlled for size <sup>c</sup>				
Large proprietary	33	19.7	13.7	<u>t</u> = 1.796*
Large nonprofit	25	14.4	8.6	
<u>Hypothesis 5</u>				
Ownership when controlled for size and location --S.M.S.A.				
Large urban				
Proprietary	13	16.1	12.8	<u>t</u> = 0.238
Nonprofit	9	15.2	7.0	
Large rural				
Proprietary	20 <sup>c</sup>	21.9	14.3	<u>t</u> = 1.95*
Nonprofit	16	14.0	9.6	

<sup>a</sup>S.M.S.A. = Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area classification for urban and rural areas.

<sup>b</sup>The bed capacity of the nursing homes (N = 80) ranged from 20-325. M = 92, Median = 81, and SD = 53.4. The nursing home with a turnover rate of 186.2% was included in the analysis.

<sup>c</sup>Sample size was limited to nursing homes with 50 and more beds (large). The group of nursing homes (n = 21) categorized as small (0-49 beds) was an inadequate sample for testing. The small sample resulted in 4 non-profit and 17 proprietary nursing homes.

\*p < .10.

self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates ranged from 0-186.2%. When a combination of urban and rural nursing homes of both proprietary and nonprofit status were tested by the Pearson product moment correlation (see Table 4), there was no significant correlation between the self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates of nursing homes and nursing home bed capacity. An examination of the scattergram indicated that the results would not be changed by eliminating the outlying turnover rate of 186.2%. This finding suggests size, by itself, does not significantly influence turnover rates. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

### Hypothesis 3

There will be no significant difference between the self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates of proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes.

When a t-test was used to examine a combination of urban and rural nursing homes of all sizes, the findings indicated:

1. Ownership status is significantly related to turnover rates, and proprietary nursing homes have higher turnover rates than nonprofit homes,  $t(78) = 1.91$ ,  $p < .10$ .

2. In proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes, the nursing assistant turnover rates ranged from 0-186.2% and 0-28%, respectively.

A t-test was also used to test this hypothesis omitting the nursing home with a turnover rate of 186.2%. Ownership remained significant at the  $p < .10$  level. See Table 4 for the t-values. This finding suggests proprietary ownership does influence self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.



#### Hypothesis 4

When controlling for size, there will be no significant difference between the self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates of proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes.

The sample ( $N = 80$ ) was matched according to size and ownership status. Size was categorized into small, less than 50 beds, and large, 50 or more beds. The matching of the nursing homes resulted in 4 (5.0%) small nonprofit, 17 (21.2%) small proprietary, 25 (31.3%) large nonprofit, and 34 (42.5%) large proprietary nursing homes. This revealed there was an inadequate number of small nursing homes in the sample for further testing. The ranges for turnover rates of the 34 large proprietary and 25 large nonprofit nursing homes were 0-186.2% and 0-28.0%, respectively.

When a t-test was used to examine a combination of large urban and rural nursing homes, ownership was found to be significantly related to turnover,  $p < .10$ . Large proprietary nursing homes had higher turnover rates than large nonprofit homes,  $t(56) = 1.79$ ,  $p < .10$ . When retested without the large proprietary nursing home with the outlying turnover rate of 186.2%, the results remained significant (see Table 4). The findings suggest higher self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates among proprietary nursing homes is attributed to ownership and not to the fact that proprietary homes are often large in bed capacity. No conclusion can be made in reference to small nursing homes. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected for large nursing homes.

### Hypothesis 5

When controlling for size and location, there will be no significant relationship between the self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates of proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes.

The sample ( $N = 80$ ) was matched according to (a) bed capacity (viz., small, less than 50, and large, 50 or more); (b) urban or rural location; and (c) proprietary or nonprofit ownership status. The matching of the sample according to these three categories revealed there was an inadequate number of small nursing homes in the sample for further testing. The category of large urban nursing homes was comprised of 13 proprietary and 9 nonprofit nursing homes, and the ranges for turnover rates were 0-51.0% and 4.4-26.8%, respectively. The large rural nursing home with a turnover rate of 186.2% was omitted from the analysis. The category of large rural nursing homes was comprised of 20 proprietary and 16 nonprofit nursing homes, and the ranges for turnover rates were 5.1-61.5% and 0-32.0%, respectively.

Separate t-tests were computed for large urban and large rural proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes (see Table 4). The first comparison examined large urban nursing homes and found ownership status was not significantly related to self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates among this group of nursing homes. This finding suggests that turnover rates among large urban nursing homes does not appear to be attributable to ownership status. No conclusion can be made in reference to small urban nursing homes.

The second comparison examined large rural nursing homes and found a significant relationship between ownership status of large rural homes

and turnover rates. Nursing homes with proprietary ownership status had higher self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates than nonprofit homes. This finding suggests that proprietary ownership status does significantly influence turnover rates for large rural homes, and it does not appear to be due to the nursing homes being large in bed capacity or located in rural areas. No conclusion can be made in reference to small rural nursing homes. Therefore, the null hypothesis was (a) not tested for nursing homes with less than 50 beds, (b) accepted for large urban nursing homes, and (c) rejected for large rural homes.

#### Hypotheses Discussion

Five hypotheses were tested to determine whether there was a significant relationship between selected nursing home organizational variables and self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates. The selected organizational variables were location, size, and ownership status. Location and size were not significantly related to nursing assistant turnover rates. Ownership status was significantly related to turnover rates at the  $p < .10$  level for the total nursing home sample and for the large nursing homes in the sample. When controlled for location, the relationship between ownership status and nursing assistant turnover rates was significant for large rural nursing homes, but not for large urban nursing homes.

#### The Relationship of Self-Terminated Nursing Assistant Turnover Rates to Nursing Home Location

The lack of a significant relationship between turnover rates and nursing home location for urban and rural areas was consistent with the findings of Anderson (1981), Pecarchik and Nelson (1973), and Stryker-

Gordon (1979). The findings of this study were, however, contrary to those of Petersen (1979). He reported nursing homes located in more densely populated communities had significantly higher nursing assistant turnover rates. The discrepancy between the findings of this study and those of Petersen may be due to the inconsistency of defining the location of the nursing homes. Many of the nursing homes in this study would have been reclassified using Petersen's (1979) community-based definition of location. Using the S.M.S.A. definition of location, there were 27 urban and 53 rural nursing homes in this sample. The rural nursing home with the outlying turnover rate of 186.2% was eliminated for data analysis. Therefore, the mean self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates were 17.3% for the urban homes and 16.6% for the rural homes. If the nursing home location was reclassified according to the community-based definition, there would be 36 homes located in cities with 25,000 or more people (urban) and 43 homes located in cities with less than 25,000 people (rural). The mean self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates for urban and rural nursing homes would be 19.7% and 14.4%, respectively. The difference between the means would be greater using the community-based definition of location, and might be statistically significant.

#### The Relationship of Self-Terminated Nursing Assistant Turnover Rates to Nursing Home Size

The absence of a significant relationship between nursing assistant turnover rates and nursing home bed capacity was consistent with Anderson (1981) and Petersen (1979). The results of this study, however, were contrary to the significant relationship reported by Stryker-

Gordon (1979). The findings of this study were, however, contrary to those of Petersen (1979). He reported nursing homes located in more densely populated communities had significantly higher nursing assistant turnover rates. The discrepancy between the findings of this study and those of Petersen may be due to the inconsistency of defining the location of the nursing homes. Many of the nursing homes in this study would have been reclassified using Petersen's (1979) community-based definition of location. Using the S.M.S.A. definition of location, there were 27 urban and 53 rural nursing homes in this sample. The rural nursing home with the outlying turnover rate of 186.2% was eliminated for data analysis. Therefore, the mean self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates were 17.3% for the urban homes and 16.6% for the rural homes. If the nursing home location was reclassified according to the community-based definition, there would be 36 homes located in cities with 25,000 or more people (urban) and 43 homes located in cities with less than 25,000 people (rural). The mean self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates for urban and rural nursing homes would be 19.7% and 14.4%, respectively. The difference between the means would be greater using the community-based definition of location, and might be statistically significant.

#### The Relationship of Self-Terminated Nursing Assistant Turnover Rates to Nursing Home Size

The absence of a significant relationship between nursing assistant turnover rates and nursing home bed capacity was consistent with Anderson (1981) and Petersen (1979). The results of this study, however, were contrary to the significant relationship reported by Stryker-

Gordon (1979) between nursing homes with more than 100 beds and higher nursing assistant turnover rates. As seen in Table 4, the correlation between nursing home bed capacity and self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates is in the same direction as reported in the literature; however, it is not statistically significant.

A partial explanation for the absence of a significant relationship between nursing home size and turnover rates might be the computing method used for turnover rates. There were two methods found in the literature for calculating turnover rates. Although Stryker-Gordon (1979) used the same equation for calculating turnover rates as this study, she utilized total nursing assistant turnover rates calculated by various nursing home administrators. Turnover rates for this study were calculated by the investigator in an attempt to increase consistency. It is unknown which method for calculating turnover rates was used in the other studies. Therefore, the difference in the finding may be due to the use of turnover rates calculated by only one individual or due to the use of only self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates.

#### The Relationship of Self-Terminated Nursing Assistant Turnover Rates to Nursing Home Ownership Status

The significant relationship found between ownership status of nursing homes and higher nursing assistant turnover rates is consistent with previous studies by Anderson (1981), Pecarchik and Nelson (1973), and Petersen (1979). The results, however, were contrary to Stryker-Gordon's (1979) study reporting no significant difference between nursing home ownership and nursing assistant turnover rates. Kasteler

et al. (1979) did not investigate the influence of ownership on turnover rates.

There were no studies found in the literature which investigated the relationship between ownership status on turnover rates when controlled for size. In this study, when nursing homes were controlled for size, there was a significant relationship between large proprietary nursing homes and turnover rates. Small nursing homes were not tested. This finding suggests that the significant relationship is between proprietary ownership status and nursing assistant turnover rates, not the large size of the nursing home. Once again, this contradicts the significant relationship reported by Stryker-Gordon (1979) between nursing homes with more than 100 beds and higher nursing assistant turnover rates. An explanation for the difference in findings may be this study's classification of size according to small (having less than 50 beds) and large (having 50 or more beds). Stryker-Gordon's (1979) finding is, however, based on a correlation test.

The influence of ownership status on turnover rates, which controlled for size and location, was also not reported in the literature. This study found a significant relationship between large rural proprietary nursing homes and nursing assistant turnover rates. Small nursing homes were not evaluated. This finding isolates the significant relationship between proprietary ownership status and turnover rates one step further. The finding also suggests this significant relationship is not due to the nursing home being large or located in a rural area; however, it is due to the proprietary ownership status. The distinction

between the characteristics of proprietary and nonprofit ownership status needs to be studied further.

In summary, the findings from the hypothesis testing have narrowed the previous research in reference to the influence of nursing home ownership status on nursing assistant turnover rates. When controlling for size, large proprietary nursing homes had significantly higher turnover rates than large nonprofit. No conclusions could be made for small homes (less than 50 beds) due to the inadequate sample size. When controlling for size and location, the results varied for urban and rural areas. Ownership status was significantly related to turnover rates for large rural but not large urban nursing homes. Findings suggest nursing assistant turnover rates in large urban nursing homes may be influenced by variables other than proprietary ownership, such as small bed capacity, job-related variables, or personal variables.

#### Findings and Discussion of Research Questions

The nursing assistant participants in this study cannot be considered representative of all nursing assistants. Although the nursing homes were selected in a manner which maximized representativeness, and all self-terminated nursing assistants were included in the survey, the response rate was low. Questionnaires were mailed to 483 nursing assistants and 173 (35.8%) were returned. The returned questionnaires were used for analysis. See Table 2 for a comparison of the nursing assistant participants and nonparticipants. Due to the lack of representativeness, generalizations cannot be made based on this research. The findings do, however, contribute to the description of the nursing assistants who self-terminated.



### Research Question 1

Since personal variables are thought to influence nursing assistant turnover rates, what are the personal characteristics of nursing assistants who self-terminated employment from nursing homes?

The personal variables found in the literature that are thought to influence turnover rates are (a) age, (b) family considerations, and (c) gender. Information pertaining to these variables was gathered by the nursing home telephone questionnaire and the nursing assistant mail questionnaire. Since there was a significant difference between self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates for proprietary and non-profit homes, the 173 respondents to the mail questionnaire were divided according to the ownership of their respective nursing homes. This resulted in 93 participants from proprietary homes and 80 from nonprofit homes.

Participants from proprietary nursing homes represent 31 homes. Of these, 65.6% are from rural proprietary nursing homes and 34.4% are from urban proprietary homes. All cluster areas on the map of Oregon (see Figure 2) were represented except North Central Oregon. The respective facility bed capacities ranged from 20-194 beds with a mean of 99. Participants from nonprofit nursing homes represent 19 homes. Of these participants, 50.0% are from rural nonprofit homes and 50.0% are from urban nonprofit homes. All cluster areas on the map of Oregon (see Figure 2) were represented except Central and North Central Oregon. The respective facility bed capacities ranged from 43-325 with a mean of 172. Selected personal characteristics could not be investigated on the nursing assistants (N = 310) who did not return the mail questionnaire;

however, selected employment characteristics of the nonparticipants were discussed in Chapter II (see Table 2).

The self-terminated nursing assistants who responded from both types of homes were very similar on the following variables. A high percentage were (a) less than 25 years old, (b) single, (c) not responsible for children while employed, and (d) females. Additional personal characteristics not addressed in the literature review, yet surveyed by the mail questionnaire, were the nursing assistant's highest grade of education, work status, and length of employment at the previous nursing home. When comparing the participants from both types of homes based on these additional personal characteristics (see Table 5), the majority of nursing assistants had (a) completed more than 12 years of school, (b) worked fulltime at the nursing home from which they had self-terminated, and (c) self-terminated employment prior to 3 months. All participants had completed at least 10 years of school.

Participants from proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes were different on several personal characteristics. A higher percentage of self-terminated nursing assistants from proprietary than nonprofit homes were (a) males, (b) married, and (c) responsible for children while employed. Also, a higher percentage of participants from nonprofit homes had worked 12 or more months.

In summary, most nursing assistants who self-terminated employment, regardless of ownership status of the nursing home, were less than 25 years old. This finding is consistent with the studies by McCloskey (1974) and Molberg (1978). Also, the finding that most nursing assistants self-terminated prior to 3 months supports Halbur (1982) and

Table 5

Selected Personal Characteristics of Nursing Assistants Who Have Self-Terminated Employment From Proprietary and Nonprofit Nursing Homes

Personal characteristic	Participants from proprietary nursing homes <sup>a</sup> <u>N</u> = 93		Participants from nonprofit nursing homes <sup>b</sup> <u>N</u> = 80	
	<u>n</u>	%	<u>n</u>	%
Age <sup>c</sup>				
Less than 25 years old	37	39.8	35	43.8
25-29	17	18.3	14	17.5
30-34	11	11.8	10	12.5
35-39	10	10.8	10	12.5
40-49	14	15.1	10	12.5
50-60	3	3.2	1	1.2
60 or over	1	1.1	0	0
Gender <sup>c</sup>				
Male	14	15.1	7	8.7
Female	79	84.9	73	91.2
Marital status <sup>c</sup>				
Married	38	40.8	25	31.3
Single never married	31	33.3	32	40.0
Widowed	1	1.1	0	0
Divorced or separated	20	21.5	21	26.3
Unknown	3	3.3	2	2.4

(Continued on next page)

<sup>a</sup>Participants from proprietary nursing homes represent 31 homes. Of the participants, 65.6% are from rural nursing homes and 34.4% urban homes. No participants responded from North Central Oregon proprietary nursing homes. The facility bed capacities ranged from 20-194, M = 99.

<sup>b</sup>Participants from nonprofit nursing homes represent 19 homes. Of the participants, 50.0% are from rural nursing homes and 50.0% urban homes. No participants responded from Central or North Central Oregon nonprofit nursing homes. The facility bed capacities ranged from 43-325, M = 172.

<sup>c</sup>Data was gathered by nursing assistant mail questionnaire.

Table 5 (Continued)

Personal characteristic	Participants from proprietary nursing homes <sup>a</sup> <u>N</u> = 93		Participants from nonprofit nursing homes <sup>b</sup> <u>N</u> = 80	
	<u>n</u>	%	<u>n</u>	%
Children to care for while employed <sup>c</sup>				
Yes	39	41.9	31	38.7
No	54	58.1	49	61.3
Highest grade of school completed <sup>c</sup>				
10-11th	8	8.6	7	8.8
12th	32	34.4	30	37.5
More than 12	49	52.6	39	48.7
Unknown	4	4.4	4	5.0
Employee work status <sup>c</sup>				
Fulltime	71	76.3	62	77.5
Parttime	17	18.3	14	17.5
Hired for temporary work	2	2.2	2	2.5
Unknown	3	3.2	2	2.5
Employee length of employment <sup>d</sup>				
Up to 3 months	29	31.2	27	33.7
3-6 months (inclusive)	14	15.0	12	15.0
Over 6 and up to 12 months	17	18.3	7	8.8
12 months and over	15	16.1	27	33.7
Unknown	18	19.4	7	8.8

<sup>a</sup>Participants from proprietary nursing homes represent 31 homes. Of the participants, 65.6% are from rural nursing homes and 34.4% urban homes. No participants responded from North Central Oregon proprietary nursing homes. The facility bed capacities ranged from 20-194, M = 99.

<sup>b</sup>Participants from nonprofit nursing homes represent 19 homes. Of the participants, 50.0% are from rural nursing homes and 50.0% urban homes. No participants responded from Central or North Central Oregon nonprofit nursing homes. The facility bed capacities ranged from 43-325, M = 172.

<sup>c</sup>Data was gathered by nursing assistant mail questionnaire.

<sup>d</sup>Data was gathered by facility telephone questionnaire.

Stryker-Gordon (1979). The finding that most nursing assistants who self-terminated from proprietary nursing homes were married and responsible for child care while employed was not consistent with the inverse relationship between turnover and family considerations cited in the literature (Molberg, 1978; and Price and Mueller, 1981).

### Research Question 2

Since job-related variables are thought to influence nursing assistant turnover rates, what are the self-terminated nursing assistants' responses to questions pertaining to the (a) degree of routinization of job activities, (b) amount of employee pay and benefits, (c) level of instrumental communication, and (d) degree of perceived job autonomy?

Self-terminated nursing assistants were surveyed by a mail questionnaire pertaining to the above job-related variables. Since there was a significant difference between self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates for proprietary and nonprofit homes, the 173 respondents to the mail questionnaire were divided according to the ownership of their respective nursing homes. This resulted in 93 participants from proprietary homes and 80 from nonprofit homes. Additional descriptive characteristics of these participants was presented in the previous discussion of research question 1.

In response to questions pertaining to the degree of routinization of job activities, nursing assistants from both proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes most frequently responded (a) there was little or no variety with the job, (b) the job was done the same way each day, and (c) there was a great deal of repetitiveness with the job (see Appendix H). Nursing assistants from nonprofit homes more frequently reported

the job activities were very routine, whereas the majority from proprietary homes reported the job activities were quite routine. A higher percentage of nursing assistants from proprietary homes as compared to those from nonprofit homes indicated there was a very great deal of repetitiveness with the job. The inconsistency between the nursing assistants' responses on the specific questions pertaining to the routinization of job activities and the repetitiveness of the job may indicate that they do not equate routinization with repetitiveness. The job-related variable of pay was investigated based on data from both the telephone and mail questionnaires. Information given by the facility contact person was matched with each nursing assistant who returned a questionnaire. A comparison between the participants from proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes revealed the ranges for the base C.N.A. wage, respectively, were \$3.35-4.60 and \$3.35-5.75, with means of \$3.56 and \$3.79 (see Table 6). The ranges for the raise after probation for the proprietary and nonprofit homes, respectively, were \$.00-.25 and \$.00-.48, with means of \$.11 and \$.10. Therefore, the difference between the proprietary and nonprofit homes, in relation to wages and raises, appears to be in the initial base wage rather than the amount of pay raise after probation. As seen in Table 6, it is apparent that nonprofit homes on the average pay \$.23 more per hour for starting certified nursing assistants. The findings from the comparison of the facility-given information were consistent with the responses to the questions on the mail questionnaire pertaining to pay. Participants from proprietary nursing homes when compared with participants from nonprofit nursing homes more frequently indicated pay was very poor or

Table 6

Comparison of Nonprofit and Proprietary Nursing Home Wages and Raises  
for Nursing Assistants Who Self-Terminated Employment

Statistic	Participants from proprietary nursing homes <sup>a</sup> <u>N</u> = 93	Participants from nonprofit nursing homes <sup>b</sup> <u>N</u> = 80
Base C.N.A. wage per hour		
Range	\$3.35 - 4.60	\$3.35 - 5.75
Mean	\$3.56	\$3.79
Median	\$3.53	\$3.65
Standard deviation	21.4	42.7
Raise per hour after probation for C.N.A.		
Range	\$.00 - .25	\$.00 - .48
Mean	\$.11	\$.10
Median	\$.10	\$.05
Standard deviation	5.0	12.9
<p><sup>a</sup>The participants responded from 31 nursing homes. Sixty-seven (72.0%) responded from nursing homes with a probationary period of 3 months. Four responded from nursing homes with no raise after probation.</p> <p><sup>b</sup>The participants responded from 19 nursing homes. Forty-five (56.2%) responded from nursing homes with a probationary period of 3 months. Thirty responded from nursing homes with no raise after probation.</p>		

poor as compared to the effort and contribution made by the respective nursing assistant (see Appendix H).

Another job-related variable thought to influence turnover rates is benefits, such as medical insurance, vacation pay, and educational opportunities. The participants from both proprietary and nonprofit homes reported benefits, other than vacation and holiday pay, were gen-

erally poor; however, many did not know about the available benefits (see Appendix H). The participants from both types of nursing homes indicated vacation and holiday pay were average. A higher percentage of participants from proprietary homes than nonprofit homes noted the benefits for (a) retirement, (b) educational opportunities, (c) vacations, (d) sick leave, (e) holiday pay, and (f) weekends off were very poor. The fact that many participants did not know about available benefits may be due to their length of employment as compared to the length of employment required for earning benefits. Of the participants from proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes, 31.2% and 33.7%, respectively, self-terminated employment prior to 3 months. Coincidentally, 72.0% of the participants from proprietary homes and 56.2% of those from nonprofit homes were from nursing homes with a 3-month probationary period required for receiving benefits.

The differences found between self-terminated nursing assistants' ratings on pay and benefits, as well as the difference found between the facility reported base wage, suggest the pay variable may have influenced the significantly higher turnover rates for proprietary nursing homes. Nursing assistants were also surveyed on the specific reasons for self-termination, and a higher percentage of participants from proprietary than nonprofit homes did indicate they had self-terminated in order to seek better benefits and had already sought a better paying job (see Appendix I).

Instrumental communication is also thought to influence turnover rates. If employees are poorly informed about various aspects of the job, dissatisfaction may occur and, in turn, influence self-termination.



Nursing assistants from proprietary and nonprofit homes indicated they were generally well informed about selected aspects of the job, with the exception of (a) how well the job was done and (b) forthcoming changes (see Appendix H). These participants reported they were only "somewhat informed" about how well the job was done and forthcoming changes. A higher percentage of proprietary than nonprofit participants noted they were "hardly at all" informed about how well the job was done or about forthcoming changes. Therefore, the difference between responses of nursing assistants from proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes suggests turnover rates may be influenced by inadequate communication in relationship to how well the job was done and forthcoming job changes.

Lastly, perceived job autonomy was found in the literature to influence turnover rates. If one does not have any say in job decisions, self-termination may be an end result. Nursing assistants from proprietary and nonprofit homes generally reported "some say" in job decisions pertaining to (a) how the job was done, (b) the sequence of job activities, (c) the speed of work, (d) changing how one did the job, and (e) how much one worked (see Appendix H). A higher percentage of the participants indicated "no say" in decisions pertaining to (a) when one worked, (b) how the work would be divided, and (c) what one did from day to day. A comparison of the responses from proprietary and nonprofit nursing home participants revealed no obvious differences between the two groups.

In conclusion, nursing assistants from proprietary nursing homes more frequently than those from nonprofit nursing homes indicated pay, as well as benefits for (a) retirement, (b) educational opportunities,

(c) vacations, (d) sick leave, (e) paid holidays, and (f) weekends off were very poor. This group also more frequently reported they were hardly at all informed about forthcoming changes or how well the job was done. These findings support Pecarchik and Mather's (1971) suggestion pertaining to the possible influence of nursing home benefits on turnover rates. The findings also support the suggestion by Kasteler et al. (1979) pertaining to the influence of instrumental communication on nursing personnel turnover rates. When asked the specific reasons for self-termination, nursing assistants from both types of homes indicated both personal and job-related reasons (see Appendix I). A higher percentage of nursing assistants from proprietary homes than nonprofit homes indicated they had self-terminated employment due to (a) the distance to work, (b) getting a better paying job, (c) inadequate staffing, (d) seeking better benefits, (e) inadequate equipment for patient care, and (f) poor work conditions. The findings from the nursing assistant responses do suggest there may be differences between job-related characteristics of proprietary and nonprofit homes. Further testing is obviously necessary to determine which variables significantly influence nursing assistant turnover rates.

CHAPTER IV  
SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS,  
AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Summary

The percentage of the United States elderly infirmed population is increasing and the majority of patient care is provided by the nursing assistant whose national turnover rates range from 75-100%. It was felt that the variables of nursing assistant turnover rates needed to be evaluated since high turnover rates are thought to be detrimental to qualify patient care and are an added expense to nursing homes. Review of the literature surveyed the relationships between organizational, job-related, and personal variables and turnover rates.

This study examined the influence of selected organizational, job-related, and personal variables on self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates in Oregon geriatric nursing homes. Specifically, the purpose of this study was twofold: (a) to investigate the relationship of self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates to nursing home location, size, and ownership; and (b) to investigate self-terminated nursing assistants' responses to questionnaire items pertaining to job-related and personal variables thought to influence turnover rates.

In this study, data from a sample of nursing homes and a sample of nursing assistants was used. The nursing home sample contained 51 proprietary and 29 nonprofit nursing homes selected by a disproportionate stratified random sampling method. For the nursing assistant sample, a list of 483 self-terminated nursing assistants was provided by the

participating nursing homes. Of this group, 173 (35.8%) returned questionnaires which were available for analysis.

The study addressed five hypotheses and two research questions. The hypotheses were tested by either t-tests or Pearson product moment correlation using organizational data obtained by telephone interviews with nursing home representatives. The research questions were investigated using personal data and responses to questions pertaining to selected job-related variables obtained from the mail questionnaire sent to self-terminated nursing assistants. Only the questionnaires returned by nursing assistants from the 80 nursing homes used in the analysis were used for the investigation of the research questions.

The five hypotheses investigated the relationship between selected nursing home organizational variables and self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates. The selected organizational variables were location (urban or rural), size (bed capacity), and ownership (proprietary or nonprofit). For analysis, the sample was reduced to 79 nursing homes, excluding the large rural proprietary nursing home with the outlying turnover rate of 186.2%. Location and size were not significantly related to nursing assistant turnover rates. Ownership status was significantly related to turnover rates at the  $p < .10$  level for both the total nursing home sample and the large nursing home sample (50 or more beds). Proprietary nursing homes had higher turnover rates in each of the above analysis. When controlled for location and size, the relationship between ownership status and nursing assistant turnover rates was significant for large rural nursing homes, but not for large urban nursing homes. The relationship between ownership status and small

nursing homes (less than 50 beds) could not be tested due to an inadequate number of small nursing homes in the sample.

The two research questions were addressed descriptively. Because of the significant relationship between ownership and turnover rates found in the previous analysis, the responses of the self-terminated nursing assistants from the participating proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes were separated for both research questions. This separation resulted in 93 participants from proprietary homes and 80 from nonprofit homes.

Research question 1 investigated the personal characteristics of the self-terminated nursing assistants. In general, the nursing assistants who self-terminated employment from both proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes were (a) less than 25 years old, (b) single, (c) not responsible for children, (d) females, (e) educated for at least 12 years, (f) previously employed on a fulltime basis, and (g) previously employed for less than 3 months. A higher percentage of the nursing assistants from proprietary than nonprofit homes were (a) males, (b) married, and (c) responsible for children while employed.

Research question 2 investigated the self-terminated nursing assistant responses to questions pertaining to the previous place of employment and job-related variables of (a) degree of routinization of job activities, (b) amount of employee pay and benefits, (c) level of instrumental communication, and (d) degree of perceived job autonomy. In general, nursing assistants from both proprietary and nonprofit homes indicated (a) the job activities were quite routine with a great deal of repetitiveness; (b) benefits other than vacation and holiday pay, were

poor; (c) they were well informed about selected aspects of the job; (d) they were only somewhat informed about how well the job was done and forthcoming changes; and (e) they had some say in how the job was done, the sequence of job activities, the speed of work, changing how one did the job, and how much one worked. A higher percentage of the nursing assistants from proprietary than nonprofit homes indicated there was a very great deal of repetitiveness with the job, and pay, as well as benefits for (a) retirement, (b) educational opportunities, (c) vacations, (d) sick leave, (e) paid holidays, and (f) weekends off were very poor. This group also more frequently reported they were hardly at all informed about forthcoming changes or how well the job was done.

The findings of this study indicate proprietary ownership does make a significant difference but only with large rural nursing homes. Small nursing homes were not tested. When investigating self-terminated nursing assistants from proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes, there was a difference in responses to questions pertaining to personal and job-related variables, as addressed above.

Although the nursing assistant sample was divided according to the ownership status of the previous place of employment, this sample does represent participants from both large and small homes, as well as urban and rural homes.

#### Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the study was the use of the O.F.M.C. list for the sampling of long-term care facilities. After the study was completed, it was discovered that Oregon had 204 long-term care facilities, versus the 176 reported on the O.F.M.C. list. The difference between

the two populations is in the number of proprietary nursing homes. Included on the O.F.M.C. list were 140 proprietary nursing homes, yet the State Health Division identified 167 proprietary homes. Further assessment of those homes not on the O.F.M.C. list might be advisable.

A second limitation of this study is the use of turnover rates based on a 3-month interval. Turnover rates were calculated using data collected for the months of June, July, and August, 1984. One does not know if the turnover rates would be representative of a 12-month period. Also, the use of turnover rates for the summer months may be influenced by seasonal variables.

Lastly, the self-select process by the nursing assistant participants resulted in a 35.8% return rate and, therefore, limits the ability to generalize from the findings of the mail questionnaire. Findings are only specific to this sample.

#### Recommendations for Future Studies

This research recommends the use of consistent definitions for nursing home location and size in future studies. The equation used for calculating turnover rates should also be consistent. As shown by Stryker-Gordon (1979), the significant variables influencing total nursing home personnel turnover rates are not the same as those influencing nursing assistant turnover rates. Therefore, nursing assistants should be studied as a separate group. Lastly, the following specific studies are recommended:

1. A further investigation of the specific differences between proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes that might influence nursing assistant turnover rates.

2. An investigation of small nursing homes in Oregon according to hypotheses 4 and 5 of this study.

3. A comparison of employed and self-terminated nursing assistants according to personal characteristics and responses to questions pertaining to job-related variables.

4. An investigation of the "no-call, no-show" nursing assistants to determine if they represent a different group of employees.

5. An investigation of this sample to determine if there would be a significant difference between self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates of large and small nursing homes, when controlling for ownership status and location.

6. An investigation of the influence of the economic climate and available job opportunities on self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates.

7. An investigation of the influence of (a) specific recruitment efforts, (b) selection and placement techniques, and (c) employer training programs on self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates.

8. Exit interviews of both facility- and self-initiated terminated nursing assistants to investigate personal characteristics and responses to questions pertaining to job-related variables.

#### Implications for Nursing Practice

When considering the findings from this study from a practical standpoint, one cannot change the bed capacity, location, or ownership status of the nursing home. However, one must recognize that high turnover rates were found in all types of Oregon nursing homes, and this problem needs to be further studied in the interest of the elderly



clients. Primary emphasis should be placed on studying large rural proprietary nursing homes based on the significant relationship between nursing assistant turnover rates and these homes. Future studies need to investigate particular administrative practices, such as (a) recruitment efforts, (b) selection and placement techniques of employees, (c) training programs, (d) level of instrumental communication, and (e) employee wage schedules and benefit packages. It may be these variables that truly influence nursing assistants to terminate employment from nursing homes.

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## REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A

Introductory Cover Letter to Nursing Home Administrator



# OREGON ASSOCIATION OF HOMES FOR THE AGING

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John Humbert  
Po Ah Terrace

Joyce Williams  
Columbia Basin  
Nursing Home

Kuhn  
Capitol Manor

Cliff Peightal  
Live Plaza

Betty Nelson  
Resbyterian Nursing  
Home

Ed Wolcheck  
Oregon Baptist  
Retirement Home

Cliff Slick  
Willamette Methodist  
Convalescent Center

Donald Perry  
Hillside Manor

Sean Campbell  
Friendsview Manor

De Adams  
Calaroga Terrace

Don Jarman  
Northwestern  
B.A. Services

Dear

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research project on nursing staff turnover in the State of Oregon! I would like to introduce myself. I am a graduate student at Oregon Health Sciences University in the School of Nursing. As you recall from Keren Wilson's telephone call, this project is a joint effort between myself and the Association. A portion of the information from the study will be part of my thesis requirement. Darlene McKenzie, Ph.D., is my thesis advisor at the Oregon Health Sciences University. This summer I am serving as a research assistant with the Oregon Association of Homes for the Aging (OAHA). Keren Wilson, Ph.D., will be assisting me throughout this project for OAHA.

This thesis topic results from four (4) years of experience in Oregon's long term care facilities as both an Assistant Director of Nursing Service and a Director of Nursing Service. I recognized many problems resulting from nursing staff turnover and would like to assess the reasons for termination.

I am enclosing some materials related to the research project for your perusal prior to my telephone call. The enclosures include:

- a copy of the research plan
- a copy of the questions that I will be asking the designated contact person for your facility during telephone calls; and
- a copy of the form letter and questionnaire that I will be mailing to the CNA's and NA's who voluntarily terminate employment

The data from this project will produce two documents. One will be the Association's report and the other will become my thesis. You are more than welcome to request the Association's report by contacting Dr. Keren Wilson at the Association's Office. I will also be happy to supply my thesis findings by your contacting the School of Nursing at (503) 225-7793.

Page 2

If you have any questions during the summer, please contact me, or Keren Wilson, at (503) 292-3571. Again, thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Hardin Brown, RN, BSN, Candidate for Masters in Nursing,  
OHSU & Research Assistant, OAHA

Keren Wilson, Ph.D.,  
Director Research & Education

HB/zg

Enc.

The questionnaire for the CNA/NA's is an adaptation from the questionnaire in Price, J. L., & Mueller, C.W. (1981) Professional Turnover: The Case of Nurses. New York: SP Medical & Scientific Books.



APPENDIX B  
Research Plan

## RESEARCH PLAN

1. Administrator commitment by telephone, to participate in the study.
2. Follow-up letter to both the long-term care facility's administrator and the contact person.
3. Telephone contact to the person whom the administrator gave as a contact person.
4. Telephone call, every other week, to the contact person to retrieve the answers to the questions on the following questionnaire. The addresses of the CNA/NAs who voluntarily terminated will also be obtained. (June-August 1984)
5. Mailing of the questionnaire and explanatory letter to potential respondents. (June-August 1984) This pertains to the CNA/NAs only.
6. Follow-up questionnaire mailed to potential respondent who has not responded to the questionnaire within two weeks after the initial mailing.
7. Statistical analysis testing of respondent questionnaires.
8. Mailing of the findings of the descriptive study to those who express an interest.

### Clarification of Terms

1. Involuntary terminations--examples are:

no call--no show	excessive tardiness
patient abuse	excessive absenteeism
alcohol	work performance
drugs	skill level
failure to correct deficiency after warning	insubordination
other	convicted of crime

2. Voluntary terminations--examples are:

stressful	better-paying job	pregnancy
child care	too hard	moving
returning to school	distance between	benefits
work environment	home and job	management
spouse objected to work	bad hours	other

3. Temporary employee--one who is hired knowing that he/she will only have a job for a limited length of time--examples are:

vacation relief  
injury-on-the-job relief  
summer relief

APPENDIX C  
Telephone Questionnaire

## TELEPHONE QUESTIONNAIRE

This is a questionnaire that I will be asking you (or the facility contact person) via a telephone call. The questions pertaining to your specific facility will only be asked during my initial phone call after June 21, 1984. The questions pertaining to terminations and applications will be asked on an every-other-week basis.

### I - Facility-related questions (only answered once)

1. What type of beds, and how many of each type, does your facility have?
2. What type of ownership does your facility operate under?
3. How many full-time, part-time, and full-time equivalent positions are you currently budgeted for?
  - a. All long-term care staff?
  - b. All long-term care nursing staff?
  - c. RN's?
  - d. LPN's?
  - e. CMA's?
  - f. CNA's?
  - g. NA's?
  - h. Other nursing staff?
4. If your facility is hospital based:
  - a. Is the staff cross-trained to work in both the acute and long-term care units?
  - b. Is the same staff member ever scheduled to work in both the acute and long-term care units, but on different days?
  - c. Is there a different Director of Nursing Service for the acute units versus the long-term care unit?
  - d. Is the pay for the certified nurse assistant the same for working in the acute unit, as for working in the long-term care unit?
  - e. If the certified nurse assistant pay varies with the unit that they are scheduled for, which unit has a higher wage?

### II - Questions pertaining to terminations and applications (answered on an every-other-week basis)

1. How many terminations have there been in the nursing staff since our last telephone conversation? (Starting June, 1984)

2. For each of the nursing staff employees whom terminated (RN, LPN, CMA, CNA, NA, other) was he/she:
  - a. Full-time, part-time, temporary employee?
  - b. A voluntary or involuntary termination?
  - c. What was the reason for termination?
  - d. What is the last known address of each voluntary terminnee? (CNA/NA only)
  - e. Date of hire?
3. How many of the voluntary terminations were actually initiated by the facility?
4. Did you have any nursing department applications since our last telephone conversation? (Starting June 1, 1984)
5. For each of the nursing department applications (RN, LPN, CMA, CNA, NA, other) was he/she:
  - a. Hired?
  - b. Hired for a full-time or part-time position?
  - c. Hired on a temporary or permanent basis?
  - d. Were references checked prior to hiring?
  - e. Where was his/her previous place of employment?

APPENDIX D

Cover Letter for Mail Questionnaire  
Sent to Self-Terminated Nursing Assistants



# OREGON ASSOCIATION OF HOMES FOR THE AGING

6227 S.W. Canyon Court • P.O. Box 25583  
Portland, Oregon 97225  
503-292-3571

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Columbia Valley Manor

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Keith Slick  
Willamette Methodist  
Convalescent Center

Donald Perry  
Hillside Manor

Sean Campbell  
Henderview Manor

Joe Adams  
Clatsop Terrace

John Jarman  
Northwestern  
B.A. Services

Dear

Your name has been randomly selected from a list of people who have recently voluntarily left their job at a nursing home. We are doing a study to find out why people leave employment at Oregon's nursing homes and we need your help.

I am a graduate student in the School of Nursing at the Oregon Health Sciences University and also a research assistant with the Oregon Association of Homes for the Aging. The information that you provide will be used for my master's thesis and for a statewide report on nursing staff turnover in nursing homes. I have worked in nursing homes since 1979. During these years, I noticed that the certified nursing assistant and nursing assistant turnover presents many problems with quality of care, staff morale, and staffing schedules and workload.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the enclosed stamped envelope. The instructions are on page 1 of the questionnaire. By returning a completed questionnaire, you will be helping us better understand the problems that aides have working in nursing homes. Hopefully, once the problems are better understood, solutions can be addressed.

Feel free to be as honest as you can. Your name does not go on the questionnaire and no one will know how you answer or who you are. Your former place of employment will not receive information that you provide. Total confidentiality is insured. The information that you provide will be grouped with other responses. Any publications from this study will include the necessary precautions to protect your identity.

Thank you for your time and consideration! If you have any questions or would like a copy of the results of the study, please call me at (503) 292-3571.

Sincerely,

Hardin Brown, R.N., B.S.N.  
Candidate for a Masters in Nursing, O.H.S.U.  
Research Assistant, O.A.H.A.

Enc.



## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please answer the questions in order. Do not skip around.
2. All of the questions can be answered by checking the space marked ( ) before the appropriate choice. If you do not find the exact answer that you want, please write in your response. Please answer all questions.
3. Remember, the answers you give will be completely confidential. It is important that you be as honest as you can in answering this questionnaire.
4. Please return the completed questionnaire in the self addressed envelope to: **Oregon Association of Homes for the Aging**  
P. O. Box 25583  
Portland, Oregon 97225

## ABOUT YOUR MOST RECENT JOB

1. Were you working full-time or part-time?  
 Full-time  
 Part-time  
 Hired for temporary work
2. Did you work on a rotating shift or a straight shift?  
 Rotating shift  
 Straight shift
3. If you worked on a straight shift, on what shift did you work?  
 Day shift  
 Evening shift  
 Night shift  
 I did not work a straight shift
4. What was the total length of time that you worked in the nursing home in any capacity?  
 Less than one year  
 Between 1-3 years  
 Between 3-5 years  
 Between 5-10 years  
 Over 10 years
5. How long had your immediate supervisor been in his or her present position? (Note: Your immediate supervisor was the person who officially evaluated your work.)  
 Less than one year  
 More than one year  
 I do not know
6. How much variety was there in the activities that made up your job?  
 A great amount of variety  
 A moderate amount of variety  
 Some amount of variety  
 Little or no variety
7. To what extent did you do the same job in the same way every day?  
 Almost totally the same every day  
 Very much the same  
 Moderately the same  
 Somewhat the same  
 Almost totally different every day
8. To what extent were the activities that made up your job routine?  
 Very routine  
 Quite routine  
 Moderately routine  
 Somewhat routine  
 Little or no routine
9. Considering the amount of work that you were required to complete in one shift of duty, how do you rate your workload?  
 Too heavy of workload  
 Realistic workload  
 Light workload

10. How much repetitiveness was there in the activities that made up your job?
- A very great deal
  - A great deal
  - A moderate amount
  - Some
  - Little or none

11. Listed below are different kinds of opportunities which a job might offer. How much importance do you personally attach to each of these opportunities, disregarding whether or not your previous job provided them? (Check one for each opportunity.)

<u>Opportunity</u>	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Quite Important</u>	<u>Fairly Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not Important at all</u>
A. To have a varied job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. To receive good pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. To receive good fringe benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. To be able to get ahead	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. To have close friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. To be able to grow professionally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. To be informed about your job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. To make decisions about your job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. To be fairly paid for the work you do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your most recent job? (Past job) Only check one for each statement.

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neither Agree nor Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>
A. I found real enjoyment in my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. I considered my job rather unpleasant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. I was often bored with my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. I was fairly well satisfied with my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. I definitely disliked my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Each day on my job seemed like it would never end.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Most days I was enthusiastic about my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about promotional opportunities for a person with your qualifications somewhere in the nursing home? (Check one for each statement)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. There was little chance to get ahead.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
B. Promotions were regular.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
C. Promotions were infrequent.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
D. There was an opportunity for advancement.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
E. I was in a dead-end job.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
F. There was a very good opportunity for advancement.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
G. Promotions were very rare.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
H. There was a good chance to get ahead.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

CLOSE FRIENDS AT WORK

19. How many close friends did you have among employees from the nursing home that you previously worked at? (Note: there is nothing odd about not having close friends at places of employment.)
- ( ) No close friends among the nursing home employees
  - ( ) One
  - ( ) Two
  - ( ) Three
  - ( ) Four
  - ( ) Five or more close friends among the nursing home employees
20. While you were actually working, how often did you see your close friends?
- ( ) More than once a day
  - ( ) About once a day
  - ( ) About once every two days
  - ( ) Less than once every two days
  - ( ) No close friends among the nursing home employees
21. How often did you see your close friends among nursing home employees during breaks, such as for coffee and lunch?
- ( ) More than once a day
  - ( ) About once a day
  - ( ) About once every two days
  - ( ) Less than once every two days
  - ( ) No close friends among the nursing home employees
22. How often did you see your close friends among nursing home employees outside of working hours, such as at dinners, picnics, or other social events?
- ( ) Almost every day
  - ( ) Roughly between two and six times a week
  - ( ) About once a week
  - ( ) About every other week
  - ( ) About once a month
  - ( ) Less than once a month
  - ( ) No close friends among the nursing home employees

THE JOB MARKET

23. How easy is it for you to find a nursing job with another employer?  
 Very easy  
 Quite easy  
 Fairly easy  
 Not quite so easy  
 Not easy at all

24. How easy is it for you to find a nursing job as good as the one you had at the previous nursing home?  
 Very easy  
 Quite easy  
 Fairly easy  
 Not quite so easy  
 Not easy at all

25. How would you describe the number of available nursing jobs, with all types of employers, for a certified nursing assistant with your qualifications?  
 A great many  
 Quite a few  
 A moderate number  
 Few  
 Very few

26. Which of the following statements, in your view, best describes the job market for a certified nursing assistant with your qualifications?  
 There are more job vacancies than applicants.  
 There are more applicants than job vacancies.

COMMUNICATION AND DECISION-MAKING

27. How well informed were you about each of the following aspects of your previous job in the nursing home? (Check one for each aspect)

Aspect	Very Well Informed	Quite Well Informed	Fairly Well Informed	Somewhat Informed	Hardly at all Informed
A. What was to be done	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Policies and procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Priority of work to be done	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. How well the job was done	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Technical knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Nature of equipment used	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Forthcoming changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. How you were supposed to do the job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

28. Here is a list of decisions which get made on the job. For each of the following decisions, please indicate how much say you actually had in making these decisions. (Check one for each decision)

<u>Decision</u>	<u>No Say at All</u>	<u>Some Say</u>	<u>Moderate Say</u>	<u>A Good Deal of Say</u>	<u>A Very Great Deal of Say</u>
A. How you did your job	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
B. Sequence of your job activities	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
C. Speed at which you worked	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
D. Changing how you did your job	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
E. How much you worked	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
F. When you worked	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
G. How work would be divided among people	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
H. What you did from day to day	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IN WHICH YOU LIVE

29. How many memberships do you have in local community organizations, such as churches, civic associations, fraternal orders, political groups, trade unions, recreational clubs, and so forth?
- ( ) No memberships
  - ( ) One
  - ( ) Two
  - ( ) Three
  - ( ) Four
  - ( ) Five or more memberships
30. Considering all of the local community organizations to which you belong, approximately how often do you generally attend their meetings?
- ( ) Less than once a week
  - ( ) At least once a week for one organization or another
  - ( ) Twice a week
  - ( ) Three times a week
  - ( ) Four times a week or more for one organization or another
  - ( ) No memberships in local community organizations
31. How many official positions, such as being a committee member or an officer, do you have in these local community organizations?
- ( ) No official positions
  - ( ) One
  - ( ) Two
  - ( ) Three
  - ( ) Four
  - ( ) Five or more official positions
  - ( ) No memberships in local community organizations
32. How often do you vote in local community elections, such as for the school board or the city council?
- ( ) Vote in every election
  - ( ) Vote in more than a majority of the elections
  - ( ) Vote in about half of the elections
  - ( ) Vote in less than half of the elections
  - ( ) Never vote

ABOUT YOURSELF

Turnover is often influenced by personal characteristics such as age, education, marital status, and so forth. Therefore, some background information is needed about you.

33. How old are you? Please give birthdate \_\_\_\_\_  
( ) Less than 25 years old  
( ) 25 to 29 years old  
( ) 30 to 34 years old  
( ) 35 to 39 years old  
( ) 40 to 49 years old  
( ) 50 to 59 years old  
( ) 60 years or over
34. What gender are you?  
( ) Male  
( ) Female
35. Approximately how many miles was it from where you lived to the previous nursing home that you were employed at?  
( ) Less than five miles  
( ) Between five and fifteen miles  
( ) Over fifteen miles
36. What is your present marital status?  
( ) Married  
( ) Single never married  
( ) Widowed  
( ) Divorced or separated  
( ) Refuse to answer
37. Do you have any children, that you were caring for, while previously employed at the nursing home?  
( ) Yes  
( ) No
38. Do you have any preschool children, that you were caring for, while previously employed at the nursing home?  
( ) Yes  
( ) No
39. Here are five kinds of goals admired in America today. Ideally, if you could arrange your life, which goal would you choose to emphasize most, which second most, which third, which fourth, and which last? Mark the one you rank as your best choice as "1".

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Goal</u>
_____	To have a successful career
_____	To be a good wife (or husband)
_____	To be a good mother (or a good father)
_____	To be a good citizen of the community
_____	To be a good member of my church or synagogue

40. How would you rate your job performance as a certified nursing assistant? (At the previous nursing home that your were employed)  
( ) Much better than average  
( ) Better than average  
( ) About average  
( ) Slightly below average  
( ) Considerably below average
41. How would most of your co-workers rate your job performance as a certified nursing assistant?  
( ) Much better than average  
( ) Better than average  
( ) About average  
( ) Slightly below average  
( ) Considerably below average
42. How would your previous immediate supervisor rate your job performance as a certified nursing assistant?  
( ) Much better than average  
( ) Better than average  
( ) About average  
( ) Slightly below average  
( ) Considerably below average

43. While you were growing up, say until you were eighteen, what kind of community did you live in for the most part?
- Rural area or farm
  - Town or small city (under 50,000)
  - Medium-size city (50,000-250,000)
  - Suburban area near large city
  - Large city (over 250,000)
44. What is the primary occupation of your husband (or wife)?
- \_\_\_\_\_
  - Not applicable
  - Refuse to answer
45. Circle the highest grade of school that you have completed
- Grade school 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8  
 High school 9 10 11 12  
 College 13 14 15 16
46. Roughly, what is your total yearly income from your nursing career before taxes and other deductions are made?
- Less than \$3,000
  - \$3,000 to \$4,999
  - \$5,000 to \$6,999
  - \$7,000 to \$8,999
  - \$9,000 to \$10,999
  - \$11,000 to \$12,999
  - \$13,000 to \$14,999
  - \$15,000 or over
  - Refuse to answer
47. When you originally sought this previous nursing home job, were you looking for a long-term job? (More than a summer job)
- Yes
  - No
48. Why did you leave your job at the nursing home?
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> job too stressful                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> better benefits                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> job too physically demanding                           | <input type="checkbox"/> family objected to work               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> too great distance to travel to work                   | <input type="checkbox"/> child care problems                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> problems with facility management                      | <input type="checkbox"/> returning to school                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> got a better paying job                                | <input type="checkbox"/> inadequate equipment for patient care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> inadequate staffing                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> poor work conditions                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> got a job that like better                             | <input type="checkbox"/> bad hours/shift                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> got a job that fits skill ability/ career goals better | <input type="checkbox"/> hired for vacation relief             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> moving out of area                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> hired for summer relief               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pregnancy  | <input type="checkbox"/> hired for illness/injury relief       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> health problems  | <input type="checkbox"/> relief                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> retirement   | <input type="checkbox"/> other                                 |
49. Are you now working for pay?
- yes, full time
  - yes, part time
  - yes, temporary relief
  - yes, on call
  - no, but looking for a job
  - no, not looking for a job
50. Where are you working now for pay?
- working in other nearby nursing home
  - working in nursing home in new area, new town
  - working for a staffing agency on a temporary or on call basis, for example, Staff Builders, Quality Care, Medical Personnel Pool, etc.
  - working for another health care agency on a permanent basis, for example, Visiting Nurses Association, County Health Dept., etc.
  - working in a hospital setting
  - working in a non-health care setting
  - other
  - not working
51. Please write any additional comments regarding your reasons for leaving employment at the nursing home. . .
- 
- 
-

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PLEASE CHECK TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE NOT SKIPPED ANY QUESTIONS.  
Thank you very much for your cooperation in filling out this questionnaire. Hopefully, we will find some reasons why certified nursing assistants leave nursing homes, and will be able to make some changes to correct these problems.



APPENDIX F

Follow-up Letter to Self-Terminated Nursing Assistants



# OREGON ASSOCIATION OF HOMES FOR THE AGING

6227 S.W. Canyon Court • P.O. Box 25583  
Portland, Oregon 97225  
503-292-3571

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Eric Kuhn  
Hospital Manor

Jeff Peightal  
Five Plaza

Betty Nelson  
Presbyterian Nursing  
Home

Ed Wolcheck  
Oregon Baptist  
Retirement Home

Keith Slick  
Clatskanie Methodist  
Invalascent Center

Donald Perry  
Liside Manor

Sean Campbell  
Lendevue Manor

Dee Adams  
Clatskanie Terrace

John Jarman  
Northwestern  
B.A. Services

Dear

Your name has been randomly selected from a list of people who have recently voluntarily left their job at a nursing home. I mailed you a questionnaire about a month ago and did not receive your completed questionnaire. I am resending you a questionnaire and request that you reconsider filling it out and returning it to me.

I am a graduate student in the School of Nursing at the Oregon Health Sciences University and also a research assistant with the Oregon Association of Homes for the Aging. The information that you provide will be used for my master's thesis and for a statewide report on nursing staff turnover in nursing homes. I have worked in nursing homes since 1979. During these years, I noticed that the certified nursing assistant and nursing assistant turnover presents many problems with quality of care, staff morale, and staffing schedules and workload.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the enclosed stamped envelope. The instructions are on page 1 of the questionnaire. By returning a completed questionnaire, you will be helping us better understand the problems that aides have working in nursing homes. Hopefully, once the problems are better understood, solutions can be addressed.

Feel free to be as honest as you can. Your name does not go on the questionnaire and no one will know how you answer or who you are. Your former place of employment will not receive information that you provide. Total confidentiality is insured. The information that you provide will be grouped with other responses. Any publications from this study will include the necessary precautions to protect your identity.

Thank you for your time and consideration! If you have any questions or would like a copy of the results of the study, please call me at (503) 292-3571.

Sincerely,

Hardin Brown, R.N., B.S.N.  
Candidate for a Masters in Nursing, O.H.S.U.  
Research Assistant, O.A.H.A.

Enc

APPENDIX G

Organizational Variables for the Nursing Home Sample

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Organizational Variables for the Nursing Home Sample

Nursing Home	Location <sup>a</sup>	Size <sup>b</sup>	Turnover Rate <sup>c</sup>
Nonprofit			
1	R	42	20.0
2	R	38	0
3	R	48	3.7
4	R	127	8.0
5	R	52	28.0
6	R	122	14.3
7	R	65	5.6
8	R	116	10.0
9	R	154	25.3
10	R	161	18.6
11	R	74	0
12	R	72	32.0
13	R	72	0
14	R	240	7.9
15	R	103	13.3
16	R	60	10.5
17	R	124	25.9
18	R	166	15.2
19	R	95	9.7
20	U	43	13.6
21	U	189	19.5
22	U	120	26.8
23	U	200	15.6
24	U	133	6.2
25	U	325	18.9
26	U	175	19.0
27	U	143	11.9
28	U	83	14.7
29	U	120	4.4

<sup>a</sup>Location is categorized into rural (R) or urban (U).

<sup>b</sup>Size is the licensed bed capacity of the facility.

<sup>c</sup>Turnover rates are for self-terminated nursing assistants during a 3-month interval.

Nursing Home	Location <sup>a</sup>	Size <sup>b</sup>	Turnover Rate <sup>c</sup>
Proprietary			
30	R	43	11.8
31	R	49	4.0
32	R	48	9.1
33	R	30	11.1
34	R	43	0
35	R	47	25.0
36	R	40	35.3
37	R	32	5.6
38	R	40	17.6
39	R	40	0
40	R	37	22.2
41	R	33	35.7
42	R	41	0
43	R	99	8.8
44	R	69	47.4
45	R	77	5.1
46	R	100	25.7
47	R	92	61.5
48	R	84	25.0
49	R	132	23.6
50	R	138	15.4
51	R	83	5.3
52	R	114	25.5
53	R	153	18.3
54	R	72	15.0
55	R	100	27.3
56	R	60	13.3
57	R	194	33.8
58	R	52	11.1
59	R	91	186.2
60	R	92	26.8
61	R	82	31.2
62	R	71	7.1
63	R	80	11.4
64	U	36	78.6
65	U	20	18.2

<sup>a</sup>Location is categorized into rural (R) or urban (U).

<sup>b</sup>Size is the licensed bed capacity of the facility.

<sup>c</sup>Turnover rates are for self-terminated nursing assistants during a 3-month interval.

Nursing Home	Location <sup>a</sup>	Size <sup>b</sup>	Turnover Rate <sup>c</sup>
Proprietary (Continued)			
66	U	40	0
67	U	28	10.0
68	U	59	18.2
69	U	93	8.8
70	U	137	23.8
71	U	99	15.2
72	U	60	5.6
73	U	100	14.6
74	U	80	6.5
75	U	104	22.8
76	U	68	0
77	U	77	19.4
78	U	90	11.8
79	U	61	12.0
80	U	152	51.0

<sup>a</sup>Location is categorized into rural (R) or urban (U).

<sup>b</sup>Size is the licensed bed capacity of the facility.

<sup>c</sup>Turnover rates are for self-terminated nursing assistants during a 3-month interval.

APPENDIX H

Comparison of Nursing Assistant Participants  
From Nonprofit and Proprietary Nursing Homes  
in Relation to Selected Job-Related Variables

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Comparison of Nursing Assistant Participants  
From Nonprofit and Proprietary Nursing Homes  
in Relation to Selected Job-Related Variables

Job-related item	Participants from proprietary nursing homes <sup>a</sup> N = 93	Participants from nonprofit nursing homes <sup>a</sup> N = 80
Routinization of job activities		
Variety <sup>b</sup>		
Little or no	40.9	37.5
Some	28.0	27.5
Same job same way <sup>c</sup>		
Almost totally	37.6	31.6
Very much	45.2	49.4
Job activities <sup>c</sup>		
Very routine	34.8	46.8
Quite routine	37.0	34.2
Repetitiveness <sup>c</sup>		
A very great deal	38.5	23.4
A great deal	42.9	61.0
Pay <sup>c</sup>		
Compared to my effort		
Pay was very poor	65.6	55.0
Pay was poor	30.1	27.5
Compared to my contribution		
Pay was very poor	58.1	37.5
Pay was poor	36.6	31.3

<sup>a</sup>Adjusted frequency

<sup>b</sup>This variable is measured by a 4-item likert scale.

<sup>c</sup>This variable is measured by a 5-item likert scale.



Job-related item	Participants from proprietary nursing homes <sup>a</sup> <u>N</u> = 93	Participants from nonprofit nursing homes <sup>a</sup> <u>N</u> = 80
Benefits <sup>d</sup>		
Medical insurance		
Very poor	32.6	26.0
Poor	20.9	16.9
Average	14.0	22.1
Don't know	18.6	15.6
Life insurance		
Very poor	39.1	23.4
Poor	13.8	13.0
Average	8.0	20.8
Don't know	32.2	29.9
Retirement		
Very poor	47.7	28.9
Poor	9.3	9.2
Don't know	36.0	28.9
Educational opportunities		
Very poor	41.2	30.7
Poor	14.2	21.3
Don't know	21.2	18.7
Vacations		
Average	43.0	45.3
Good	7.0	21.3
Don't know	11.6	8.0
Sick leave		
Very poor	35.6	20.8
Poor	11.5	18.2
Average	27.6	26.0
Don't know	17.2	14.3

<sup>a</sup>Adjusted frequency

<sup>d</sup>The items on the scale ranged from very good benefits (1) to don't know (6).

Job-related item	Participants from proprietary nursing homes <sup>a</sup> N = 93	Participants from nonprofit nursing homes <sup>a</sup> N = 80
Benefits <sup>d</sup> (Continued)		
Paid holidays		
Average	29.5	37.7
Good	12.5	14.3
Very good	9.1	10.4
Don't know	11.4	9.1
Weekends off		
Very poor	40.2	33.8
Poor	12.6	15.6
Average	26.4	26.0
Don't know	11.5	10.4
Aspects of job informed about <sup>e,f</sup>		
What was to be done		
Fairly well	24.7	26.6
Quite well	23.7	32.9
Very well	33.3	27.8
Policies and procedures		
Fairly well	25.8	26.9
Quite well	24.7	28.2
Very well	26.9	28.2
Priority of work to be done		
Fairly well	22.6	17.7
Quite well	24.7	27.8
Very well	25.8	29.1

<sup>a</sup>Adjusted frequency

<sup>d</sup>The items on the scale ranged from very good benefits (1) to don't know (6).

<sup>e</sup>This questionnaire item was used to assess instrumental communication.

<sup>f</sup>The items on the scale ranged from very well informed (1) to hardly at all informed (5).

Job-related item	Participants from proprietary nursing homes <sup>a</sup> <u>N</u> = 93	Participants from nonprofit nursing homes <sup>a</sup> <u>N</u> = 80
Aspects of job informed about <sup>e,f</sup> (Continued)		
How well the job was done		
Hardly at all	30.4	21.3
Somewhat	16.3	18.8
Fairly well	14.1	26.3
Technical knowledge		
Fairly well	18.5	20.0
Quite well	23.9	20.0
Very well	17.4	26.3
Nature of equipment used		
Fairly well	22.8	17.5
Quite well	22.8	28.7
Very well	21.7	25.0
Forthcoming changes		
Hardly at all	27.5	22.8
Somewhat	34.1	22.8
Fairly well	23.1	25.3
How to do the job		
Fairly well	23.9	30.0
Quite well	28.3	28.7
Very well	17.4	20.0

<sup>a</sup>Adjusted frequency

<sup>e</sup>This questionnaire item was used to assess instrumental communication.

<sup>f</sup>The items on the scale ranged from very well informed (1) to hardly at all informed (5).

Job-related item	Participants from proprietary nursing homes <sup>a</sup> <u>N</u> = 93	Participants from nonprofit nursing homes <sup>a</sup> <u>N</u> = 80
Amount of say in job decisions <sup>g,h</sup>		
How the job was done		
Some	29.3	36.2
Moderate	29.3	16.2
A good deal	16.3	28.7
Sequence of job activities		
No	17.6	21.5
Some	27.5	26.6
Moderate	30.8	21.5
Speed of work		
No	18.0	23.8
Some	28.1	26.3
Moderate	27.0	18.8
Changing how you did the job		
No	27.5	22.5
Some	27.5	35.0
Moderate	18.7	16.2
How much you worked		
No	37.8	27.5
Some	28.9	27.5
Moderate	20.0	16.2
When you worked		
No	40.2	35.9
Some	33.7	30.8
Moderate	16.3	15.4

<sup>a</sup>Adjusted frequency

<sup>g</sup>This questionnaire item was used to assess perceived job autonomy.

<sup>h</sup>The items on the scale ranged from no say at all (1) to a very great deal of say (5).

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Job-related item	Participants from proprietary nursing homes <sup>a</sup> <u>N</u> = 93	Participants from nonprofit nursing homes <sup>a</sup> <u>N</u> = 80
Amount of say in job decisions <sup>g,h</sup> (Continued)		
How work would be divided		
No	45.6	45.0
Some	35.6	30.0
Moderate	14.4	15.0
What you did from day to day		
No	44.0	51.2
Some	29.7	22.5
Moderate	15.4	15.0

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<sup>a</sup>Adjusted frequency

<sup>g</sup>This questionnaire item was used to assess perceived job autonomy.

<sup>h</sup>The items on the scale ranged from no say at all (1) to a very great deal of say (5).

APPENDIX I

Comparison of Reasons Given by Nursing Assistants  
for Terminating Employment  
From Proprietary and Nonprofit Nursing Homes

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Comparison of Reasons Given by Nursing Assistants for Terminating  
Employment From Proprietary and Nonprofit Nursing Homes

Reason <sup>a</sup>	Participants from proprietary nursing homes <u>N</u> = 93		Participants from nonprofit nursing homes <u>N</u> = 80	
	<u>n</u>	%	<u>n</u>	%
Too stressful	24	25.8	26	32.5
Too physically demanding	13	14.0	16	20.0
Distance to work	11	11.8	2	2.5
Facility management	18	19.4	19	23.8
Got a better paying job	23	24.7	14	17.5
Inadequate staffing	33	35.4	19	23.8
Got a job that like better	15	16.1	14	17.5
Got a job that fits skill ability or goals better	10	10.8	10	12.5
Moved	19	20.4	16	20.0
Pregnancy	4	4.3	3	3.8
Health problems	5	5.4	5	6.3
Seek better benefits	13	14.0	3	3.8
Family objected to work	3	3.2	4	5.0
Child care problems	4	4.3	5	6.3
Returning to school	12	12.9	12	15.0
Inadequate equipment for patient care	18	19.4	6	7.5
Poor work conditions	33	35.5	10	12.5
Bad hours or shift	6	6.5	11	13.8
Hired for summer relief	2	2.2	2	2.5

<sup>a</sup>The nursing assistant could mark more than one reason for self-termination.

ABSTRACT



AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF  
HARDIN BROWN

For the MASTER OF NURSING

Date of Receiving this Degree: June 14, 1985

Title: ASSESSMENT OF NURSING ASSISTANT TURNOVER IN OREGON'S GERIATRIC  
NURSING HOMES

APPROVED:

Barlene Schroeder McKenzie, R.N., Ph.D., Thesis Advisor

This study examines the influence of selected organizational, job-related, and personal variables on self-terminated nursing assistant turnover rates in Oregon geriatric nursing homes. Correlational and descriptive designs were used for this study.

Mail questionnaires were sent to 483 nursing assistants who self-terminated employment from 50 proprietary and 29 nonprofit Oregon nursing homes during June, July and August of 1984. Complete data was available for 35.8% ( $n = 93$  from proprietary and  $n = 80$  from nonprofit nursing homes) of the mail questionnaires.

Five hypotheses were tested using  $t$  tests and Pearson product moment correlation. Self-terminated nursing assistant turnover was found to not be significantly related to location ( $t = 0.268$ ) or size ( $r = .054$ ). Turnover was significantly related to ownership ( $t = 1.806$ ) with proprietary nursing homes having the higher turnover rate. The relationship remained significant for large proprietary nursing homes and for large rural proprietary nursing homes. The relationship was not significant for large urban proprietary nursing homes. The relationship between turnover rates and small proprietary or nonprofit nursing homes was not tested.

Two research questions were addressed descriptively. In general,

the nursing assistants who self-terminated employment from both proprietary and nonprofit nursing homes were (a) less than 25 years old, (b) single, (c) not responsible for children, (d) females, (e) educated for at least 12 years, (f) previously employed on a fulltime basis, and (g) previously employed for less than 3 months. Additionally, nursing assistants from both proprietary and nonprofit homes indicated (a) the job activities were quite routine with a great deal of repetitiveness; (b) benefits other than vacation and holiday pay were poor; (c) they were well informed about selected aspects of the job; (d) they were only somewhat informed about how well the job was done and forthcoming changes; and (e) they had some say in how the job was done, the sequence of job activities, the speed of work, changing how one did the job, and how much one worked.

Factors limiting the generalizability of the findings were (a) the use of a non-inclusive list of Oregon nursing homes for the disproportionate random sampling technique; (b) the use of turnover rates based on a 3-month interval; and (c) the use of the self-select process by the nursing assistant participants resulting in a low response rate.

Implications for nursing practice include the finding of high turnover rates in all types of Oregon nursing homes, although the large rural proprietary homes had significantly higher rates. From a practical standpoint, one cannot change the bed capacity, location, or ownership status of the nursing home. However, in the interest of the elderly clients, future studies need to investigate particular administrative practices which may influence nursing assistants to terminate employment from nursing homes.