

The lack of nursing staff at public hospitals in Greece – The effects of economic crisis

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According to current legislation in Greece the nursing staff in hospitals works in 3 consecutive 8-hour shifts. In previous years, morning shifts at public hospitals were staffed by 4-6 nurses, while the afternoon shift by 3-4 and the night shift by 2-3 nurses, according to the nature and severity of cases at the various departments.



Over the last years, due to the economic crisis that has occurred in Greece, there have been major budget cuts regarding employment of new nursing staff. This has led to a dramatic decrease on the number of nurses working at each shift, thus making the performance of their duties extremely difficult.



In particular, the morning shift nowadays is comprised of 2-4 nurses, while the afternoon and night shifts by only one nurse. This leads not only to the exhaustion of the already understaffed nursing personnel, but also to higher risks regarding patients' hospitalization. It is therefore imperative that, despite the serious economic problems of the country, the budget of public hospitals is increased in order to cover the needs of nursing staff employment.

