

INTRODUCTION

Time is something that you need in order to do your work, accomplish your goals, spend time with your loved ones, and enjoy everything that life has to offer. Time is a unique resource because you get the same amount as everyone else. Once it's gone, it's gone forever and you can never get it back. One thing that you can do with your time is change the way you use it (*Constandse, 2007*). For any leader, time is a limited and precious resource. There is no way to recover time that we have wasted. We can't speed it up, slow it down, or stop it. In any case, as leaders, we can only find a way to make the most of it. One way we can start to effectively manage our time, is to start to identify things that waste our time as well as things that save our time with hundreds of decisions to make in a day, managing time in such a way that allows managers to prioritize issues effectively is a necessity (*Wells, 1993*).

Time management is a core skill of effective management, it affects the way one uses or wastes (*Constandse, 2007*). It is defined as a set of related common skills which help in using the time in the most effective and productive way possible. Managing time is important for managers and for organization as a whole. Time management can be viewed as a systematic approach to taking control of the issues that confront people on a day to day basis (*Emmett, 2000*). However *Crouch (2005)* argued that time can't be managed because it is constant and consistent, however, the way people conduct themselves can be managed. Time management is the art of arranging, organizing, scheduling, and budgeting one's time for the purpose of generating more effective work and productivity (*Estes, 2008*).

Managing your time well means managing your life well. People who handle their time well do it creatively. They make short- and long-term plans,

set and keep realistic schedules, take efficient and timely breaks, and view tasks to be done as opportunities rather than dreaded obligations. They practice creative time management by taking control of their time and therefore their life (*Yager, 2000*). Time management is simply self-management. It is an asset of related common sense skills that help head nurses to optimal use of the available time effectively to ensure quality patient care, and productivity.

Employees are asked to accomplish more in less time, with fewer resources and less support staff (*American Management Association, 2004*). According to *Bowers et al;*(2001), the main source of job dissatisfaction was to little time, nurses emphasized that limited time made it difficult to complete required tasks and almost impossible to spend enough time with residents and they described time as a limited commodity.

In many developing countries, healthcare administrators are currently facing challenges, that they are with no formal training in healthcare administration, and this is perhaps most apparent in their difficulties with time management. In the study carried out by *Kisa and Ersoy (2005)*, on healthcare administrators, 79.1% reported that they have never attended time management courses or workshops. Although 76.1% said they were free to choose the priority of their daily tasks, only 44.8% felt they knew how much time they should allow for each activity in their daily life. These and other findings in the study suggest that the need for time management education is a well-defined target for intervention, such as in-service training for healthcare administrators who are already working.

Time was found to be an element of work for all nurses. It was spontaneously mentioned by each nurse as the factor that most affected how she worked, felt about her work and how her work affected resident outcomes (*Bowers et al., 2001*). Time can't be managed. It's uncontrollable, managers can

only manage themselves and their use of time and this depends on their own motivation, energy, skills and abilities (*Walker et al., 2002*). As long as, if nurse managers can recapture a wasted hour here and there and redirect it to a more productive use, they can make great increases in their daily productivity (*Wetmore, 1999*).

According to *Huber (2000)*, all managers have the same amount of time 168 hours a week, of which at least one-fourth will be spent on the job. Time can be wasted by many ways, some time wasters are easy to recognize. Others aren't. *Mackenzie, (2000)* identified 35 time wasters related to management functions. He lists them under seven categories: *First* planning time wasters as; no objectives, priorities or daily plan; *second*, organizing time wasters as; personal disorganization/stacked desk, duplication of effort, confused responsibility and authority; *third*, staffing time wasters as; untrained/inadequate staff Understaffed/overstaffed and personnel with problems; *fourth*, directing time wasters as, doing it myself, ineffective delegation, lack of motivation, no coordination/no teamwork; *fifth*, controlling time wasters, telephone/visitors, incomplete information, no standards or progress reports, over control, mistakes/ineffective performance, inability to say no; *sixth* as, communicating time wasters, meetings, under- or over-communicating/unclear communication, failure to listen and socializing too much. Finally, decision-making time wasters such as; snap decisions, indecision/procrastinating and wanting all the facts.

Time can be saved, so *Clark (2001)* suggested some of time saving methods as, manage the decision making process, not the decisions, concentrate on doing only one task at a time, establishing, short term and long term plans, short letters and memos, throw unneeded things away, establishing personal and organization deadlines, don't waste other people's time, ensure all meetings have a purpose, get rid of busy work, maintain accurate calendars,

delegating everything possible and empower subordinate, ensure time is setting aside to accomplish high priority tasks, to do lists, and adjusting priorities as a result of new tasks.

Sullivan and Decker (1997) decided that, the principles of time management are, goal setting, time analysis, priority determination, daily planning, delegating effectively, control of interruptions and evaluation. In this respect *Marquis and Huston (1998, 2000)* said that steps of time management are: 1) Time is allowed for planning and establishing priorities, 2) Time entails completing the highest priority task whenever possible and finishing one task before beginning another, and 3) The person must reprioritize based on new information that may have been received. Because this is a cyclic process, all three steps must be accomplished sequentially.

Although, managers objectives in the time to make the most of their day, they must be able to: differentiate traditional and enlightened time management approaches to productivity, identify and reduce our day stealers, control how people impact our time at work, determine what's most important in our job, use a flexible scheduling plan to make the right choices about how we spend our time and finally determine how to break bad habits and form good ones (*Sheldon & Niemiec, 2006*). As regards nurse managers to effectively direct employees, they must first be able to find the time to do. Few studies have been done in Egypt in the field of nursing related to time management. Accordingly, the present study was carried out to determine the effect of time management training program on head nurses' work skills.