



## **European study shows degree educated nurses reduce hospital deaths**

**Geneva, Switzerland, 28 February 2014** - A study published in the Lancet earlier this week has found that a better educated nursing workforce reduces unnecessary deaths.

The study, led by Professor Linda Aiken from the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, USA, was conducted across nine European countries<sup>i</sup> and found that a 10% increase in the proportion of nurses holding a bachelor degree is associated with a 7% decrease in the risk of death.

With data from more than 420,000 patients in 300 hospitals across nine European countries, the RN4CAST study also found that every extra patient added to a nurse's workload increases the chance of surgical patients dying within 30 days of admission by 7%.

Patients in hospitals, in which 60% of nurses had bachelor's degrees and nurses cared for an average of six patients, had almost 30% lower mortality than patients in hospitals in which only 30% of nurses had bachelor's degrees and nurses cared for an average of eight patients.

"This study consolidates the growing quantity of proof from different regions of the world and confirms what nurses already know – that quality nursing education and safe staffing levels have a direct impact on patient survival," said Judith Shamian, ICN President. "While this study was carried out in Europe, the lessons learned are similar to findings from other countries and applicable in all countries and all settings. ICN calls on all nursing associations to use this study to gain the support of their citizens and collectively lobby their governments to ensure that well-qualified, well-cared for nursing staff are available in sufficient numbers."

"Our evidence demonstrates that it is not only quantity but the quality of the workforce that counts," said Professor Anne Marie Rafferty from the Florence Nightingale School of Nursing and Midwifery, King's College London, and the lead investigator for England on the study. "Hospitals should take notice because when budgets are tight, cutting back on nurses is often the first step, but the study has shown that this can have disastrous consequences for patients."

The full article is available at: [www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(13\)62631-8/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(13)62631-8/abstract)

### **Note for Editors**

The **International Council of Nurses** (ICN) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses and leading nursing internationally, ICN works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies globally.

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<sup>i</sup> Belgium, England, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland