

## **Effects of nurse staffing and nurse education on patient deaths in hospitals with different nurse work environments.**

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Aiken LH, Cimiotti JP, Sloane DM, et al. Effects of nurse staffing and nurse education on patient deaths in hospitals with different nurse work environments. *Med Care*. 2011;49(12):1047-53.

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The association between lower patient-to-nurse ratios and inpatient mortality has been demonstrated in classic [studies](#), providing an impetus for laws in 15 states that mandate the maximum number of patients per nurse. This study explores the mechanism by which reducing patient-to-nurse ratios improves outcomes. Using a large database of patient discharges and nurse surveys from 665 hospitals in 4 states, the authors found that decreasing the number of patients per nurse improved mortality and failure to rescue predominantly in hospitals rated as having a good work environment. Hospitals with a poor work environment derived no benefit from reducing patient-to-nurse ratios. The critical role that nurses play in ensuring patient safety is discussed further in this [Patient Safety Primer](#).