

Nurses' shift length and overtime working in 12 European countries: the association with perceived quality of care and patient safety.

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Although 12-hour nursing shifts are [common](#) in the United States, this study found that only 15% of European nurses worked 12 hours or more. Similar to [prior research](#), longer nursing shifts were associated with lower quality of care and compromised patient safety. This study also found that nurses working extended shifts reported more [care left undone](#). Nurses who worked [overtime](#), even if shift length was less than 10 hours, described similar concerns. The authors warn that policies to adopt standard 12-hour nursing shifts as a cost-effective way of maintaining nurse–patient ratios may contribute to [burnout](#). A past AHRQ WebM&M [interview](#) with Barbara Blakeney discussed the importance of proper nursing staffing for patient safety, and a prior AHRQ WebM&M [commentary](#) examines the complexities around balancing nurse staffing and workload.