

HIMSS 2020 Nursing Informatics Workforce Survey

Executive Summary

Building upon research that began in 2004, the HIMSS 2020 Nursing Informatics Workforce Survey continues to show that nurse informaticists play a crucial role in healthcare. As we celebrate the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, it is a unique opportunity to recognize the increasing importance of the nurse informaticist. Specifically, they are the driving force behind the development, implementation, and optimization of electronic medical/health records, nursing clinical documentation, point-of-care clinical decision support, and computerized practitioner order entry.

Over two-thirds (68%) of the 1359 survey respondents work for a hospital or multifacility health system. More than half (53%) work at a Magnet-designated hospital, and 41% work at a HIMSS EMRAM Stage 6/7 Hospital. This may correlate to the increased value of informatics in health system achievements. The majority of the remaining respondents work for a vendor/payer, government or military, or in an academic setting. Ambulatory nurse informaticists are on the rise, with 6% of respondents reporting the ambulatory environment as their primary work place. In 2020, the survey formally captured workforce data from a global audience with 94 respondents reporting they work primarily outside of the US.

This year saw an uptick in the percentage of respondents (66%) who have a master's degree in nursing (24%), nursing informatics (27%), or some other field (11%). In comparison, 59% of respondents reported having a post-graduate degree in any field in 2017. This may correlate to the increased percentage of survey respondents in leadership roles.

The role of CNIO/Senior Nursing Informatics Officer continues to be on the rise with 41% of respondents reporting that their organization had the formal role. In 2020, 10% of respondents reported holding the title of manager of clinical informatics as compared with just 1% in 2017. The percent of director-level respondents increased as well to 11% as compared with 7% in 2017. Still, the majority of respondents (24%) stated their title was nursing informatics specialist, a small increase over 2017's 20%. This year also showed a significant change in reporting structure, with more nurse informaticists reporting to Nursing (40%), Quality (12%) and Operations (9%) over the historical trend of reporting to IT (48%).

Other key findings and comparisons to previous surveys include:

Nursing background: In terms of respondents' clinical experience prior to becoming a nurse informaticist, more respondents (25%) indicated they had six to 10 years of experience than in 2017 respondents (22%). On the other hand, there was a noticeable

decline in the number of respondents reporting having more than 20 years of experience at the bedside from 26% in 2011 to 19% in 2020.

Training & Education: Training and education continues to be a priority for nurse informaticists, and 2020 saw a significant rise in formal education. The percentage of respondents who have a master's degree or Ph.D. in nursing informatics is 37% as compared with 31% in 2017. Those who have received a certificate in nursing informatics rose from 20% in 2017 to 25% in 2020. And 15% of respondents reported having completed a vendor/supplier certification, a new category in the 2020 survey. On-the-job training continued its downward trend with 54% of respondents reporting they engaged in it as compared with 56% in 2017 and 58% in 2014.

Certification: The number of respondents with any certification took a significant jump from 49% in 2017 to 58% in 2020. In a new question for 2020, survey respondents selected enhanced credibility and marketability (49%) and personal satisfaction (45%) as top reasons to pursue certification. These answers also topped the list when asked about perceived value of certification, although personal satisfaction (81%) edged out over enhanced credibility and marketability (78%). Certification was again found to have a fairly high impact on respondents' career paths. The average rating for the impact certification has on career was 5.14 out of seven as compared with 4.96 in 2017.

Informatics Career: Nearly a third (31%) of respondents reported having more than 10 years of experience in nursing informatics, the same as in 2017. However, the percent with less than a year of experience increased from 8% in 2017 to 14% in 2020. The number of respondents who have been in their current role for more than five years also increased a substantial amount from 31% in 2017 to 38%.

Career Satisfaction: Satisfaction of respondents' current position and their career choice in informatics was rated using a one to seven scale where one was not at all satisfied and seven was highly satisfied. Just over half (51%) of respondents indicated that they were highly satisfied with their current position (score of six or above), which is down seven percentage points from 2017 (58%). The majority of respondents (77%) reported being highly satisfied with their informatics career choice, which is down a more modest three percentage points from 2017 (80%). Overall, respondents seem to have remained quite satisfied with their choice of career in informatics but not as satisfied with the current position they hold.

Job Responsibilities: About a third (36%) of respondents manage at least one direct report with 19% managing between one and five employees. Another 8% manage six to 10 employees. This year's question about job responsibilities also included two new categories: project management (30% of respondents) and change/control management (26% of respondents). The top job responsibilities of nurse informaticists continue to be systems implementation (44%) and utilization/optimization (41%). While systems development is still in the top three job responsibilities, only 34% of respondents report currently working in this area.

Salary: The number of respondents earning more than \$150,000 a year stayed the same (11%) since 2017. The number of respondents making \$131,000 to \$150,000 rose by four

percentage points in the same time period, and those making \$116,000 to \$130,000 increased by three percentage points. As with previous years, the majority of respondents (63%) stated they earn a base salary between \$61,000 and \$115,000.

Barriers to success: Over the history of the survey, there has been a shift in the identified barriers to success as a nurse informaticist. In the 2004 and 2007 surveys, respondents identified the lack of financial resources as the top barrier while in 2011 it was the lack of integration and interoperability. In 2014 and 2017, a lack of administrative support and a lack of staffing resources were the primary barriers faced. This year, 21% of respondents chose IT priorities as the top barrier, followed closely by organizational structure (20%).

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