

**TITLE** Effects of RN Age and Experience on Transformational Leadership Practices

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*Journal of Nursing Administration* (2017)  
Vol. 47, No. 6, pp. 327-337

**OBJECTIVE** The purpose of this research was to investigate how nursing transformational leadership practices and behaviors evolve over time, including respondents' age, years of RN practice, and years of management experience.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Leadership Practices Inventory surveys were distributed online to 1,221 Association of California Nurse Leaders (with 262 participating; 22% response rate). The typical respondent was a 54 years old female, with 56 years as a RN, and 43 years in management. Internal reliability coefficients in this study were .75 Model, .85 Inspire, .82 Challenge, .75 Enable, .88 Encourage, and .94 overall (Transformational Leadership/TL).

### **KEY FINDINGS**

The time-related categories of age in years, years in management, and years as RN were strongly correlated. Age showed a significant positive correlation with how frequently all five leadership practices were used from 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, and then dropped off from 70-79 years of age. Similar shapes or slopes of frequency curves were found for the five leadership practices by years of RN experience, with advances from 0-9 years, 10-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, and dropping off from 50-60 years of RN experience. Again, a similar picture emerged in regards to years of management experiences, generally increasing from 0-9 years, 10-19, 20-29, 30-39, and then trailing off from 40-49 years. A major increase in TL metrics were found at or above the director level compared with those at or below the manager level, yet no significant difference was observed between director and CNO. The author notes: "An implication is that nursing directors seem prepared to assume the type of TL exemplified by the CNO" (p. 336).

The author concludes: "This study demonstrates that TL qualities develop over the careers of professional RNs. Earlier studies showed that leadership capabilities are strongest within those in CNO and director positions. This study shows that even outside those upper management levels, TL subscale metrics continue to progress throughout RN careers" (p. 337). "For those planning to advance TL, the greatest need for improvement would be the group with least experience. The group with less than 10 years RN experience was statistically low in LPI-S metrics. As suggested in an earlier report from this survey, less experienced RN staff should be encouraged to join professional RN

organizations offering nurse leader development and mentoring. Improving the leadership skills of transformational nurse leaders will improve healthcare environments and ultimately patient outcomes” (p. 337).