

Trends and Challenges of Migrant Nurses in Japan

—Some Indications from Canada and Australia—

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[1. Aim]

With the progress of aging, the need for care personnel has increased, and immigrant care workers are proceeding in English-speaking countries such as Canada, Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom. The shortage of care providers is serious in Japan, and in recent years, the Japanese government is trying to encourage training and acceptance of foreign caregivers, such as nurses and certified care workers. I will examine the potential issues around foreign nurses in Japan by comparing the situation in Canada and Australia.

[2. Data & Methods]

In Canada and Australia, migrant nurses have a path to be employed and accepted as immigrant care providers. Today, based on the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) from Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam, Japanese society has been accepting candidates for foreign nurses / care worker candidates since 2008. For nurses, at the first national examination in 2009, there were 82 candidates and none was accepted. In 2010, 3 out of 254 passed the examination. Eventually in 2018, 78 out of 441 people (17.7%) passed. However, even if they pass the national exam, there are many people who choose to return their home country. This study examines the difficulties and problems for immigrant nurses to work in Japan, and how Canada and Australia have created and operated the system to accept migrant nurses based on the governmental documents, literature, and websites which are related with immigrant nurse.

[3. Results]

In Canada, once the foreign nurses obtain permanent resident status, they can have the right to live and work in Canada under the same conditions as Canadian citizens; they have equal access to healthcare and social services. In Australia, if one is less than 45 years old and has three years training followed by three years relevant work experience, then one has high possibility to get a permanent visa. In Japan, foreign nurse candidates based on the EPA are eligible to stay in Japan for three years before taking the national examination. Nurse candidates can take the national exam up to 3 times in total. But, it is very difficult to pass the exam.

[4. Conclusion]

The movement of immigrant nurses to Japan continues to face significant challenges; to improve the language training program before departure, to create a rewarding workplace environment, and to improve convenience for visa acquisition.