

The financial losses from the migration of nurses from Malawi

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Background

The migration of health professionals trained in Africa to developed nations has compromised health systems in the African region. The financial losses from the investment in training due to the migration from the developing nations are hardly known.

Methods

The cost of training a health professional was estimated by including fees for primary, secondary and tertiary education. Accepted derivation of formula as used in economic analysis was used to estimate the lost investment.

Results

The total cost of training an enrolled nurse-midwife from primary school through nurse-midwifery training in Malawi was estimated as US\$ 9,329.53. For a degree nurse-midwife, the total cost was US\$ 31,726.26. For each enrolled nurse-midwife that migrates out of Malawi, the country loses between US\$ 71,081.76 and US\$ 7.5 million at bank interest rates of 7% and 25% per annum for 30 years respectively. For a degree nurse-midwife, the lost investment ranges from US\$ 241,508 to US\$ 25.6 million at 7% and 25% interest rate per annum for 30 years respectively.

Conclusion

Developing countries are losing significant amounts of money through lost investment of health care professionals who emigrate. There is need to quantify the amount of remittances that developing nations get in return from those who migrate. (Source: *BMC Nursing* 2006, **5**:9)