

# Analysis of registered nurse versus licensed practical nurse

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This essay is meant to compare and contrast two broad categories of nurse jobs in America and they are Registered Nurse (RN) and Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). Registered nurses are the most common nurses found in America. RN is considered the most advanced form of nurses and it is vital to note that it takes two to four years to train to be a registered nurse. These days to become an RN one has to get an Associate Degree in Nursing or a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. On the other hand, to become a Licensed Practical Nurse-only takes a year of study and does not require a degree, but a certificate or diploma may be issued. Some hospitals and schools offer LPN training and upon completion of their training, an individual must pass the NCLEX-PN (Practical Nurse) in order to be certified. It is vital to note that there are certain duties that LPNs are not allowed to carry out since they are not qualified. Skills only handled by RNs in hospitals include hanging the first unit of blood during a transfusion, carrying out the initial assessment of a patient, and IV pushes. However, the working hours of RNs and LPNs are similar despite the fact that RNs normally carry out more supervisory roles in hospitals and have a greater scope of practice (Ellis & Hartley, 2004). The amount of pay the two sets of nurses receive is also different due to the skills they hold and the roles they carry out. An RN earns about \$10 an hour more than an LPN. However, it is important to note that there are some LPNs who earn more than RNs depending on the duties they carry out and the location of the hospital. The reason why RNs get more pay than LPN is because of their supervisory role. If any procedure carried out by the LPN goes wrong, it is their supervising RN who will be blamed. This is because they are meant to ensure that the LPNs carry out their duties effectively.

It is hence essential to note that the most important difference between a registered nurse and a licensed practical nurse in the different duties they carry out in a hospital. An RN is expected to carry out the initial assessment of a patient and then write down a care plan on when the patient was admitted. An LPN is not allowed to carry out such duties, however, they may carry out a focused assessment and chart their findings during the shift and can later carry out all the patient care and charting after the RN is through with the initial assessment (Ellis & Hartley, 2004). Another duty that is only carried out by the RN is the educating of patients. This is because under the license LPNs are prohibited from interpreting data, or making decisions for their patients. However, LPNs are allowed to collect data such as vital signs that include blood pressure, heart rate, blood glucose levels, and pain. Upon collection of the data, they are meant to inform the physician or the supervising RN for the interpretation of the data. This is due to the fact that LPNs are not certified to carry out this duty. Due to the limitations set by their licenses, it may seem as though LPNs carry out less work in the hospital than RNs. However, the LPN only carries out duties that she is legally allowed to do. This is despite the fact that an LPN may learn quickly on the job, and hence become familiar with certain medical ailments, and extremely well informed about the welfare of their patients from years of practical experience. In real practice, LPN may disregard these lines since they are blurred and not well defined. However, legally these limitations are extremely real limitations, and not following them may lead to serious repercussions. It is vital to note the fact that several LPNs, later on, become RNs. They do so by enrolling in an accelerated degree program, and this

allows them to bypass the initial steps of the degree because they already have the fundamental education and hands-on experience working as LPNs. Some of the fields that RNs have been taught in school and are not familiar with LPNs include maternity and medical surgery (Ellis & Hartley, 2004). In conclusion, I believe that LPNs are more task-oriented since they carry out most of the physical duties around a nursing home. On the other hand, RNs are more multifaceted and see the bigger picture in a medical sense. This is due to the fact that RNs learn a deeper level of assessment of patients, as well as learning on leadership styles. They are educated on legal and ethical matters that they may face when carrying out their duties. For example, LPNs perform duties such as changing beds with the patient in it. RNs learn nursing on a deeper level and for example, know what is in an IV bag how it works, when it should be administered and why it is administered.