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/TECHNIQUES OF SELECTION FOR NONPROFESSIONAL
PERSONNEL IN THE HOSPITAL FOOD SERVICE/

By

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//

A PROBLEM

Submitted to the Dean of the College of Home Economics of
Michigan State University of Agriculture and Applied
Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major Subject: Institution Administration

1956

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express her sincere gratitude and thanks to Miss Katherine Hart under whose supervision and interest this study was undertaken. Special appreciation is also due to Dr. Pearl Aldrich for her aid and helpful advice.

The writer extends sincere thanks to Dr. Eugene Jacobson, Associate Professor of Psychology at Michigan State University, for his interest, cooperation, and experienced help in developing particular parts of the study. Appreciation is due Dr. Carl Frost for indirect assistance as a result of his psychology classroom teaching.

Grateful acknowledgment is owed to Miss Gladys Knight for her assistance and encouragement.

To the dietetic staffs and personnel departments of the eleven hospitals surveyed go special thanks for the cooperation that was given during the collection of data.

The writer is indebted to Major General Silas B. Hays, Surgeon General of the United States Army; to Colonel Harriet S. Lee, Chief, Army Medical Specialist Corps; and to Lieutenant Colonel Hilda M. Lovett, Chief, Dietetic Section, Army Medical Specialist

Corps, for making possible this course of graduate study at Michigan State University. Special thanks are due Majors Eleanor L. Mitchell and Martha M. Moseman, Army Medical Specialist Corps, for their encouragement, stimulation, and assistance.



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INTRODUCTION

For many years the chief functions of hospitals have been the care of patients, administration of research, and the training of certain professional groups. A new function has been added with the purpose of maintaining happy and continuous working relationships among groups working together within the hospital. This new function is based on a sincere desire for healthy interactions, with a lessened attention to status, which should result in concerted group efforts toward common goals. The interaction is a part of the larger concept, human relations. Hospital administrators, dietitians, and personnel directors in many hospitals have become increasingly aware of the worker as a human relations problem and are constantly gaining insight about the importance of each worker to himself and to the hospital.

A starting point toward goal accomplishment in the hospital is the personnel selection program. This study was planned to determine what selection procedures were used by the participating hospitals in obtaining nonprofessional dietary workers. Particular consideration was given to recruitment, use of the application blank, testing, interviewing, and placement.

The primary objective of this investigation was to determine, by questionnaire and personal interviews, which selection tools were being used to obtain dietary employees in the hospitals included in the survey. An attempt was also made to ascertain which of the commonly accepted tools the participants felt were most valuable for their particular purposes and which aids they considered relatively unimportant. Because hospitals in this group were not chosen for similarity in size or layout, no attempt was made to interpret findings on a comparative basis. Instead, findings were simply summarized for each individual organization.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In recent years the public has become increasingly aware of the changing role of hospitals. In the middle ages in Europe, hospitals were known as rest stops for travelers. Gradually, their function became that of caring for the sick and homeless at the expense of the wealthy; later the public helped to assume this responsibility through taxation. Finally, the development of hospital insurance plans, which made available hospitalization to the large American middle class, resulted in public recognition of the fact that the hospital is a business. As such, it should develop business operating procedures which have proved successful in industry. This recognition in no way conflicts with the primary purposes of the hospital which are to care for the sick and to conduct research for the improvement of medical knowledge.

One hospital department which has used business techniques successfully, and which has a major share in the hospital budget, is the dietary or food service department. Its leaders, trained professional dietitians, are finding that careful selection procedures of departmental personnel result not only in greater productivity or efficiency but also in improved morale for patients and personnel alike.

Recruitment

The initial step in the selection procedure is recruitment. Some authorities distinguish between recruitment and selection. The former is sometimes characterized as a positive managerial function while selection is considered as a negative counterpart. Recruitment locates workers and makes them available. Selection involves choosing those workers most likely to succeed on the job. The recruitment process involves some selection (70) as satisfied and productive workers have their origin in recruitment. Effective selection from available manpower is accomplished through full utilization of recruitment sources (5).

To insure an effective recruitment program, Aspley (3) emphasized the following points:

1. Have a definite recruitment policy.
2. Set up procedures for recruiting new employees.
3. Devise ways and means of better utilizing the services of present employees.
4. Analyze carefully the manpower requirements from a long range view and include the probable requirements for the organization, the probable turnover in present employees, and the method for their replacement.

Yoder (70) recommended an evaluation of the recruitment program. Establish a criterion for measuring satisfactory job performance, such as the quality of work performed. Avoid prejudice or immediate convenience. A further recommendation was the analysis of job openings according to the type of person the organization wishes to attract to its employee group (34). Define carefully the job description. Determine the requirements for employment, such as personal and educational. Consider personal traits. For example, the position of the hospital cook requires close cooperation with other employees. The cook must be able to work with recipes and varying food quantities. Ability, aptitude, and interest are essential for transforming expensive raw foods into wholesome, appetizing products.

Other considerations are age limits, physical qualifications, and the question of employing men or women or both. In addition, note the starting salary, advance salary, promotion potential, hours of work, vacations, sick leave, and fringe benefits. Analyze the job advantages and disadvantages. Economic comparisons with other organizations are beneficial. An excellent recruitment aid is a reject file for possible productive recruiting and for eliminating undesirable applicants who may reapply. Applicants previously

disqualified because of conflicts with school schedules or home conditions may be available for employment (34).

The filling of positions from inside sources was recommended by Yoder and Bellows. Morale can be increased through the transfer from another job within the organization. Present employees often suggest new employees. Friends of good workers are good workers, too. There is the assumption that the new worker will adjust faster if he is working among familiar people. The present employee has a sense of pride when someone he has recommended is hired. Opponents to these theories believe that cliques develop which result in trouble-making minority groups. Because of this fear, some friends of present workers are not considered for openings.

Recruitment from outside sources offers a variety of possibilities. An important source is the unsolicited application. With both personal and mailed applications an indexed waiting list can be maintained by the organization. In former years immigrant workers were an important source of labor. Recruitment has also been affected occasionally by population shifts in rural and urban migrations. In recent years industry has realized the advantages of hiring older workers and handicapped persons. Consideration can be given to the possibility of using minors in vacation periods. Women, whether working full-time or part-time, have proved to be valuable employees.

Fuller use could be made of minority groups such as Negroes. Some sources of recruitment include public employment agencies (United States Employment Service), private employment agencies, labor organizations, schools and colleges, miscellaneous sources (churches, fraternal organizations, lodges, penal institutions), advertising, scouting (labor pirating), and cooperation with personnel men in other organizations.

The Application Blank

The application blank, like the personal interview, is a key point in a well-balanced selection program. Many organizations are now using a weighted application blank or inventory. This form is developed by determining which items on the application, such as age and marital status, are related to job success. The purpose is to screen those whose chances of success are poor. Bellows (5) found that application blanks could be devised which would add predictive power or accuracy to other selection procedures.

In the weighted application form items of a biographical or personal history nature are assigned numerical weights according to their relative values in predicting success in the work involved (27). Some psychologists consider the weighted application form too inflexible while others point to its excellent record. Adequate

validation data for this form cannot be obtained where there are fewer than 50 employees in this type of work to be studied.

Application blanks can be brief or quite elaborate. In larger organizations a general form is prepared for all jobs. A template is superimposed on the form to eliminate all but the relevant information for the particular job under consideration (6). Items selected may be those that seem logical and appropriate to the individual preparing the form or may be those used by other companies.

The application form is a basic personnel record and should be used in the interview (10). The interviewer may wish to discuss certain items, such as experience and hobbies, in more detail. Some personal history records are prying but the more the employer knows about the applicant, the better he will be able to place him satisfactorily (3).

Ahern (1) suggested the following questions in considering item necessity and suitability in the application form:

1. Is the item necessary for identifying the applicant?
2. Is it necessary for screening out those who are ineligible under the company's basic hiring policies? Specifically, what policy does it pertain to?
3. Does it help to decide whether the candidate is qualified?

4. Is it based on analysis of the job or jobs for which the applicant will be selected?
5. Has it been pretested on the company's employees and found to correlate with success?
6. Will the information be used? How?
7. Is the application form the proper place for it?
8. To what extent will answers duplicate information to be obtained in another step in the selection procedure - for example, through interviews, tests, or medical examinations?
9. Is the information needed for selection at all, or should it be obtained at induction, or even later?
10. Is it probable that applicants' replies will be reliable?
11. Does the question violate any applicable federal or state legislation?

The Interview

After prospective workers have been made available through recruitment, the role of the interview in the selection process becomes significant. In larger organizations the interview is further subdivided into the preliminary interview, the action interview, and the exit interview. These may not follow in logical sequence.

The preliminary interview

Many organizations utilize the preliminary employment interview to save management time and expense. This interview eliminates procedures such as tests and physical examinations for unqualified applicants. The employment interview, whether preliminary or action-type, functions to give information, get information, and to make a friend (7). Often this involves advising the applicant and convincing him of the superior advantages of the organization.

The interview is the most widely used selection tool and the least reliable and valid. It can be improved through an understanding of the way the interview is now being used in the employment situation. The interviewer should compare his methods and procedures with those used by others (14).

The good interview is conducted in quiet and pleasant surroundings with a minimum of interruptions (10). The interviewer is friendly, builds up good will, and offers encouragement. He is cognizant of the fact that no one likes to look for a job. The interviewer lets the applicant know that his ambitions are important (18). Mannerisms are considered only as one feature along with many others of the qualifications of the applicant (10). The interviewer

recognizes that he can get only a general impression and that it is hard to measure laziness, character, persistence, and energy.

The interviewer must avoid bias and hasty judgment. He plans questions of the what, how, and why type and involving a descriptive, discussive, or a reasoning answer. His questions elicit facts about job knowledge, background, and interests. The interviewer avoids copious note-taking since this may make the applicant nervous (10). He does not make promises.

Both the preliminary and action interviews require tactful termination. The applicant should not be given vague and indefinite promises. He is not told that he lacks the necessary qualifications for the job but, with several other applicants under consideration, a final decision will be made when all the facts are available (58).

Uhrbrock (58) listed interviewer obligations as follows:

1. Treat all applicants courteously.
2. Explore each applicant's background with sufficient thoroughness to decide whether immediate rejection or further investigation of potentialities is indicated.
3. Assist in the hiring of new people with characteristics like those of the best of the present group of employees.
4. Reject applicants whose services cannot be used in such a manner that they will not "lose face."

5. Maintain adequate records on interviewing activities, so that the results and effects of the work can be evaluated periodically.

The treatment of the applicant in the employment office has much to do with his subsequent attitude toward the company. The applicant is entitled to the consideration and courtesy granted to anyone calling on a matter of business. It is especially important to the satisfactory placement of the applicant and long-run company effectiveness. Also, vacancies may occur in the future for particular applicants (51).

The action interview

Much of the discussion in the preliminary interview applies to the action interview. The positive results--selection, entail a responsibility to the employer, to the employees on the job, and to the applicants as a total group (30). To allow personal bias is to fail responsibility to the total group. The applicant is judged on the basis of his record and not on his ability to impress, appeal, or amuse. His goal is evaluated primarily in terms of his past performances. The "halo" effect must be avoided as the interviewee may be extremely nervous, may unintentionally distort facts, or actually try to deceive (17).

The interviewer should work out a plan of action prior to the interview (32). The plan must include the interview purpose, the kind of information desired, and the methods and principles for conducting the interview. Some interviewers believe that the interview furnishes quality information while the application blank supplies quantity information.

Planned interviews may be guided or unguided. The former consists of a definite set of questions in a definite order. During the unguided interview the applicant is encouraged to talk, but the interviewer refrains from giving clues as to what he would like to hear and from asking leading questions. The chief disadvantage of the guided interview is that it often reflects the biases of interviewers and is unlikely to yield reliable and accurate information (32).

The basic principles of interviewing are practiced in order to gain proficiency. The interests of the interviewee are respected. The objectives to be gained or the purposes to be served by interviews are clearly established. The interviewee is made to feel at ease and allowed and encouraged to talk freely. The interviewer refrains from expressing his views or opinions unless they are of significance to the applicant, or until the interviewee has had sufficient opportunity to express himself. In terminating the interview

the interviewer knows how to draw it to a close and how to state his views or decisions clearly, concisely, and, if possible, conclusively (32).

Interviewing practice develops initiative and spontaneity (17). A display of cordiality preserves the self-confidence of the applicant. The interviewer should schedule appointments and keep them, a practice which encourages interviewee receptivity and cooperation. If insufficient time is allowed for the interview, another meeting must be arranged. There should be maximum privacy. The course of the interview must be planned and a check list of questions on the probable course of the meeting reviewed.

The good interview depends upon mutual cooperation and confidence. The interviewer must control his thoughts and feelings. He encourages rapport through the avoidance of an inferior chair, a strong light, the challenging of references, and the asking of embarrassing questions (17).

Race, religion, nationality, or identity with any particular group should have no effect on the approach of the interviewer. Good relations are fostered through skill in interpretation by the interviewer. If the applicant feels he is being understood, he is apt to be more straightforward in his answers and attitude (17).

Questions, skillfully interjected, start the applicant talking, draw out essential facts, and steer the conversation in the right channels. In evaluating data obtained through questions, consideration must be given to the actual conveyance of the precise meanings of the questions to the interviewee and to the possibility of whether the questions, by their very form, suggest the answers (17). The comments and assertions of the interviewee must be clearly understood.

The interviewer can use the pause in conversation to allow the applicant to organize his thoughts. Prolonged pauses may be alleviated through deft remarks of the interviewer. He can also utilize the pause for inconspicuous note-taking (17).

The interviewer should guard against overselling the job to the applicant (51). New workers often become resentful and leave after finding the job does not correspond to the picture painted by employment interviewers.

In interpreting and evaluating interview data there is the continuous process of assigning meanings to individual factors and to groups of factors. The true reasons for past instabilities must be disclosed. Pertinent background areas should be explored. The investigation of a pattern of responses in different areas, rather than a single response, is favored (17).

In the working environment the interview supplements information recorded on the application blank or that obtained from the applicant by the employment interviewer (58). The supervisor may wish to investigate the experience of the applicant more thoroughly for evaluating skill, experience, and attitudes. Advantages in working for the organization and disagreeable features associated with the job are stressed. A tour of the department can be made. The applicant is told that the supervisor, and not the employment interviewer, has the authority to hire him. The supervisor does discuss the applicant with the employment interviewer.

In learning about the ability of the applicant to get along with others, Mitchell (42) advised asking him his opinions about his former employers. The applicant who has been mistreated repeatedly bears watching. Explanations or alibis advanced to account for poor past performances can be discounted (30). The accepted applicant is designated as excellent, good, or questionable. This record can be kept for future analysis. It is possible to review past predictions and, from proved facts, improve the accuracy of future selection.

The interviewer can learn evidences of immaturity by noting lack of leadership in any activities, abnormal dependence on parents for financial aid, irresponsibility in behavior and an inclination to blame others for insufficiencies, and lack of self-control (39).

Before making the final decision, the interviewer understands that few people make radical changes in personality, work habits, or personal habits. The "poor" man will continue to do badly, regardless of available opportunities, while the "good" man will continue to do well with little support (30).

Research data are needed for answering the question, "How shall we reject applicants?" Many employers, who depend upon others to conduct the interviewing procedure, do not know why applicants are dismissed or what the feelings of the applicants may be toward the company (58).

A man is not "hired" but his services are purchased (30). Likewise, the applicant is not rejected but his offer of services is not accepted. The applicant must not be made to feel that he, personally, has been rejected. The apparent satisfaction or distress with which some interviewers reject an applicant is sufficient evidence that the decision was made on personal grounds instead of qualification fitness.

Johnson (30) favored not informing the applicant of the specific reason for rejection of his application. He maintained that no useful purpose is served and often a time-consuming argument is provoked which is difficult to bring to a satisfactory conclusion. For public relations the application is rejected because the job

does not fit the qualifications of the applicant, but never the reverse.

The interview is terminated when a definite basis for disqualification is discovered, pertinent information required for a final decision is obtained, or as much information as customary at this stage is collected before sending the applicant to the next step in the selection process (17). The interviewer at termination must keep in mind certain practices. Rejections must be accomplished tactfully. No promises are made unless they can be kept. The interviewer can summarize the main features of the job and answer any further questions. If a qualified applicant declines employment, the reason is requested. Lastly, the interviewer returns the conversation to general topics. He may give suitable leads to other employment, if possible.

Records of applicants not hired are maintained (32). This prevents restudy of the case if the applicant applies later. The record is desirable if the company is accused of unfair labor practices. The usefulness of a file of desirable applicants depends upon the economic position of the industrial and business community.

In addition to the file of applicants not hired, other interviewing tools are job descriptions and interview rating scales. The

latter is not a test but records impressions of the applicant and guides in formulation of the judgment of the interviewer.

Prerequisites for good interviewing, according to Drake (17), included alertness, ability to make reasonably accurate estimates without the use of special instruments, the capacity to make fine distinctions, freedom from various pathological states (drugs, alcohol, fatigue), the immediate preparation of an accurate record, the ability to perceive correctly, freedom from prejudice or from habits of interpretation, and freedom from excitement.

Finlay, Sartain, and Tait (21) advised against hiring the most talented and brightest applicants for routine jobs since ambitious and capable people tire quickly of assignments. This results in inefficient and unhappy employees, particularly so, if there are few promotions. There is a real need for utilizing ordinary people.

The interviewer who applies rules of general semantics sees the applicant in a different light (15). He is constantly exchanging words with the interviewee in an attempt to evaluate him. Rapport is necessary between both. In establishing this condition words, phrases, or sentences are used which have no denotative meaning but which connote the attitude of the interviewer. Thus anxiety is eliminated through a cliché pertaining to the weather.

In other forms of conversation the interviewer refrains from emotionally charged words such as statements regarding the intelligence of the applicant. Words or phrases that may be misconstrued are avoided. The language used is familiar to the applicant and stimulates responses indicative of his real self (15).

In interpreting and evaluating the interview data the interviewer must think rapidly, be alert for factors hidden by the applicant, and be on guard constantly for attachment of false meanings. The semantically oriented interviewer watches for other meanings of words, is aware of words and phrases possessing latent content, and prepares the interviewee semantically before discussing the job (15).

Daniels (13) has found the interview an inconsistent measuring instrument. Reliability is the first requisite to prediction of job success. The new technique of factor analysis (the breaking down of the interview into measurable factors) has been successfully applied to tests of personality, intelligence, and aptitude. Factors permitting increased accuracy in the analysis of the interview are interviewer pertinency, interviewer dominance, and interviewer verbosity.

The exit interview

The exit interview is used for an analysis of employment failings and as an aid in improving selection (10). There is the danger of generalizing on a few cases. The real cause may not be given.

The exit interview is more profitable if it is conducted by someone other than the immediate supervisor of the employee (5). The worker may disclose real or fancied grievances, illness, lack of understanding of the job, misunderstanding of the importance the job bears to the general production scheme, improper wage differentials, poor selection and placement policies and practices, anxiety neuroses, personal and home problems. Sometimes the result is the immediate elimination of the cause and retention of a valuable employee.

Reference Checks

Following completion of the application blank, and before the action interview, the references of the applicant are often checked by telephone. Thus the interviewer is facilitated in his contact with the applicant through the use of the completed application form and the verified references.

References, to be used, must be checked. Former employers may be reluctant to divulge information which might prevent the employee from getting another job. Too often the references given are those from persons directly interested in seeing that the applicant gets the job for which he has applied. Better references are from previous employers, schools, and credit sources. A personal knowledge of the employer is helpful (10). Scott, Clothier, and Spriegel (51) believed that employer references had the disadvantage of faulty recollections, little careful attention, and the human desire not to give an applicant a poor recommendation.

The type of reference given is significant, such as from a priest or minister, reputable doctor, or banker (3). Telephone checks are time-saving and adroit questions elicit the desired information. Personal letters require specific questions which must be drawn up carefully. Industry and hospitals alike place much value on telephone and personal letter checks of references used although they may not agree as to the value of references as a selection procedure.

Tests

An ancillary aid in the selection program is the use of psychological tests. These have been used more commonly by industry

than by hospitals. Tests are generally given after the action interview and are especially valuable for placement. In addition, tests are used for particular jobs if training costs are high and labor turnover is great. Aptitude, dexterity, or hand steadiness tests assure better selection. Intelligence tests given to all applicants help in initial placement and in future openings. These tests show a correlation between low intelligence and accident proneness.

Organizations use validated tests as guides rather than as determinants (10). The tests save the organization money and the employees worry. Employee failure and turnover can be lessened by miniature work tests, work sample tests, and dexterity tests. Interest tests are questionable because of changing interests. Personality tests would meet the same objection. Character traits difficult to judge by tests are laziness, indifference, dependability, and energy.

Before beginning a testing program the organization should perfect its personnel procedures. These might include better interviewing, improved conference checks, closer follow-up of new employees, better training methods, or more expert supervision.

Difficulties encountered in starting a testing program include prejudice, ignorance, and costs. Time should be allowed for gathering statistics, making adequate trials, and investigating the necessary

tests (10). If the test is constructed and verified by an outside agency, the administration of it can be handled by any good personnel staff member.

Finlay, Sartain, and Tate (21) believed that tests supplemented, but did not supplant, ordinary hiring procedures. They listed the following difficulties in the use of psychological selection tests:

1. Assumption that scores on the test must be related to success on the job.
2. Evaluation of a test in a particular situation requires expert assistance.
3. The tagging of a man with a test score so that he is not evaluated for what he is.
4. Test results may influence the standard against which they are evaluated.
5. Tests at present do very little with employees in aspects of motivation and willingness to work and willingness and ability to cooperate.

Notwithstanding the difficulties in the use of psychological tests there is the distinct advantage in utilizing tests for job placement. On-the-job trials have proved impractical and costly to the employer and the employee (40). A testing program reduces trial

and error and results in better satisfied management and worker personnel.

The Physical Examination

Industry has long recognized the part of the physical examination in the selection process. The examination aids not only the productivity aims of the company (helps to reduce employee turnover through job physical fitness) but assists in furthering morale of other workers through known physical dependability of the newly selected worker. It is especially important in the food service field, and in hospitals in particular, that these examinations be given in order to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. The use of the examination avoids mistakes in hiring and protects the health and safety of the prospective employees (10).

The examination is an organization expense; therefore, it should be utilized wisely. The applicant is given the examination only after he has met all other steps in the selection procedure. Some organizations have had the misfortune to give physical examinations to applicants before a final interview, only to learn later that such applications were made in order to receive a free physical examination.

Placement

The final step in the selection program is the proper placement of the applicant. The personnel administrator or supervisor must utilize individual differences as industry has need for varying abilities and ambitions. Some jobs may be stepping stones but, generally, persons of high ability and initiative should not be assigned to low stimulus or dissatisfying positions (where promotion may be slow or dead-end). The new worker brings to the job a certain amount of potentiality and capacity for growth (51). His value to the organization lies not only in what he is, but also in what he may become.

Good employee relations in placement consist of anything done to help the new employee get started in the right direction and assistance in relieving his tension and anxiety. This may begin with his notification to report to work and may include a friendly, individually typed letter and perhaps a company book (3). A courteous telephone call may suffice.

Many organizations use a sponsor plan for the new worker. Caution must be exercised in sponsor selection as disgruntled older employees have an adverse effect on the morale of the newly hired worker. The sponsor may be assigned this duty along with his

regular duties, but with additional pay (51). He should possess tact, loyalty, personal courtesy, and enthusiasm for the company. The sponsor can help eliminate the feeling of awkwardness and ignorance which makes the new employee feel inferior to those around him. He can show the new worker the locations of the drinking fountain, lavatory, and cafeteria. In addition, the sponsor can introduce the employee to other workers and assist him in understanding company rules and policies.

The good supervisor is alert to the problem of older employee hostility to the new worker (12). He overcomes this by a few introductions, placement of the new employee in a work group, and by showing a personal interest in him. The new worker, until he becomes experienced, retards the work of others. The wise supervisor will try to shorten his learning period as much as possible by training the subordinate in his responsibilities. Much of the training must include encouragement. The supervisor should develop employee eagerness, but he must use strictness as well as leniency.

In large organizations a placement procedure for a number of new employees includes lectures about the organization and its function, trips through the plant, illustrated catalogues, bulletin boards, showcases, and paneled exhibits of products (51).

Garrett and Kingery (26) considered the reasons for turnover in the first week of employment to be that the employee had not been made to feel "at home," the job and company advantages had not been explained to him thoroughly, and he did not feel that the company had a real interest in him as an individual.

Blai (8) believed that one way to reduce worker turnover in general was through the selection and assignment of new workers. The supervisor can avoid assigning too difficult jobs and refrain from under utilization of skills. He can make job requirements realistic and suit the worker physically, mentally, and on the basis of his experience.

In making the new worker feel a part of the organization Whyte (64) advocated working through recognized informal group leadership. Older trusted workers help new members on the job. A system is built that provides social satisfactions as well as job instruction. Incentives are offered which build teamwork. The team works together to help each other and to give faster and better service.

The last five years have seen great strides in selection and evaluation of workers but present methods are still imperfect (21). Who is selected is not as important as how the person is treated after he has been hired.

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

Hospitals Selected for Survey

Selection procedures for nonprofessional dietary personnel in 11 hospitals were discussed in this paper. All hospitals were chosen on the pattern of ability of the personnel contacted to cooperate. Other factors were accessibility and the prominence of the chief dietitians in the dietetic profession. Conferences about choices of hospitals were arranged with the president of the Michigan Hospital Association, a Michigan public health nutritionist, and with a member of the Department of Foods and Nutrition at Michigan State University. The head of the Department of Institution Administration at Michigan State University made the preliminary arrangements for the Chicago interviews.

Letters were sent to chief dietitians in the selected hospitals requesting interviews about their selection procedures. The background of the correspondent was stated. The use of a questionnaire by the interviewer was discussed. Information regarding arrangements for contacting the respective personnel administrators was requested. A choice of interviewing dates was listed for the

convenience of the chief dietitians. Letters were sent to the chief dietitians confirming the preferred interview dates.

The two Lansing hospitals, St. Lawrence and Sparrow, were selected as test interview performances. The results were so beneficial that it was decided to include the two hospitals in the survey.

The Detroit area hospitals were selected because of accessibility. They included the main section of Grace Hospital, the northwest branch of Grace, Henry Ford Hospital, and The Oakwood Hospital at Dearborn. Henry Ford Hospital was chosen also because of the professional standing of the chief dietitian.

The Cleveland hospitals, City and St. Luke's, had chief dietitians who have been quite active in the American Dietetic Association. The chief dietitian at City Hospital is also an assistant superintendent of the hospital, one of the first dietitians to achieve such a distinction. Since the distance to these hospitals was a problem, the interviews had to be scheduled during the university spring vacation period.

The dietetic prominence of the chief dietitians was a factor in selecting the Presbyterian Hospital and the University of Chicago Clinics. The chief dietitian at Presbyterian Hospital is a past president of the American Dietetic Association. Because of the

distance to the Chicago hospitals, interviewing arrangements had to be completed during the university spring vacation period.

Hurley Hospital at Flint was chosen because of accessibility.

Preparation of Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed for use by the interviewer as an aid in the interview. Utility and informality were considered essential so both objective and open-ended questions were used. The content included an introductory section and further subdivisions relating to the selection procedures of recruitment, the application blank, tests, the interview, and placement. Opinions and suggestions regarding the merits of the questionnaire were sought from Dr. Eugene Jacobson of the Michigan State University Psychology Department and from Mrs. Evelyn Drake, Director of Food Service, Kellogg Center, at Michigan State University. In general, Dr. Jacobson stressed an informal and conversational style with an avoidance of ambiguities.

The first section, with general information questions, was designed to establish interview rapport. The size of the dietary department would give some indication as to the simplicity or complexity of selection procedures. It was necessary to determine the responsible person for hiring before proceeding with the rest of the

questionnaire. The questions pertaining to the number of people hired in the previous year and the average length of employee service are indicators of turnover and perhaps proper placement. The tenure question was suggested by Mrs. Drake.

The second section dealt with the sources of worker recruitment. The object was to learn the most commonly accepted practice and the reason for this procedure. Another aim was to compare hospital pay scales with commerce and industry.

The third section showed the usefulness of the application blank. It was anticipated that question '3' in this section regarding application form items pertinent to best selection would result in ambiguous answers or unconsidered replies.

The fourth section, tests, was expected to result in negative answers but, perhaps, suggest a need or realization of such a tool in better selection.

The fifth section was planned to determine how hospitals organized their interviews according to the latest recommendations from the field of personnel management. This organization included not only the setting, a plan, and guides, but also the factors considered important in the hiring decision.

The sixth section was considered a part of the selection procedure since proper placement not only helps to prevent turnover,

but also results in higher productivity and morale for the organization involved. The questions relating to sponsoring, the probation period, and follow up are ancillary to proper placement.

Table 1 summarizes the questionnaire.

Method of Interview

Preparation for interviewing

Dr. Jacobson recommended practice in reading the questionnaire aloud to other persons in order to develop ease, spontaneity, and informality. In addition, he asked the interviewer to role-play the intended method of interviewing. He advised restatement of the purpose of the interview to the interviewees, notwithstanding the previous correspondence.

A further interview tryout, suggested by the head of the Institution Administration Department at Michigan State University, was arranged with Mrs. Drake. This interview was quite successful in that rapport was excellent, the required information was obtained easily and naturally, and the method for recording the information was established.

Mrs. Drake arranged a further interview with the assistant personnel administrator of Michigan State University. Excellent

Table 1. Form used for summarizing questionnaire.

Name of Hospital _____ Location _____	
<u>Scope of Dietary Operation</u> Number of Nonprofessional Employees _____ Daily Average Patient Ratios _____ Daily Average Nonpatient Ratios _____ Nonprofessional Employees Hired By _____ Total Hired in 1955 _____ Average Tenure of Employees _____	<u>Recruitment</u> Use of Advertising _____ Recruiting from Within _____ Friends of Workers _____ Promotion from Within _____ Classes _____ Employment Agency Used _____ Wage Comparison with Commerce _____ and Industry _____
<u>Application Blank</u> <u>How Used</u> General Use in Hospital _____ Items Significant for Job Success _____ Usefulness of Blank _____	Tests _____ Psychological _____ Other _____
<u>Interview</u> Number of Interviewers Present _____ Advance Planning of Interview _____ Interviewing Aids _____ Hiring Considerations _____ Experience _____ Age _____ Marital Status _____ References _____ Education _____ Other _____	<u>Placement</u> Sponsoring of Worker _____ Probation Period _____ Worker Follow-Up _____

results were obtained with a minimum of effort on the part of the interviewer.

The original purpose of the interviews at the two Lansing hospitals was to test the interview management. The results were so successful that it was decided to include this information in the survey.

Recording of the data

In order to maintain informality and rapport, as little writing as was necessary was done by the interviewer during the actual interview. Abbreviations were used for recording essential information on the questionnaire. The rest of the information was recorded after the interview had been concluded. The absence of much recording helped to eliminate embarrassing pauses. Where much writing was required, the interviewer steered the interviewee conversation into channels irrelevant to the study.

Procedure for evaluating findings

Since the hospitals were not selected on a specific basis for comparison, the final compilation was simple. Each hospital was treated as a separate entity. All hospital findings were summarized by following the various sections of the questionnaire.

DISCUSSION

The findings of each interview were consolidated for reporting purposes under each general heading of the questionnaire. Where possible, the data have been arranged in tables to facilitate clarification and comprehension.

Scope of Dietary Operation

In considering the steps in the selection procedure it was necessary to know something about the scope of operations of the dietary department. All of the hospitals were situated in industrial cities of over 100,000 people. Because of the availability of other nearby hospitals all hospitals studied, with the exception of Hurley, were able to keep the patient census below the bed capacity. This is a common practice in many hospitals because of the ever present possibility of a large scale disaster. The patient census was a principal determinant of the number of staff employed. The patient load and the total staff were a significant influence in the number of dietary employees hired. Other influencing factors included the physical layout of the dietary department, the responsibilities of the department, and the type of worker hired.

Table 2 shows the number of full time employees in each hospital dietary department and the number of patient and nonpatient rations which they prepared. In all hospitals, with the exception of Cleveland City Hospital, the full time workers were supplemented with part time workers who averaged five to twenty hours of work each week. Many of the latter were school children who were held in high regard by dietitians in the Detroit and Lansing hospitals. Older people, drawing social security, performed useful part time work in Lansing hospitals. The Detroit area hospitals studied, with the exception of The Oakwood Hospital, used displaced persons in full time work. Opinions were unanimous regarding their excellent work skills and working relationships. The Cleveland City Hospital used Amish men (conscientious objectors) in all departments except in the dietary department. This exception was caused by the sanitary hazard of beards worn by all married men. Hospital authorities were in agreement that the men were excellent workers, neat and quiet, and kind to patients.

The number of nonpatient rations served does not present a true picture of each operation. In all hospitals the breakfast meal count was low, the noon count highest, and the supper count intermediate. In addition, what constituted a meal was not clear to many dietitians. In all pay cafeterias such minor purchases as a cup of

Table 2. The scope of dietary operation, expressed as numbers of patients, nonpatients, and dietary employees.

Hospital	Number of Patients	Number of Non- patients	Number of Dietary Employees
Henry Ford, Detroit	870	1270	171
City Hospital, Cleveland	735	470	196
Hurley, Flint	500	260	110
University of Chicago Clinics, Chicago	450	665	136
St. Luke's, Cleveland	450	450	88
Main Grace, Detroit	400	750	170
Sparrow, Lansing	360	200	70
Presbyterian, Chicago	350	600	85
Grace, Northwest Branch, Detroit .	275	165	103
St. Lawrence, Lansing	265	310	52
Oakwood, Dearborn	200	200	42

coffee and a bowl of soup were counted as a meal. Some hospitals did not extend the food service privilege beyond the hospital staff. At Henry Ford, Presbyterian, and the University of Chicago Clinics the visitors were allowed to purchase meals and were not differentiated from the staff in the census records.

The dietary personnel were hired by the chief dietitian or an assistant dietitian in all hospitals except at the main section of Grace Hospital. Here the dietary supervisor hired some pantry maids. An initial screening of applicants was performed by the personnel department in all hospitals except in the two Lansing hospitals and in the northwest branch of Grace Hospital.

None of the hospitals maintained records on the total number of people hired in 1955. Four hospitals were unable to determine this figure. The remaining seven calculated the following figures from other records:

<u>Hospital</u>	<u>Number Hired in 1955</u>
Main Grace	113
Northwest Grace	30
St. Lawrence	150*
Hurley	62
Oakwood	60
Cleveland City	131
St. Luke's	69

*Includes part time workers.

Management in any organization views worker turnover with concern. In the hospitals surveyed the tenure of dietary workers in certain areas was high. Examples included the head butcher at Cleveland City Hospital with 43 years longevity, a cook at Henry Ford with 37 years of service, cooks at Presbyterian with 25 to 30 years on the job, a pastry cook at St. Luke's for 40 years, and dietary personnel in several hospitals with over 20 years of service.

In this study an attempt was made to learn the dietary worker average length of service for each hospital. No reliable comparison could be made between hospitals since many hospitals were long established while Grace, Northwest Branch, and Oakwood were less than four years old. Also, hospitals with larger numbers of high turnover positions (pantry maids, porters, dishwashers, pot and pan personnel, and relief workers) could not be compared with hospitals of equal size but with a smaller proportion of routine or dead-end jobs. Hospital authorities stated that turnover was almost nonexistent in the skilled positions (supervisors, cooks, bakers, butchers).

None of the hospital management interviewed knew the average length of time that their dietary workers had been with them. Several chief dietitians and personnel administrators expressed considerable

interest in this query and personally calculated their figures which are listed below:

<u>Hospital</u>	<u>Average Years of Service</u>
Presbyterian	10*
University of Chicago Clinics	2 - 10*
Hurley	6*
Cleveland City	4
St. Luke's	4
Henry Ford	4
Grace, Northwest Branch	2-1/2
St. Lawrence	2-1/2
Main Grace	2 - 2-1/2
Oakwood	2

*Estimated.

Sparrow Hospital had no figure available but the chief dietitian stated that most of her employees had been with her for a number of years.

Recruitment

A common recruitment source is advertising. Some hospitals, such as Henry Ford, northwest Grace, St. Lawrence, Sparrow, Cleveland City, St. Luke's, and Hurley, did not have to advertise because of low turnover rates or numerous applications at the door. The main section of Grace Hospital advertised occasionally for

supervisors, cooks, and butchers. The chief dietitian at Presbyterian Hospital advertised for supervisors, cooks, and dietary aids but felt that this recruitment medium was a poor source of labor. The University of Chicago Clinics advertised for dietary aids. The Oakwood Hospital in Dearborn advertised for workers frequently because of the high turnover rate which the chief dietitian attributed to low pay and competition from industry. Hurley Hospital, a city hospital, and Cleveland City Hospital obtained workers from civil service lists. The latter hospital also hired friends of present employees.

Many leaders in the field of personnel management advocate recruiting workers from within the organization. One method is the encouragement of good workers to recruit their friends. The second method is a clearly defined promotion-from-within program. All chief dietitians and personnel directors interviewed were in agreement about the first method. Differences of opinion were noted concerning the latter method.

Henry Ford Hospital maintained a constant training program and every effort was made to recruit or promote within the organization. Occasionally new, but experienced, cooks were hired. The northwest branch of Grace Hospital preferred to promote from within but occasionally was required to hire bakers or butchers from outside sources. There was no promotional setup at the main

section of Grace Hospital although Chadsey High School furnished cook apprentices.

The Lansing hospitals, Hurley, Oakwood, Presbyterian, and the University of Chicago Clinics practiced promoting from within wherever possible. The Cleveland City Hospital had effective and continuous training programs, in one of which the kitchen helpers were able to be promoted to cooks. Minimum and maximum bands in the work and pay scale were established. St. Luke's Hospital had a promotional program leading to the positions of cook, baker, and supervisor.

Employment agencies were infrequently used for recruitment. The United States Employment Service (USES) was the best known but was least favored by the personnel interviewed. Henry Ford Hospital made limited use of USES but received the "cream of the crop" (largely displaced persons) from the International Institute. Limited use of an agency was made by the main section of Grace Hospital, St. Lawrence, Sparrow, University of Chicago Clinics, and St. Luke's Hospital. Hospitals which did not obtain workers from any agency included the northwest branch of Grace Hospital, Presbyterian, Oakwood, Hurley, and the Cleveland City Hospital.

No other recruitment sources were utilized by the hospitals studied.

In any organization the wage scale is of some importance not only to the workers involved but also to the community. Formerly, hospitals were known for their extremely low wages and the resultant poor labor force. Public awareness and education have done much to correct this condition so that many hospitals are able to compete successfully with commerce and industry in the recruitment of personnel. A few of the hospitals studied paid higher than commerce but lower than industry. A few hospitals had slightly lower wage scales than commerce and industry. In the comparisons of the hospital scales there were variations in the wages of skilled and nonskilled dietary workers.

The wage scale at Henry Ford Hospital was above that of commercial feeding establishments but was lower than that of industry. This was the highest hospital wage scale in the Detroit area. At the northwest branch of Grace Hospital and at The Oakwood Hospital wage scales were lower than commerce and industry. Both hospitals were situated in residential communities. St. Luke's and Presbyterian Hospitals also paid less than commerce and industry. The main section of Grace Hospital had a wage scale for unskilled workers within the range of commercial and industrial feeding establishments but the rate for skilled workers was lower. The St. Lawrence wage scale was nearly comparable to that of commerce and industry, whereas, that at Sparrow and Hurley was higher.

Hurley Hospital had a union which helped to keep the wage scale at a higher level. Interviewees at the University of Chicago Clinics stated that the wages of their female employees were too high in comparison with commerce and industry. Their skilled workers, men, received less pay than commerce and industry. A CIO union of the dietary workers was well established. The dietary wages at the Cleveland City Hospital were higher than commercial wages but lower than the industrial scale.

The Application Blank

Nearly all organizations consider the application blank to be one of the most important tools in the selection procedure. Such an agreement was found in the hospitals studied. Some application blanks were quite elaborate and detailed. A few were brief and simple. All had the common objective of a record to be used by chief dietitians, personnel directors, and others in selecting the right person for the right job.

The only hospital which did not require all applicants to fill out an application blank was Hurley. This occurred only when the waiting list was too long. Hurley personnel did consider the form very important and a civil service requirement. The chief dietitian at Henry Ford liked the blank because it was an additional form for

dietetic records, was useful for indicating basic education, and was excellent as a base for interviewing. The northwest branch of Grace Hospital used the form as a handy reference tool. The main section of Grace Hospital made similar use of this form. Sparrow and St. Lawrence Hospitals liked the utility of the application blank and said that they could not operate without it. The chief dietitian at Presbyterian Hospital found the form useful in interviewing as a base for questions and information. Authorities at the University of Chicago Clinics considered the application form a standard for measuring all incoming applicants. Since the form indicated reading and writing ability it was considered a valuable written record. Cleveland City Hospital and St. Luke's Hospital favored the application blank because it showed the education and work background of the applicant. The Oakwood Hospital found the form to be a useful record and an aid in checking references.

Not all hospitals used the same form throughout the hospital. Henry Ford had an additional blank for hiring dietitians. St. Lawrence, Sparrow, Presbyterian, and the University of Chicago Clinics used the same form for all nonprofessional personnel but used a different form for professionals such as nurses, dietitians, and laboratory technicians. The remaining hospitals studied used the same form for all personnel.

Personnel responsible for the use of application blanks revise the forms frequently in order to make them more useful and more up-to-date. Some recent changes have occurred because of the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC). The controversial items of race and nationality have been eliminated.

Some of the items on the application blank carry more weight than others. Employers feel that specific items are most useful in helping them to select the right kind of people. In the hospitals studied, the most useful item mentioned was the previous work record. Age was next in importance since dietary work is strenuous for older persons and does not promise rapid advancement for the very young.

Table 3 shows application form items considered most useful by the various dietitians interviewed.

Citizenship was considered important by Henry Ford because of the nearness to Canada. The meaning of the importance of the work record requires clarification. Not all hospitals required previous experience because they preferred to instill good work habits in beginners. Where experience was indicated, the employer checked for evidence of a good attendance record. Other hospitals considered references of paramount importance in checking the previous work record. The chief dietitian at northwest Grace

Table 3. Items most favored for selection on the application form.

Hospital	Work Record	Age	Dependent Children
Henry Ford, Detroit	X		
City Hospital, Cleveland	X		
Hurley, Flint	X		
University of Chicago Clinics, Chicago.	X	X	
St. Luke's, Cleveland	X	X	
Main Grace, Detroit	X		
Sparrow, Lansing	X	X	X
Presbyterian, Chicago			
Northwest Grace, Detroit		X	X
St. Lawrence, Lansing	X	X	X
Oakwood, Dearborn	X		

Table 3 (Continued)

Education	Physical Condition	Address	All Items	Citizenship	Weight, Height
				x	
x					
x					
		x			
x					
	x				
			x		
	x				x

Hospital needed taller persons for certain jobs. She did not hire overweight persons because of the possibility of hypertension. Several chief dietitians and personnel directors were alert for dependent children who could be a cause for absenteeism. The address of the applicant was considered important at the University of Chicago Clinics because of transportation difficulties. All hospitals preferred high school graduates because of the patient contacts in certain jobs. Because of the labor market, working conditions, and the wage scale few hospitals were able to enforce this preference. Cooks in some hospitals were required to have the minimum of an eighth grade education. Less skilled personnel had to prove simple reading and writing ability. In a few hospitals the dishwashers and pot and pan personnel were not required to have reading and writing ability. This was particularly true of older persons.

All interviewees stated that the application blank was invaluable. Henry Ford Hospital considered the form a record of the background of the person and a guide for past and future attendance. The northwest branch of Grace Hospital found the blank a good reference device. Both the chief dietitian and the personnel director of the main section of Grace Hospital agreed that the form was useful as a statement of experience, as indicative of special aptitudes and stability, as an opening wedge for finding out more about the person in general, and as an essential record.

Both the St. Lawrence and Sparrow Hospital dietitians stated that the application form was highly utilitarian because it indicated educational background, experience, and the type of work preferred (auxilliary nursing or dietary). If both preferences were checked, there was a strong possibility that the applicant would not be happy in kitchen work because of the lower status. A similar status system existed in all hospitals. Most of the dietary workers were classified on the same level as housekeeping employees. Those in auxilliary nursing were higher on the pay and status scales.

The chief dietitian at Presbyterian Hospital felt that the application blank was a good starting point from which to work. The University of Chicago Clinics used this form as a basis for looking into particular problems. The application blank was not only a written record for intensive checks but was useful in handling transfers and promotions. The form is being revised to include finger prints which will be useful for checking narcotics addicts.

The Cleveland City Hospital chief dietitian did not consider the application blank as important as the personal interview, but she did find it important for information relating to education, the age of the applicant, telephone number, address, the number of dependents, and home problems. The chief dietitian at St. Luke's

Hospital found the application form useful for its information about age, education, and former employment.

Chief dietitians at the Oakwood and Hurley hospitals found this form an extremely useful selection tool and "all that I have to go by."

Tests

A testing program was conducted at two hospitals, the University of Chicago Clinics and Hurley Hospital in Flint. The testing program at the Clinics was given by the University employment office. The Flint Civil Service Commission tested applicants for Hurley Hospital positions. The tests were psychological, rather than job informational. Two hospitals expressed interest in initiating non-psychological tests for use in interviewing dietary workers and for identification of training needs.

The tests at the University of Chicago Clinics were a mandatory selection procedure and were given to all maintenance and service applicants. A trained psychologist administered and evaluated the tests.

The writer observed food service applicants undergoing a non-verbal intelligence test and a manual dexterity test for speed. The purpose of the testing program was not explained to the applicants.

During a short absence of the psychologist from the testing room an applicant was heard to remark, "This testing is a lot of foolishness." The psychologist told the writer that the test validity was unknown. There was no cut-off score. No time was available for test re-search. The attempt was made to salvage applicants with low scores for particular jobs in the service departments.

The Interview

In all instances personnel responsible for interviewing job applicants were aware of good interview practices. Several interviewers were conscious of the fact that their particular situations did not allow them to conduct the best type of interview. At one hospital which was in critical need of office space, the personnel department of three staff members was closeted in a tiny room with no possibility of privacy. A personnel department in another hospital was attempting to carry on personnel interviewing in the midst of paint, flying plaster, and the noise of the drills of a construction program. In still another hospital the applicant had to face a strong window light. The only alternative in this small office was for the interviewer to face the light.

Hospitals which had functioning personnel departments assigned them the task of the initial screening of applicants. In this

study only the two Lansing hospitals were without personnel departments. Many of the chief dietitians and personnel departments worked closely together in order to obtain the best type of worker. The personnel department at Presbyterian Hospital always notified the chief dietitian whenever a personable applicant was available and scheduled appointments accordingly. Most of the dietitians had preplanned or standard interviews because applicants usually arrived without appointments.

In all hospitals the dietitians hired their employees except at the main section of Grace Hospital where a dietary administrative supervisor helped to select workers for a particular job. The chief dietitian at Henry Ford Hospital hired all her employees but was assisted occasionally by a staff dietitian in interviewing an applicant for a particular job. At the northwest branch of Grace Hospital the chief dietitian delegated the interviewing task to her staff dietitians. If a new staff member interviewed, the chief dietitian was present. Occasionally a supervisor was present for interviewing applicants for particular types of work.

At St. Lawrence Hospital the chief dietitian was the only interviewer present. The chief dietitian at Sparrow sometimes utilized the therapeutic dietitian in selecting diet aids. At Hurley the chief dietitian interviewed applicants in a small office with from two to

six other persons present but performing other duties. Only one interviewer, a dietitian, was present, during interviewing at the University of Chicago Clinics, Presbyterian Hospital, St. Luke's Hospital, and the Oakwood Hospital.

As stated previously, most dietitians had preplanned or standard interviews because of the unpredictable arrival of applicants. The main section of Grace, Presbyterian, and the University of Chicago Clinics followed this practice. The chief dietitian at Henry Ford tried to plan her interviews in advance but occasionally had to resort to a preplanned interview.

Chief dietitians and personnel interviewers at all hospitals used the application blank in the interview. Over half of the hospitals found the job specification a good aid for the interview. Four hospitals worked from an interviewer's guide. Only one chief dietitian used a job analysis.

Table 4 shows the use of interviewing aids by the personnel in the various hospitals.

The relation of certain individual qualifications to the hiring decision presented a variety of opinions from the chief dietitians interviewed. Qualifications influencing the hiring decision were, in the order of preference, previous experience, age, marital status,

Table 4. Interviewing aids used in the various hospitals.

Hospital	Applica- tion Blank	Job Speci- fication	Inter- viewer's Guide	Job Analysis
Henry Ford, Detroit . . .	X	X	X	
City Hospital, Cleveland .	X	X		
Hurley, Flint	X	X		
University of Chicago Clinics, Chicago	X			
St. Luke's, Cleveland . .	X	X		
Main Grace, Detroit . . .	X		X	
Sparrow, Lansing	X	X		
Presbyterian, Chicago . .	X		X	
Grace, Northwest Branch, Detroit	X		X	
St. Lawrence, Lansing .	X	X		
Oakwood, Dearborn	X	X		X

good references, education, physical condition, appearance, and personality.

Many dietitians stated that the experience factor depended on the job and on the individual. Previous experience was required in the skilled areas. The opinions expressed are summarized as follows:

Henry Ford

Unskilled applicants--good attendance record on any job, not necessarily food experience

Skilled applicants--good attendance record, good food experience

Grace, main section

Depends on the type of job, length of previous experience, skill required, pattern of behavior in previous jobs

Grace, Northwest Branch

Depends on type of job

Club or short order situation can be adapted for cooks or bakers

St. Lawrence

Depends on job but each cook should understand quantity cookery

Sparrow

Other hospital work

Presbyterian

Depends on individual and job, related experience important

University of Chicago Clinics

Depends on job

No experience required for tray girls--more interested in attitudes and personality

Cleveland City

Not important for unskilled

More interested in person willing to learn

St. Luke's

Depends on type of job, more money offered with experience

Oakwood

Experience not too important

Consider desire and need to work

Hurley

No experience necessary

Age was a less important factor in hiring than formerly because of the labor market. Some hospital authorities were reluctant to hire the very young because of the tendency of young people to move on to better paying jobs. A few hospital personnel thought the

heavy dietary work unsuitable for older persons. The age considerations and limitations are summarized as follows:

Henry Ford

No limits

Age important for some jobs, heavy work unsuitable for older women

May hire at ages 55-61 but retirement at 67

Grace, Northwest Branch

Depends on labor market, 16-55

Grace, main section

Varies according to background, physical condition, type of work

St. Lawrence

30-50, if possible

Sparrow

No preference

Presbyterian

No limit--tight labor market

University of Chicago Clinics

Part time tray girls, 17-18

Limit for hiring--60 (exceptions)

Retirement--65 (exceptions)

City Hospital

Up to 65 but dependent on job

St. Luke's

Depends on type of job and person

Oakwood

No limits

Hurley

Up to 55 (no exceptions)

Most chief dietitians and personnel interviewers felt that the marital status of the applicant was relatively unimportant in the decision to hire. A few did favor older married persons over young single persons because of stability. Many dietitians checked carefully to determine responsibility and provision for care of young children. The replies to the question of married status are indicated as follows:

Henry Ford

Depends on type of job, married men preferred to single men

Grace, Northwest Branch

Widows excellent

Watch for care of young children

Grace, main section

Depends on type of job and individual

St. Lawrence

Better workers have family responsibilities and need money

Sparrow

No comment

Presbyterian

Older married workers more stable than young single people

University of Chicago Clinics

No preference because of individual differences

Oakwood

Depends on person but older married workers preferred

City Hospital

Not important for most jobs

Older and married supervisors more stable

Consider dependents of married persons

St. Luke's

Not important

Hurley

Consider dependent children--might interfere with working hours

Wide differences of opinion existed as to the value of references in the decision to hire. Some dietitians and personnel administrators placed great importance in the use of references while others considered them to have little or no value. Some hospitals required work and character references. The number and value of references for each hospital are summarized as follows:

Henry Ford

Not reliable or good

Checks Detroit area employment for attendance record

Grace, Northwest Branch

Two character, two work--telephone and write

"Carry" references not considered

St. Lawrence

No number

Call and verify

Sparrow

Required but not used

Presbyterian

References required only for cooks

Other hospital references accepted

University of Chicago Clinics

Work references only--no number

Consistent record of employment important to employment office

References weighed carefully by dietary department

City Hospital

Character and work references--no specified number

Grace, main section

Two character, two work

St. Luke's

Unspecified, check city employment

Oakwood

Two character, three work

Hurley

None, but occasionally check those given voluntarily

Education was a less important factor in the decision to hire. There was a general preference for high school graduates in patient contact areas because of the greater ease in orientation and adjustment of the applicant. Little or no education was required for the nonskilled areas.

Henry Ford

Not too important but high school graduates for patient contacts

Grace, Northwest Branch

None for some areas, but eighth grade for others

Grace, main section

Depends on the job but high school graduates for patient contacts

St. Lawrence

Depends on the job, high school education for patient contacts

Sparrow

Depends on the job, high school education for patient contacts

Presbyterian

Depends on the job, basic education for patient food service

University of Chicago Clinics

Aim at high school, must read and write

City Hospital

High school education for patient contacts, not important for older persons

St. Luke's

High school education except for older people

Oakwood

At least eighth grade but prefer high school education

Hurley

Eighth grade

In addition to these factors in the decision to hire the applicant, other considerations which were important to the chief dietitians and the personnel administrators are summarized.

Henry Ford

Neat, clean, answers questions well (doesn't dominate conversation), asks intelligent questions, passes physical

Grace, Northwest Branch

Pass physical, consider how person will fit into work group

Grace, main section

Try to find someone who will fit in harmoniously with work group

St. Lawrence

Good physical condition (exam not given), personality (important in dealing with patients), no relatives in work group

Sparrow

Physical examination, personality

Presbyterian

Consider applicant as human relations problem

University of Chicago Clinics

Appearance, pleasing personality, no relatives in work group

City Hospital

Personality, attitude, voice, personal appearance, weight physical examination

St. Luke's

Personality, physical condition

Oakwood

Appearance

Hurley

Appearance and weight (not more than 10 percent overweight)

The survey of the hospitals showed no general agreement concerning the value of the individual qualifications in reaching the hiring decision. Previous experience was unnecessary at some hospitals but was required at others for skilled workers. Some dietitians had no age limitations while others related age to the job and the person. The effect of marital status was generally not significant except where small children were involved. The value of references showed the greatest opinion range. Education was desirable for most categories of workers. Many dietitians considered personal appearance, a good attitude, and a pleasing personality of considerable importance in arriving at the hiring decision.

Placement

After the applicant has been hired and tentatively assigned he should be given a sponsor according to authorities in the field of personnel management (10, 19, 40, 70). Most of the hospitals in this survey reported that dependable and senior employees were assigned to sponsor new workers. Two hospitals, main Grace and St. Lawrence, did not use a sponsor system.

Eight hospitals had a probation period for new employees. The three which did not were Henry Ford, Sparrow, and St. Luke's. Both the chief dietitian and the personnel administrator at Henry Ford

felt that a probation period was unnecessary because of careful selection practices. Hurley and Oakwood Hospitals had a probation period of six months. Presbyterian, University of Chicago Clinics, and Cleveland City Hospitals had probation periods of three months. New workers at St. Lawrence had a trial period of two months. The main section of Grace Hospital required a 30-day probation period. Grace Hospital, Northwest Branch had the shortest probation period, 14 days.

In eight of the hospitals the dietitian who hired the employee said that she followed up the progress of the employee. The chief dietitian at Henry Ford occasionally delegated this responsibility. The follow-up duty was assumed by the unit dietitian at the two Grace hospitals.

SUMMARY

A study of selection methods for nonprofessional dietary personnel in 11 hospitals was discussed in this paper. A questionnaire was used as a guide in interviews with chief dietitians and personnel directors.

Information was obtained about particular areas in the selection procedure: recruitment, the application blank, interviewing, tests, and placement. With two exceptions, the hospitals surveyed had personnel departments which screened applicants.

The results are summarized as follows:

1. Scope of the dietary department

The organizational pattern of the hospital helped to determine the number and the kind of dietary staff.

Other factors were the size of the hospital, the organizational policy regarding the feeding of hospital guests and the public, and the dietary equipment and departmental layout. The larger hospitals, such as Henry Ford and Cleveland City hospitals, required larger dietary staffs. Most of the hospitals reinforced their food service staffs with part time workers. These included school children,

displaced persons, and older workers drawing social security.

In all hospitals the final hiring of the nonprofessional dietary personnel was handled by the chief dietitian, except where this function was delegated to an assistant dietitian or a food service supervisor.

Turnover in personnel was indicated by the number of persons hired in 1955 and the average length of service. Skilled workers had many years of service; some had been employed for more than 20 years. The high turnover in the routine jobs lowered the average length of service to four years or less.

2. Recruitment

Many hospitals did not advertise for dietary employees because the applications at the door exceeded the number of available positions.

All of the hospitals recruited friends of present good workers. Nearly all of the hospitals had on-the-job training programs in order to promote from within the group.

Few of the hospitals utilized an employment agency.

Wage scales in most hospitals were higher than those in commercial feeding establishments but were lower than the industrial rates.

3. The application blank

The application form was in general use throughout most of the hospitals interviewed. Justification for the completion of this form included the utility as an interviewing base, reference tool, and written record.

The following items on the application form were considered most useful: work record, age, dependent young children, and education. The address, physical condition, weight and height, and citizenship were useful but of less importance.

4. Tests

Psychological tests were administered to all dietary applicants at two hospitals and will be initiated at a third hospital shortly. The tests used were for intelligence and job dexterity.

5. Interviewing

In most hospitals only one interviewer was present for interviewing.

Seven chief dietitians planned their interviews in advance. In two hospitals the applicants often arrived without appointments which eliminated advanced planning. Three hospitals used a preplanned interview.

All of the hospitals used the application blank as an interviewing aid. Next in importance were the job specification, the interviewer's guide, and the job analysis.

In the decision to hire, the following points were considered: experience, age, marital status, references, education, and other reasons. Hospitals differed as to the importance of experience but they did require a good attendance record. Some hospitals had no age limits, partly because of labor market conditions, but this consideration depended somewhat on the type of work and the physical condition of the applicant. Preferences about marital status depended on the job and on the person. There was much variation in opinion regarding the reliability, number, and type of references required. Most interviewees preferred high school graduates but were unable to obtain them in certain localities because of competition from industry. Some dietitians did not require reading and writing ability in routine jobs such as

dishwashing. Other factors which influenced the hiring decision were personal appearance, personality, the probability of adjustment to the work group, and the physical examination.

6. Placement

Nine of the chief dietitians provided sponsors for the new workers.

Eight of the hospitals had probation periods for new employees. These ranged from two weeks to six months.

Nine chief dietitians who hired employees followed them up on the job. This responsibility was assumed by the unit dietitian in two hospitals.

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INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

I. INTRODUCTION:

1. What is the size of the Dietary Department?

a. Number of nonprofessional employees?

b. Number of patients fed per day?

c. Number of staff fed per day?

2. Who hires?

Yes

No

Dietitian

Personnel Office

Chef

Other

3. Now then, how many people were hired in the last year?

4. What is the average length of time your employees have been with you?

II. RECRUITMENT:

Yes

No

1. Do you advertise for employees?

If not, why? Undignified? Lack of funds?

Never thought of it? Unsuccessful? Other?

2. Do you recruit from within?

Cooks

Bakers

Meat Cutters

Supervisors

Salad Personnel

Dishwashers and other

Dietary Attendants

3. Do you make use of an employment agency such as USES?

4. Is your wage scale within the range offered by industrial or commercial feeding establishments? Higher or lower?

III. APPLICATION BLANK:

Yes No

1. Do you require all applicants to fill out an application blank? _____
2. Is this form in general use throughout the hospital? _____
3. Which items on the application form have proved to be most useful in helping you to select the right kind of people?
4. In general, how useful is the application blank? Why?

IV. TESTS:

1. Do you require any of your applicants to complete arithmetic tests? _____
2. How about reading or vocabulary tests? _____
3. Are trade tests required such as
 - Knife proficiency? _____
 - Oral trade? _____
 - Other? _____

V. INTERVIEW:

1. In interviewing, is more than one interviewer present? _____
 If yes, how many? Why?
2. Do you plan the interview in advance? _____
3. Do you work from a job specification? _____
 - Application blank? _____
 - Interviewer's guide? _____
 - Other? _____
4. In the decision to hire, how do you consider:
 - a. Experience--what factors are most important?
 - b. Age--arbitrary limits?

c. Marital status?

d. References--kind and number?

e. Education?

f. Other?

VI. PLACEMENT:

1. Is the new worker sponsored?

Yes

No

2. Is there a probation period?

3. Does the person who hired follow up the new employee?

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