To identify a correlation between previous experience as a registered nurse and perceived self-confidence of graduate-level nurse practitioner students regarding their new role as clinical provider.

| Table 1. At this point in your NP educational program, how prepared are you in each of the following areas? |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Course                                           | Statistical Significance       |
| Health Assessment                                | $\leq 0.005$                   |
| Pathophysiology                                  | $0.012$                        |
| Pharmacology                                     | $\leq 0.005$                   |
| **Scale:** 1: very unprepared, 2: minimally prepared, 3: somewhat prepared, 4: generally well prepared, 5: very well prepared. |

- While not the first study to consider the relationship between prior RN experience and the transition to the NP role, it is the first study to consider the self-confidence of the graduate student while still in a graduate course of study (Hart & Bowen, 2016).
- Prior consideration of Patricia Benner’s Novice to Expert theory, Bandura’s self-efficacy theory, and David A. Kolb’s theory of experiential learning appeared to suggest that more RN experience would correlate with higher levels of self-confidence by the graduate NP students in their senior year of study.
- We were unable to reject the null hypothesis that there was no difference in the confidence of NP students based on years of experience as an RN.
- Some of the statistically significant findings in this study yielded surprising insights that could be used to inform the development of future nurse practitioner curriculum design.
- It is interesting to note that participants’ confidence in the core graduate NP course of pathophysiology correlated with confidence in other areas of clinical knowledge: management of both mental health concerns and emergent conditions. A linear regression analysis was run to measure the strength of association between the variables.
- For preparedness in pathophysiology and its relationship to preparedness in management of mental health, the $R$ value indicated a moderate strength correlation: $R = 0.344$.
- For preparedness in pathophysiology and management of emergent conditions, the $R$ value indicated a moderate strength correlation: $R = 0.312$.
- In addition, the data revealed information regarding graduate NPs’ perceptions of the effectiveness of different learning environments. Currently, there is a great debate regarding the effect of online versus in-classroom settings on learning outcomes.
- This study reveals that the differences between learning platforms may not be a significant determinant in producing self-confident NP graduates. This finding may support the choice of graduate nursing programs to increase online offerings and elucidates the need for further research in this area.

### References