

Perceptions of Graduate Nurses in the Emergency Department

Beaumont

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Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine the perceptions of graduate nurse's regarding their orientation process at 4 months and 6 months within an emergency department graduate nurse internship.

Introduction

Emergency nursing is challenging and complex. Because of the current shortage of nurses, emergency departments (ED) must develop strategies to recruit, train and retain nurses. Many organizations are implementing graduate nurse internship programs to improve upon staffing demands. For the graduate nurse, transitioning from student nurse to professional nurse can be challenging and complex. Many graduate nurses leave the nursing profession within the first year of practice because of job stress, lack of support, heavy workloads, poor relationships with physicians and inadequate work environments (Clark and Springer, 2012). Due to the amount of time and financial resources required to orientate graduate nurses, there would be value in obtaining the graduate nurses' perspective on the orientation process and their work environment.

Currently, there is little data in the literature discussing the perceptions of graduate nurses regarding their orientation process within the emergency department. If the graduate nurse's perceptions were known, then the orientation process could be tailored to better meet their needs.

Background

- Nursing turnover is a recurring problem for healthcare organizations that is associated with high costs (Helbing, E., Teems, M., and Moutrie, D., 2017).
- It is estimated that 17.5 percent of newly licensed RNs leave their first nursing job within the first year (Kovner, C., Brewer, C., Fathi, F. and Jun, J., 2014).
- Emergency nursing has a unique work environment that requires critical thinking and an advanced skill set.
- Graduate nurses struggle with the ability to make and implement independent nursing interventions for complex patients.
- Graduate nurse internship programs can be a key factor in the successful transition from new graduate to emergency nurse.

Setting

A hundred and thirty two bed Level One Trauma emergency department located in a large (1100 bed) public, tertiary care, teaching, research and referral medicine center in southeastern Michigan.



Methods

- Replica Study – first done by Patterson et al, 2010.
- Semi structured interviews were conducted at the beginning of the 4th month and at the end of the 6 month orientation program (Figure 1).
- Study participants included 13 women and 3 men. All were employed full time in their first position as a graduate nurse. Ten of the nurses had their BSN while the other six had their ADN.
- Each interview lasted approximately one hour and had two investigators present so that interrater agreement on the data collected could be confirmed and validated.
- A comparison of the perceptions was conducted individually pre and post as well as across interns.
- The Bowles and Candela Perceptions of First Job Nursing Experiences survey (Figure 2) was administered at the final week of orientation.
- Quantitative results from the Bowles and Candela Survey were reviewed and compared amongst the graduate nurses.

Figure 1. Interview Tool

- Examining the Perceptions of Graduate Nurses in the Emergency Department
1. Please describe what you perceive of emergency nursing in.
 2. Tell us how you feel you are adapting to the role of professional emergency nurse.
 3. What would qualify as an emergency room here?
 4. Out of everything you have learned thus far, what skill set have you found the most valuable?
 5. What support are you receiving from an emotional standpoint?
 6. What support are you receiving from a clinical standpoint?
 7. How is the graduate nurse internship preparing you for practice in the emergency department?
 8. Tell us how confident you feel right now in providing patient care.
 9. Describe your relationship with those part of the interment group with the greatest differences. Do you feel that being in the internship helped or hindered your acceptance by other emergency staff members? Explain.
 10. What are your perceptions of the current EOC setting, staff that you are working with on a daily basis?
 11. What challenges are you having in this time in your orientation process?
 12. Identify desirable characteristics for future EOC leadership program participants.
 13. What recommendations do you have for future EOC leadership programs?
 14. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Figure 2. Bowles and Candela Survey

Perceptions of First Job Nursing Experiences

SECTION: Work, Expectations, and Support

BY: Sean Dufour, RN

	Response	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. The work environment prepared me for the ED work environment.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
2. My support was helpful for preparation.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
3. The staff received together as a team.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
4. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
5. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
6. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
7. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
8. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
9. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
10. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
11. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
12. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
13. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
14. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
15. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
16. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
17. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
18. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
19. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
20. I had to stay focused for shift to be safe.	1	2.1	1.0	1.1	1.1

Results

- Participants shared their perceptions of adapting to the role of professional emergency nurse, support of their colleagues and management team, preparation for practice in the ED, challenges of acclimating to emergency nursing, experience of being part of an internship program, and recommendations for future graduate nurse internship programs.
- According to the graduates, participating within the internship program provided them the opportunity to share both their frustrations and experiences allowing for professional growth and development.
- They identified the extended orientation as assisting them with the refinement of their assessment skills and increased their comfort level in functioning as a competent ED nurse.
- The interns enjoyed having regular classes and simulation experiences allowing them to put context to the skills they were learning on the unit ensuring safe patient care.
- When asked, the graduate nurses stated the positive nature of the experience and were thankful they had the opportunity to participate in the program.
- Results of the quantitative survey on participant's perception of their first job as a registered nurse indicated that the work was stressful but they strongly agreed that their orientation prepared them for the position. They also agreed that they were supported by administration and their peers. Dealing with patient care issues (staying over to complete work, working conditions made it hard to provide safe care, staffing and negativity in the work place) was seen as primarily positive.

Discussion

The graduate nurses within this study strongly agreed that the program was successful and prepared them to face clinical challenges as novice emergency nurses. They felt the program made them more confident when providing patient care as well as assisting them with prioritizing and time management skills.

Other aspects they found valuable were learning to communicate with other members of the healthcare team and to trust their intuition even though they have not become experts yet. This supports findings found in the literature that communication and trust are key to being successful post orientation (Patterson et al, 2010).

Being part of the internship group was positively reported. The graduates felt they had an automatic support group with their peers and the educators involved. Also because they were part of the internship they were warmly received by the senior staff and expectations to be instantly knowledgeable were gradual. Because many new nurses have difficulty acclimating to the culture on the unit (Baumberger, Henry, 2012), having peers who are undergoing similar experiences decreases the stress and anxiety associated with starting a new position.

The greatest challenges identified were the frustration that they do not know everything and because emergency nursing is fast paced the lack of speed was noticeable as they cared for patients. Valdez (2008) supports that graduate nurses often feel overwhelmed post academia and are at risk for failure to thrive in practice due to the high stress, fast paced emergency setting.

The results from the Bowles and Candela survey demonstrate the necessity of hospital administrators to be cognizant of the transition that is required for graduate nurses as they enter the workforce (Bowles and Candela, 2005). Providing graduate nurses with an extended orientation process that involves both didactic and clinical opportunities will help facilitate the

transition from novice nurse to competent nurse. Additional support from the experienced nursing staff will assist with providing a sense of teamwork and belonging which may ultimately aid in retention of the new nurses.

Implications for Practice

- Understanding the experience of new graduate nurses to the ED provides vital information for developing orientation programs and assisting with the transition of the novice to competent nurse.
- There is a demand for effective internship programs that are designed to prepare new graduate nurses in providing safe, competent and effective patient care.
- Implementing a nurse internship program may help to prevent avoidable turnover among new graduate nurses within the first year of practice.

Conclusions

Despite all of the literature in regards to new graduates in the work place, little has been discussed regarding the perceptions of graduate nurse's orientation process. Support for graduates as they begin their journey into the nursing profession is extremely important. Being part of a graduate nurse internship program has demonstrated that it improves the graduate nurses' perception that they can safely provide patient care.

It is important for graduates to feel a sense of community and to be encouraged to become an integral part of the emergency department. Ultimately this will aid in retention and decrease turnover. If given proper support and mentoring throughout the orientation process the graduate nurse can professionally grow and develop and become an expert emergency nurse. Future research is needed to discover if there are similarities in responses by nurses outside the emergency department who participate in graduate nurse orientation programs.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include a small sample size and the inability to generalize the data due to it being conducted on one site and with in one department. Also, because of the small sample size, quantitative data was difficult to analyze.

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