Optimizing professional well-being and patient outcomes through the use of mentorship in rural workplaces

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Background

• Recruitment and retention in rural areas critical to meet patient needs
• Numerous challenges in rural areas
• Mentorship - strategy to improve recruitment and retention through professional growth and development.
Research Questions

• What are the perceptions of healthcare providers and individuals in senior leaderships positions of same-profession mentorships in rural regions?

• What factors and practices influence the development and sustainability of rural mentorships?
Setting & Sample

• Saskatchewan, Canada

• Healthcare providers (12)
  – RNs (7); NPs (2); MDs (3)

• Leaders (9)
  – Front-line managers (5); Senior administrators (4)
Methods & Results

• Convenience and snowball sampling
• Semi-structured interviews
• Analysis – Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Themes:

• Rural Mentorship Challenges
• Rural Mentorship Facilitators
Rural Mentorship Challenges

Administrative:

• *We’re seeing urban nurses float out [to rural] and they tend to flock back to the cities after a short period of time. It’s definitely making it harder for us to mentor people into positions.*
Rural Mentorship Challenges

Scope of practice:

• In rural, a lot of the times you have professional people who are wearing many hats, and you don’t have necessarily as many specialists as you do generalists.

• Nurses are exhausted and so to ask them to do something more is like, are you kidding? So, nurses are just feeling like they’re bled dry by the health regions.
Rural Mentorship Challenges

Interpersonal relationships:

• *The system we have here is different from where I came from. It’s more of each individual physician fighting the cause and trying to make money, you have that type of competitive situation...because you think if I get this guy to this level, he will probably take my patients.... Yeah, it’s a competition*
Rural Mentorship Facilitators

Mentorship as a recruitment and retention tool

- [Mentorship] makes a stronger employee. When you’re recruiting a person into...a service, you can offer them a mentorship program so that they feel they have that safety net when they’re starting out their practice.
Rural Mentorship Facilitators

Openness and commitment to mentorship

• Finding somebody who is going to be supportive of you and encouraging, but also somebody who’s going to challenge you, help you see the realities of nursing and go through those hard times, but just not have to do it alone.
Rural Mentorship Facilitators

Structured mentorship programs

• Need for formalized, structured programs
• Expectations clearly outlined
• Request for assistance with mentorship program development and matches from health region representative.
Rural Mentorship Facilitators

Community influence on mentorship

• [*We*] have employees that probably won’t be as successful in terms of retention in rural areas, or even during a period of their mentorship if they don’t engage in some way with the community beyond work
Recommendations

• Leaders and providers need to be invested
• Reduce workload assignments, support staff on call, mentees supernumerary
• Matching of dyads with like interests; participant input into matching process
• Formal mentorship program established
• Provider integration with rural community
Conclusion

• Development and sustainability of rural mentorships involve commitment from senior leadership, healthcare providers, and communities

• Cost effective, creative strategies required to eliminate barriers and encourage facilitators
Contact and Thank You

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References


