

Bridging the Skillset Gap of Emergency Department Nurse Practitioners: Establishing the Need for a Formal Postgraduate Emergency Nurse Practitioner Fellowship Program

Savina V. Gonzalez, DNP, APRN, FNP-C

Purpose

- This project aims to illuminate the need for more qualified emergency department (ED) nurse practitioners (NPs) in central Florida.
- The goal is to expose the benefits of a formal postgraduate emergency nurse practitioner (ENP) fellowship program for those FNPs who wish to practice in the ED setting.

Background

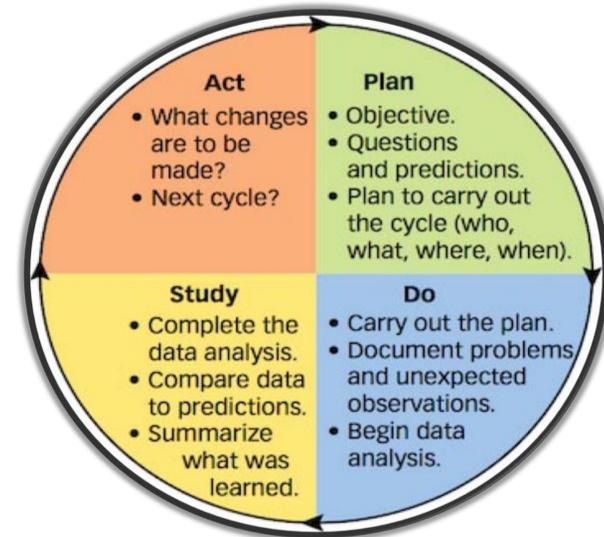
- With only 233 certified emergency nurse practitioners (ENPs) nationwide and the aging emergency physician workforce, there is an obvious discrepancy between the need and supply of ED providers (AANPNCB, 2018).
- In 2014, the total US ED visits were 141.4 million-approximately 45.1 visits per 100 persons (Jairmadas, 2018).
- FNPs hold approximately 60% of NP certifications in the US, but their training is in primary care.
- In Florida, FNPs employed in the ED setting face scope of practice (SOP) challenges.
- Currently, in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties there are only 315 certified emergency medicine physicians (EMPs) and less than 20 ENPs (Florida Department of Health, 2016).
- The FNP curriculum does not prepare NPs to perform certain procedures necessary for ED patient care.
- How to safely and efficiently fill the existing gap.

Setting

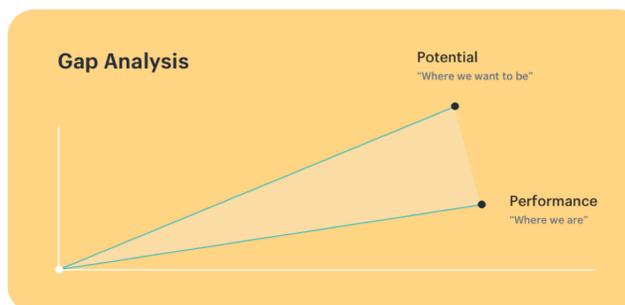
- Two focus group meetings will be held at the University of South Florida College of Nursing and led by the Principal Investigator (PI) and her faculty supervisor.
- The results will be transcribed and compared to the evidence collected through the literature review.

Framework

- The theoretical framework selected for this project is the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) improvement process. This process focuses on forming a team, setting aims, establishing measures, selecting, implementing and spreading changes (Institute for Healthcare Improvement, 2018).



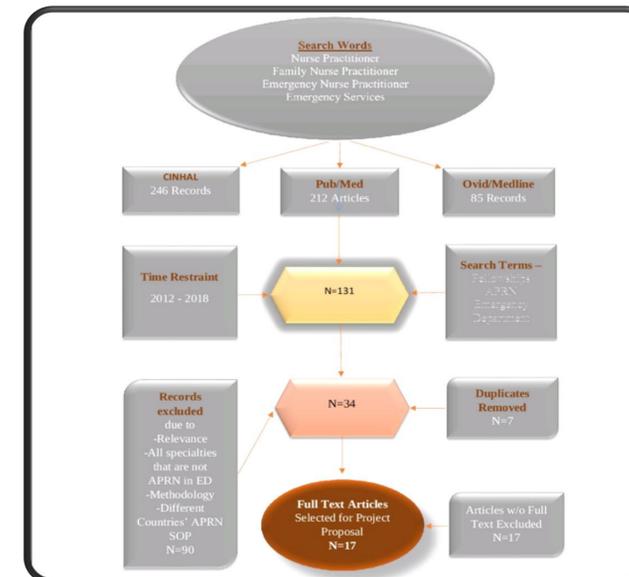
Results



- After reviewing the proposed emergency nurse practitioner fellowship curriculum and the results from the focus groups, it became clear that the perceived performance gap exists.
- There is confusion on the NP role in the ED.
- There are inconsistencies in NP utilization.
- FNPs need further preparation to be fully functional ED providers.
- Further studies on this subject will help to substantiate the need and implementation of this project.

Method

- Two focus groups will be created- one with ED physicians and administrators to understand their expectations when hiring FNPs for the ED, and another comprised of ED NPs to understand what they actually do.
- The interview recordings will be transcribed and Gap analysis will be performed to compare the gathered data to the recently-proposed ENP program and fellowship curriculum.



Inclusion Criteria

- The inclusion criteria is Florida-licensed FNPs and MDs who currently practice in central Florida EDs.



Discussions

- Evidence has shown that the FNP role in the ED is not exactly understood at this time. This has led to the inconsistency in FNP skillset utilization in EDs nationwide. A careful review of the differences in the competency lists for FNPs and ENPs yielded clear understanding that FNPs need extra course work, clinical preparation and certification to be fully-functional providers in the ED setting.
- This project has the potential to benefit both sides- administrators and nurse practitioners, but most of all the growing numbers and increased acuity of patients presenting in the central Florida emergency departments.
- Understanding the needs of the community allows for prompt delivery of solutions, which benefit everyone involved.

Limitations

- No studies on the actual topic of interest exist. While a few studies address the need for NP fellowships, not one focuses on the exact need for FNP-ENP fellowship. Most of the studies are qualitative and lack proper methodology use to substantiate the need for post-graduate coursework for ED NPs.

Acknowledgements

- I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Catherine Ling, my Project Faculty Supervisor and to Dr. Marcia Johansson for their constant support and invaluable investment into my education. I would also like to acknowledge a very influential person to this project and my career as a whole, my Clinical Site Preceptor and the developer of the Emergency Nurse Practitioner Curriculum, Dr. Kumar Jairamdas. None of this would be possible without you. Heartfelt gratitude to my clinical mentors Dr. Masood Ansari and Dr. Kenneth Justice for molding me into the clinician I am today. Finally, I would like to thank my husband and daughter for believing in me and all of my close family and friends, thank you!

