

# High Fidelity Simulation Education and Clinical Judgment: New Nurses' Voices

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## Background

With the increasing complexity of healthcare, new nurses face increasing challenges in transitioning from educational to professional practice settings. Development of sound clinical judgment skills may facilitate this transition and enhance the provision of safe, effective patient care.

Although there is a growing body of literature to support the value of high fidelity simulation (HFS) experiences, little is known about how knowledge and skills learned in HFS transfer to practice. Specifically, there is a knowledge gap about the perceived effect of HFS on the clinical judgment skills of new nurses.

## Purpose

The aim of this study, was to enhance understanding of recent BSN graduates' experiences of HFS as students and the effect of those experiences on development of clinical judgment as they transitioned to clinical practice.



## Methods

A purposive sample of 20 BSN graduates representing ten different nursing programs in five states with between one and three years' experience was interviewed. Interviews were transcribed and checked for accuracy by the principle investigator. Two researchers independently open coded two transcripts then met to discuss the initial open coding. Both then coded the remaining transcripts and met to discuss coding and interpretation of the data. From the initial codes three themes developed.

## Findings

- 1) Acting in the role of the nurse in simulation learning enhanced students' synthesis of knowledge from multiple sources.
- 2) Students identified specific learning advantages of HFS over the clinical setting.
- 3) Knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained through HFS translated to the student clinical experience and into practice.

New nurses described HFS experiences as enhancing their development of clinical judgment. They reported having taken on the role of the nurse in a safe environment enabled them to practice clinical judgment skills. They also noted clinical practice settings seldom afforded the same opportunities because of patient safety constraints.



## Discussion

Compared to clinical practice settings, unique benefits of HFS include the opportunity for the nursing student to take on the role of the nurse and make independent judgments. New nurses recalled the HFS environment as safe in that it eliminated the risk of harm to actual patients and allowed them to practice decision making in a supportive environment.

Participants noted that the knowledge, skills, and attitudes learned in HFS related to their current realm of practice and enhanced their ability to skillfully perform clinical judgment and provide safe, effective care to patients.

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