Factors that Impact Role Strain among Undergraduate Clinical Instructors Teaching in Wisconsin Nursing Programs

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Background

Clinical instructors play an integral role in undergraduate nursing education; the role is unique and complicated.

Clinical instructors report role strain related to their work, which contributes to burnout, disengagement, job dissatisfaction and faculty attrition.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore role strain among undergraduate clinical instructors teaching in Wisconsin nursing programs, due to the limited evidence about factors contributing to role strain in this population. Of particular interest was the impact of nurse faculty practice on the degree role strain.

Methods and Study Instrument

Mixed methods using a modified version of Mobily’s Role Strain Scale.

Self-identified clinical instructors at four targeted BSN-conferring institutions.

Results

• Clinical instructors reported varying degrees of role strain; role overload was the highest source.
• Instructors teaching in clinical settings experienced more role strain than those teaching in clinical and classroom settings.
• Nurse faculty practice did not reduce role strain, but instructors who practiced felt more competent and had less role strain when they practiced at the same facility where they taught.
• Lack of balance was an additional source of role strain; collegial support relieved role strain.

Conclusions

Recommendations

• Balance workloads to include clinical and classroom teaching.
• Support faculty practice at clinical sites by forming academic practice partnerships with healthcare organizations.
• Develop mechanisms for collegial support, such as faculty mentorship programs.