



# EXPLORING STAFF NURSES' PERCEPTIONS OF SPECIALTY CERTIFICATION AT A LARGE URBAN ACADEMIC MEDICAL CENTER

Jennifer Clair, DNP, RN, ACNS-BC

Kelly McCue, DNP, RN, AOCNS, Scholarly Project Advisor

Kevin Whitney, RN, DNP, NEA-BC, Scholarly Project Mentor

Northeastern University and Massachusetts General Hospital

Boston, MA, USA

## BACKGROUND

- The Institute of Medicine's study on medical errors, *To Err is Human: Building a Safer Health System*, recommends that health professions implement periodic reexaminations and relicensing of providers.
- While registered nurse (RN) licensure provides baseline competency, certification provides ongoing validations of experience, knowledge, and skills.
- The Perceived Value of Certification Tool® (PVCT) is an existing validated and reliable survey tool that assesses nurses' perceived value of certification.



## RESULTS

- There were 535 survey respondents for a response rate of 13.4%. Of these 349 completed the survey for a completion rate of 8.7%. Intrinsic and extrinsic subscales showed good internal reliability testing with Cronbach's Alpha of .935 and .814 respectively.
- Results show that nurses have a positive perception of certification that is motivated by intrinsic values more than extrinsic.**
- The paired samples statistics of intrinsic and extrinsic values demonstrated a Sig. (2-tailed) of .000, which is P value less than .05, indicating a statistically significant difference between intrinsic and extrinsic values.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this project was to assess staff nurses' perceived value of specialty certification to better understand motivators for obtaining certification at a large urban tertiary medical center. Staff nurses' perception of certification can help guide nursing leaders' interventions to increase the number of certified nurses.

Intrinsic Motivators	Extrinsic Motivators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Validates specialty knowledge</li> <li>Indicates level of clinical competence</li> <li>Indicates attainment of a practice standard</li> <li>Enhances professional credibility</li> <li>Enhances feeling of personal accomplishment</li> <li>Enhances personal confidence in clinical abilities</li> <li>Provides personal satisfaction</li> <li>Provides professional challenge</li> <li>Enhances professional autonomy</li> <li>Indicates professional growth</li> <li>Provides evidence of accountability</li> <li>Provides evidence of professional commitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotes recognition from peers</li> <li>Promotes recognition from other health professionals</li> <li>Promotes recognition from employers</li> <li>Increases consumer confidence</li> <li>Increases marketability</li> <li>Increases salary</li> </ul>

## METHODS

### Design

The project was conducted as quality improvement.

### Sample and Setting

- A convenience sample was obtained by administering the web-based survey to approximately 4,000 staff nurses via email. Inclusion criteria was English-speaking staff nurses with access to hospital email that are able to read and complete an online survey.
- Permission to use the PVCT was obtained by the Competency and Credentialing Institute and all requirements of this permission adhered to throughout the project. The tool contained eighteen questions that use a five point Likert rating scale.

### Data Analysis

Data were exported from REDCap, a secure survey application, to the statistics analysis program SPSS. Scoring was evaluated as a total score and intrinsic and extrinsic subscales.

## CONCLUSIONS

Results of this study are consistent with past research in nursing certification in that nurses see value in specialty certification. This value is largely intrinsically motivated, through indicators such as personal accomplishment and satisfaction. By confirming that nurses value specialty certification through intrinsic motivators, hospital leadership gains insight into encouraging certification. Next steps can include exploring barriers to obtaining something that nurses clearly see value in.

### Acknowledgements

Michelle Beauchesne, DNSc, RN, CPNP, FAAN, FNAP FAANP and Michele DeGrazia, PhD, RN, NNP-BC, FAAN

Funding provided by the Gamma Epsilon Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International