Leadership Education for Staff Nurses: Shortcomings, Barriers, & Future Directions

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Objectives

- Describe the staff nurse leadership role
- Identify benefits of & barriers to pursuing a staff nurse leader role
- Examine shortcomings in staff nurse leader education & training
- Propose potential educational opportunities for staff nurse leaders in alignment with QSEN core competencies
Who is a staff nurse leader?

- Roughly 3 million registered nurses in the U.S. (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016)
- Nearly 70% are staff nurses (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016)
- Most staff nurses hold diploma, associate, & baccalaureate degrees (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016)
- Many titles
  - Charge nurse
  - Team leader
  - Shift leader
  - Staff nurse leader
Literature Review

- PubMed & CINAHL – 18 articles considered
- Staff nurse leaders supervise daily unit operations & ensure things run smoothly, safely, & efficiently
- May apply for, volunteer for, or be appointed to these positions
- Can be formal or informal
- Most staff nurse leaders are insufficiently prepared (Dearmon, Riley, Mestas, & Buckner, 2015)
- Literature clearly demonstrates that effective nursing leadership is instrumental in improving staff retention, safety, & patient outcomes (Mendes & Fradique, 2014)
Benefits

- Tangible rewards
  - Increased pay
  - Improved benefits
  - More desirable work hours
  - Formal title change
- Increased sense of purpose, responsibility, & control
- Greater team engagement
- Improved confidence/empowerment
- Increased job satisfaction
- Opportunities for lifelong learning
- Stepping stone

(Dearmon et al., 2015; Hewko, Brown, Fraser, Wong, & Cummings, 2014; Mendes & Fradique, 2014)
Barriers

- **MOST COMMON** - Inadequate leadership training/education
- Stress & burnout
- Decreased self-confidence
- Decreased job satisfaction
- Increase in workload without compensation
- Increase in responsibility without authority/autonomy

(Dearmon et al., 2015; Frazer, 2014; Hewko et al., 2014; Pollard & Wild, 2014)
What do staff nurse leaders want?

- **Education**
  - MOST COMMON – Communication
  - Conflict management
  - Engaging/motivating/empowering staff
  - Team building
  - Transformational leadership theory
  - Ethics/legal issues
  - Organizational skills/delegation
  - Work-life balance/stress management
  - Self-awareness/self-reflection

- **Format**
  - MOST COMMON - Asynchronous online educational modules & webinars
  - Face-to-face
  - Case studies
  - Simulation with debriefing

- **MOST HELPFUL - Mentoring**

(Dearmon et al., 2015; Hewko et al., 2014; Lewis, Shanahan, & Andrus, 2014; Pollard & Wild, 2014; Stetler, Ritchie, Rycroft-Malone, & Charns, 2014)
QSEN Core Competencies

1. Teamwork & Collaboration
2. Evidence-Based Practice
3. Quality Improvement
4. Safety
5. Patient-Centered Care
6. Informatics
Future Directions

- Need for improved leadership education targeted at staff nurses
- Priority for nursing & hospital administration
- Flexible, online education options
- Free or low-cost
- Offered by professional organizations &/or employers
- Required educational competencies for staff nurse leaders
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Selected References


