



Service Priorities and Programmes
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Challenges of fresh nursing graduates during their transition period

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Introduction

Every nurse has experienced a turning point from being a student nurse to a staff nurse. Nurses need time to adapt to a change of identity, roles, responsibilities and a new environment, particularly when switching from a protected environment where they are supervised by their school teachers to an authentic world where they need to take care of the afflicted. Challenges emerged during the transitional period, such as stress and work dissatisfaction cause new nursing graduates to quit their jobs, thereby resulting in a high turnover rate.

Objectives

The objective of this study is to explore the challenges encountered by new nursing graduates during the transition period in the local context which aims to provide insights to academics and clinical administrators for facilitating the transition.

Methodology

This was a qualitative study and individual face-to-face interviews were used to collect data.

Result

Eight new nursing graduates (M=4, F=4) were interviewed individually. Nine themes were identified including eight areas of challenges and one common attribute. Workload, lack of knowledge, communication, expectation, change of role, working atmosphere, support and a blame/complaint culture are the common areas of challenges that they encounter in the transitional period. Furthermore, this study also found that new nursing graduates possess a common attribute, i.e. positive personal attitude which seems able to enhance their perseverance in this period. A few recommendations have been drawn from this study's results as follows. First, academics may consider adding the completion of Basic Life Support, venepuncture, and blood extraction courses as mandatory requirements for graduation. Second, hospital administrators are suggested to devise a standardized pre-RN training programme for all the hospitals. Third, the roles and responsibilities of preceptors are

also suggested to be devised, a learning contract can be employed to facilitate the preceptors and graduates to set goals and objectives together which can provide a clear direction to both parties. Thus, preceptors can easily monitor the graduates' learning process. Lastly, hospital administrators may meet the graduates regularly to provide a platform to understand more about their needs and concerns. As a result, the hospital administrators may provide inputs in the meetings with academics for programme enhancement. This mechanism is able to form a cycle with continuous improvement of nursing programmes as well as clinical support for the fresh nursing graduates.