Investing to Increase Retention of Experienced Nurse Preceptors

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BACKGROUND / PROBLEM

- Preceptors are experienced nurses that support new staff by:
  - Creating safe learning environments, validating skills, fostering independence, and promoting critical thinking
- Challenges for preceptors include:
  - Lack of time to teach, difficulty balancing roles of a provider and teacher, inconsistent support, and lack of or inconsistent preparation
- These challenges may lead to preceptor burnout, resulting in poorer outcomes for orientees, patients, and the hospital.

OBJECTIVES

- The purpose of the paper was to review and synthesize the literature to assess whether creating a standardized education for nurse preceptors will affect retention of experienced preceptors.

METHODS

- List of search terms was developed:
  - Population: Nurs* AND precept*
  - Intervention: Develop* OR train* OR educat* OR workshop
  - Outcome: Retention
- 3 databases were searched: PubMed, CINAHL, and Medline (846 results total)
- Inclusion criteria:
  - Articles published between 2017-2022
  - Peer-reviewed articles
  - English Language only
- Exclusion criteria:
  - Preceptors for non-nursing fields
  - Preceptors of nursing students
- After applying criteria and removing duplicates, 220 results remained
- Through title, abstract, and article screen, 8 articles were chosen for literature review and synthesis
- Types of articles: 2 Level II, 5 Level III 1 Level V
- Quality of articles: A and B (Overall Quality: B)

RESULTS & OUTCOMES

Literature Synthesis:

- Theme 1: Education
  - Ongoing professional development and education programs decrease turnover and are key motivators for nurses to stay
  - Education should focus on soft skills (i.e., critical thinking, conflict resolution, prioritization)
  - Preceptor education should include refresher courses, use adult learning styles, and be available for all experience levels and career stages
- Theme 2: Recognition and Satisfaction
  - Education and recognition improve satisfaction, which in turn are correlated with intent to stay
  - Provide recognition and satisfaction in a variety of ways (mentorship, shared governance, effective communication)
  - Group cohesion and effective communication is related to increased satisfaction
- Theme 3: Leadership Support
  - Help sustain education and preceptor development
  - Decrease preceptor's assignment load to allow for teaching
  - Linked to a healthier work environment

GAPS IN LITERATURE

- Low numbers of experimental studies
- Lack of generalizability
- Limited representation of experienced nurses' retention levels

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- Provide ongoing education, training, and support
  - Utilize adult learning and teaching concepts
  - Ensure education is consistent with the organization's policies and procedures
  - Provide courses using multiple modalities
  - Provide refresher courses to experienced preceptors
- Leaders should provide learning time for preceptors' professional development opportunities
- Educators should obtain buy-in from all stakeholders when creating a preceptor program, including preceptors and orientees
  - Appropriate resources to deliver the necessary training should be available
- Recognize contributions of preceptors as unit-based leaders
- Provide a supportive environment through shared governance and mentorship

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