



Perceptions in the Role of the Nurse from Student to Practice

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Introduction and Background

Many nursing students have a perception of the Nursing Role throughout the school experience and once they are in the workforce, the perception may not match the reality of the role. Variation in the perception versus reality of the Nursing Role can lead to; incompleteness of the nursing program, frequent or rapid turnover, job dissatisfaction poor fit in the patient care environment, burn out and lack of professionalism and/or advancing of the profession as a whole.

The potential goal of our project is to identify the perception of the nursing role during the students' trajectory in the nursing program, compared to New Nurses in the work force. This could ultimately lead to a more precise marketing campaign for nursing programs and healthcare agencies.

PICO/Practice Question:

- (P) 2nd and 4th term student nurses and novice nurses within a nurse residency program
- (I) None
- (C) During nursing school and first year afterwards
- (O) Perception versus reality of nursing practice

Based on the following PICO components the following practice question was developed;

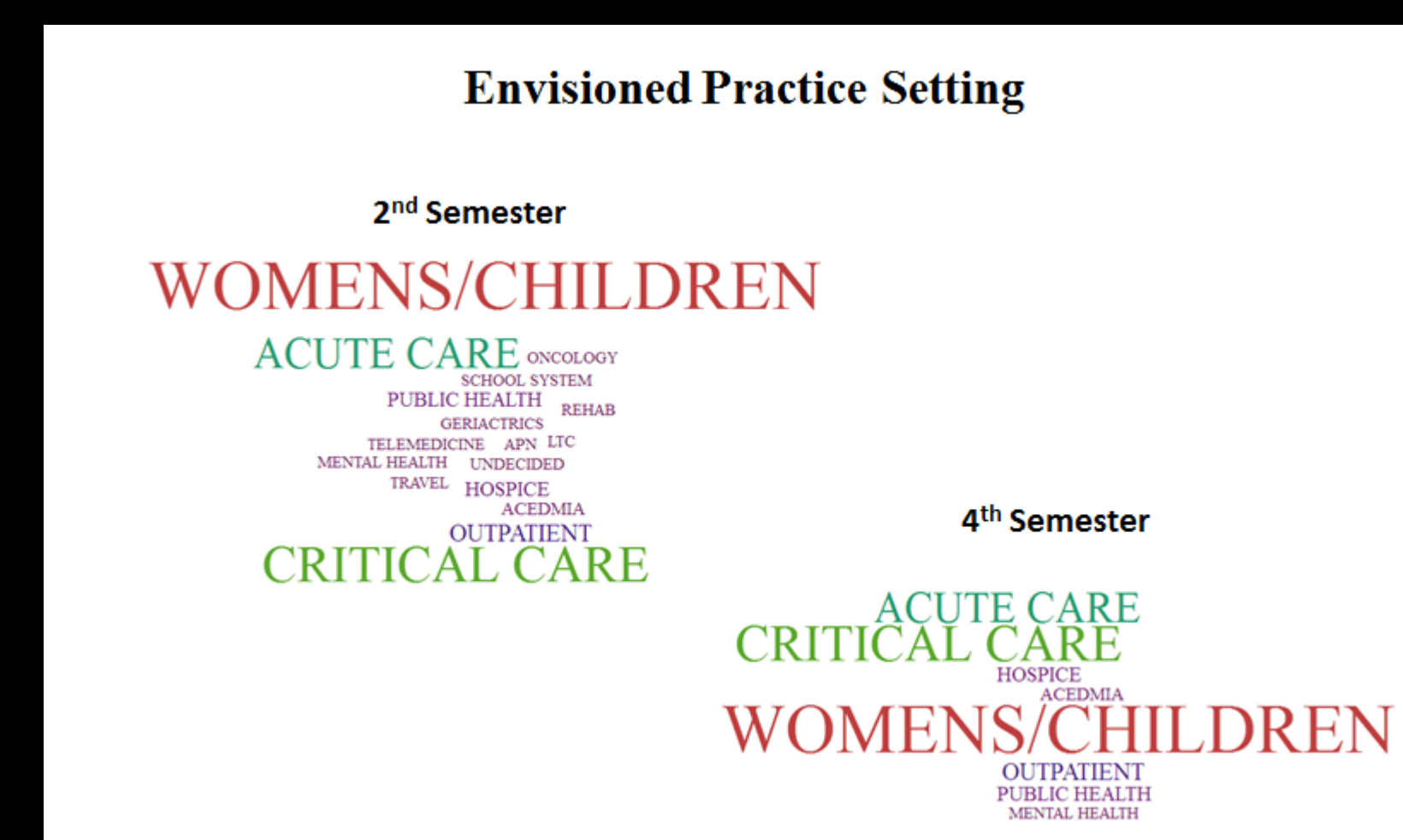
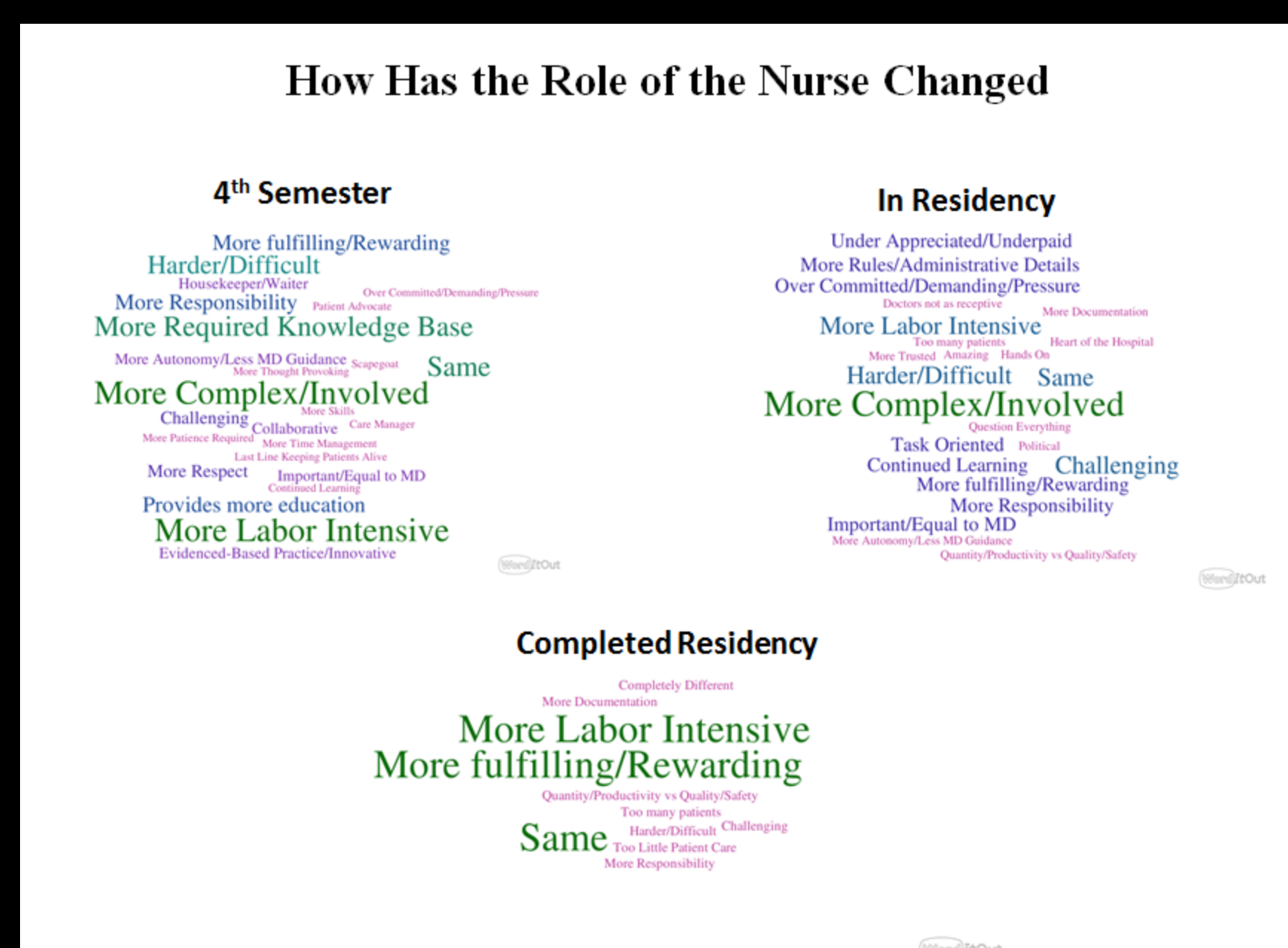
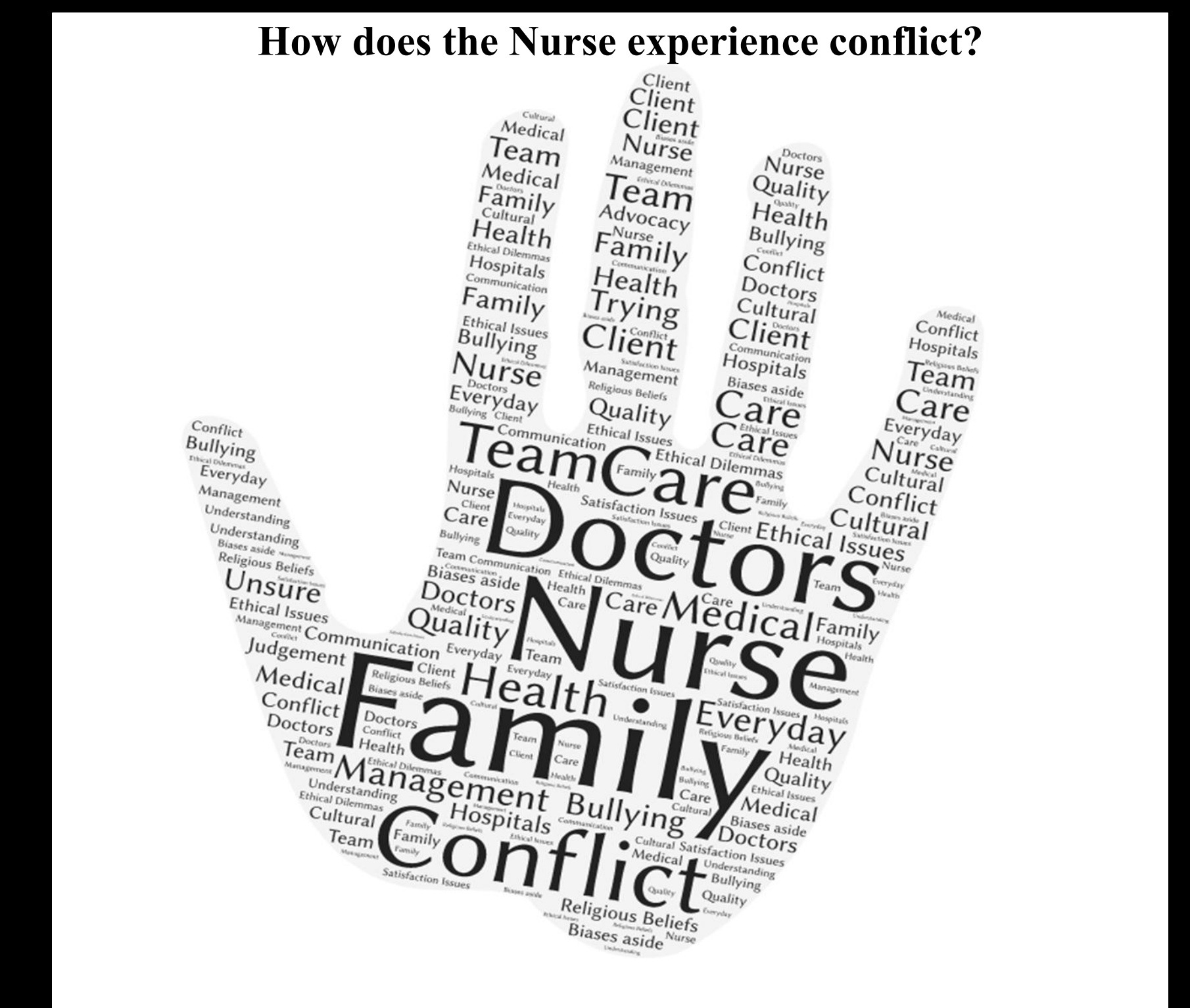
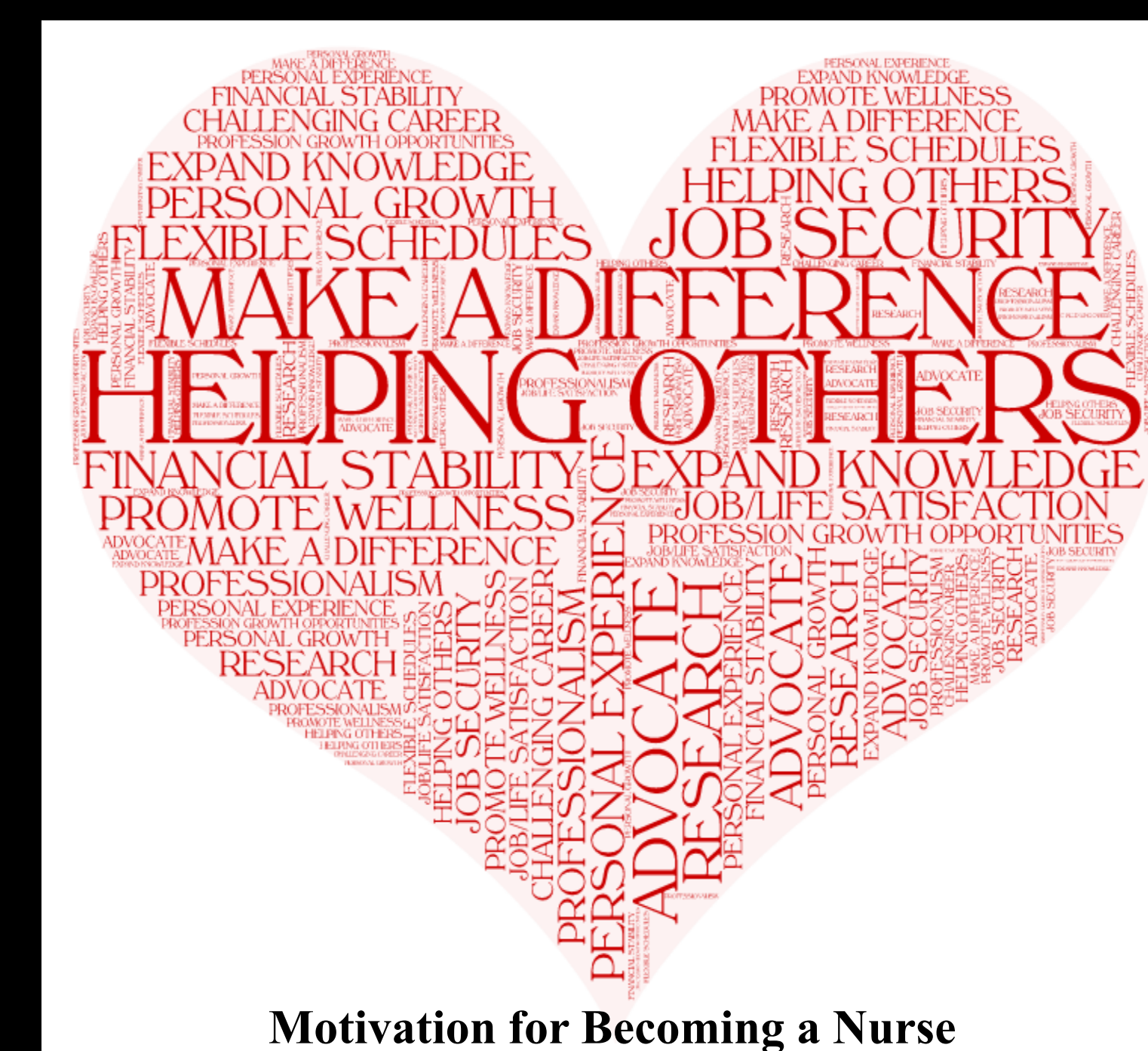
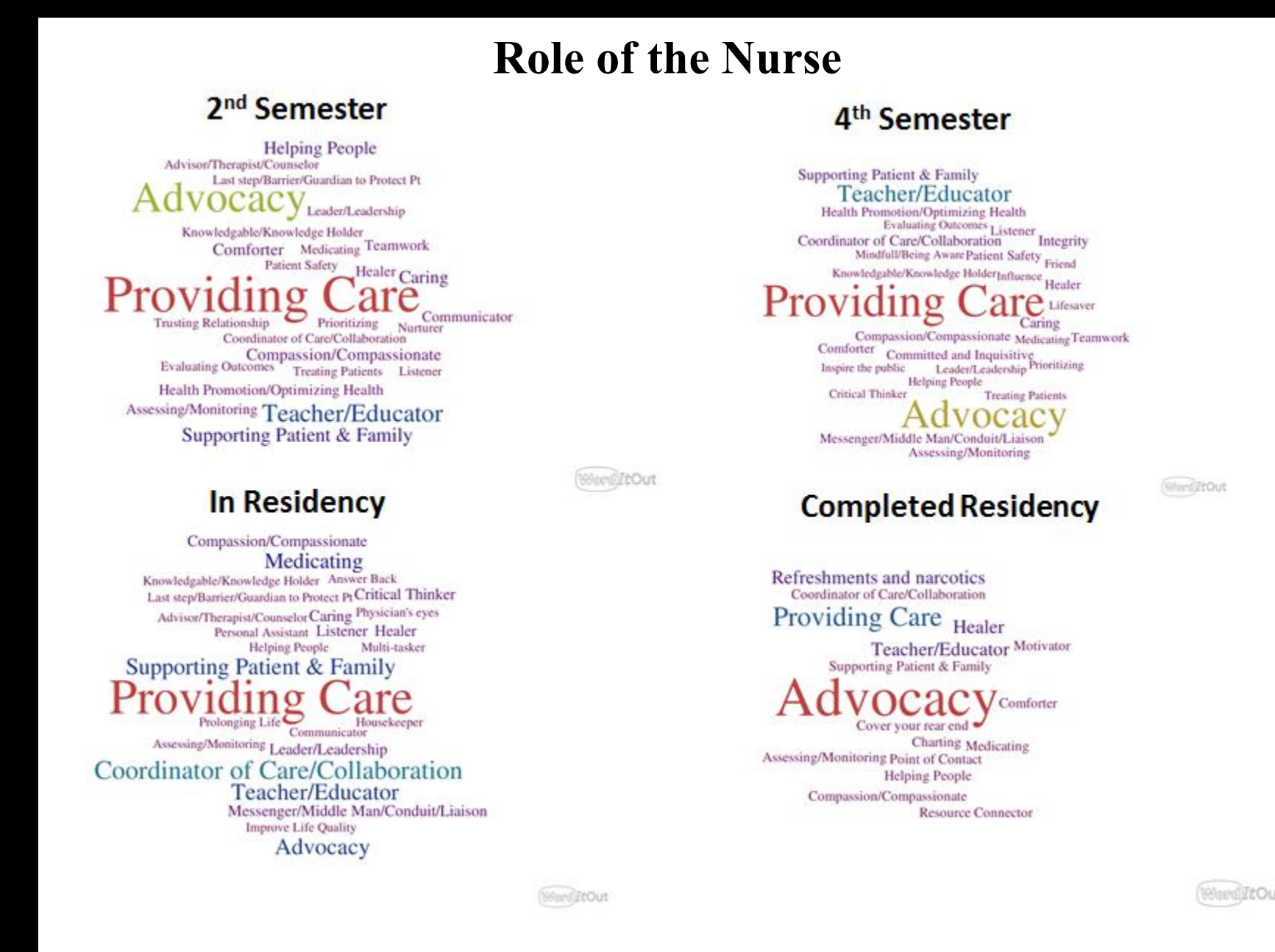
What are the perceptions of second and fourth term nursing students compared to novice nurse residents regarding the role of Registered Nurse in clinical practice.

Literature Review

The literature search was performed using OVID using the search terms: *nursing, profession, role, transition, expectations, perceptions, satisfaction*. Nine journal articles were selected based on content and identifying themes. The date range for the publications were from 2004-2015, all of the articles were Level III Qualitative studies, with good to low quality of evidence based on the scientific evidence. Limitations to the publications included small sample sizes, or isolated cohorts/regional population participation which may make some studies less generalizable.

Main findings through literature review:

- *Overarching themes on why you become a nurse:* desire to help others, the feeling of doing something useful and job security, as well as personal experiences with healthcare leading to a career in Nursing.
- Nursing is also viewed as a challenging profession.
- A positive image of the nursing profession attracts nursing applicants.
- Students think media can lead to a negative stereotype of nurses in some studies. Beginning students defined nursing as; caring, nurturing, teaching, and promoting health.
- There is variation in thoughts relating to the progression of the student to practicing Nurse and the thoughts of the role of the nurse.
- The nursing shortage is about to peak in the coming years with the retirement of baby boomer generation.
- Nursing are arriving to tumultuous work environments that have the potential to influence their work satisfaction and ultimate desire to remain in the profession.
- Nursing schools must recruit and retain qualified applicants. Then we must maintain them in the profession.
- Image of nursing influences recruitment to the profession.
- Nursing professionals should target schools beginning of 6th grade students to engage and give a clear picture of what nursing is.



Translation & Recommendations

Translations:

This qualitative research project sought to explore the differences in student nurses' and first year residency nurses' perceptions about the role of the registered nurse. Nursing students may be unprepared for the realities of the nurse's role while in nursing school; nothing can fully prepare the student for bedside practice, except the actual experience itself. At times, this may be a career changing eye opener; it may also be the impetus to experience the grit of nursing care.

- When asked about the characteristics nurses should retain, most of the responses focused on caring and compassion, while the traits of knowledge and critical thinking ranked lower across the board without change amongst nurse level.
- As Family is a major theme of conflict for the nurse, is this because of personal family obligations, or the experience of dealing with patient's family members?
- Interdisciplinary teams and doctors are a source of conflict as well. We must work better together understanding everyone holds the same patient outcome.
- The perceived role of nursing appears that as the student progresses across the experience spectrum, they realize the complexity, difficulty, and work intensity of the role. Truer to life experiences = greater appreciation and understanding of the nurse's role.
- Helping others is a consistently perceived notion for nursing careers.
- Providing care was a consistent role task, while nurses realized the necessity of patient advocacy as they progressed into individual practice.

Recommendations:

- Further research in student nurses' and novice nurses' perceptions of the nurse's role and how that perception compares to the experienced realities.
- Placing the student nurse into clinical placement as early in the nursing program as possible.
- Include nurses as guest lecturers for classroom learning who can give share realities of their careers without academic bias.
- Incorporate genuine, stress inducing methodologies in simulation labs, where appropriate in academia.
- Assign a mentor to the novice nurse, regardless of residency status, who will stay with the new nurse through the first year.
- Encourage open dialogue, or debriefing sessions weekly, on nursing units discussing good things that occurred, as well as negative or stressful events focusing on the efforts of team.

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