

Competence vs. Confidence: Helping New Nurse Graduates Transition During A Pandemic

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BACKGROUND

- The Coronavirus sparked a global pandemic in Spring 2020. As a result, nursing programs had to restructure the curriculum to meet the needs of a virtual learning environment. With disrupted hands-on and clinical experiences, new nurse graduates are faced with many unique challenges as they enter the workforce. It is important to note that the pandemic had led to minimal time for coaching new nurse graduates to improve their competency and confidence in executing their roles in their diverse working environments (Schivinski & McNulty, 2021).
- Organizations are working collaboratively with leadership, frontline staff and education departments to develop effective methods to bridge this gap. By identifying learning needs such as critical reasoning, critical thinking, knowledge deficits, and building confidence; Professional development leaders are able to tailor programs such as boot camps or simulation programs to meet the needs of the new nurse graduate. Research also supports the positive impact of year-long nurse residency programs and mentorship programs to aid in the support of new nurse graduates (Gill & Suber, 2020)

METHODS

- Databases utilized: CINAHL, PubMed
- Key terms: new graduate nurse, new nurse graduate, COVID-19, coronavirus, confidence, competence
- Lower level evidence found which is to be expected due to the sudden onset of pandemic and need to make immediate adjustments in the clinical setting

OBJECTIVES

- Identify any perceived deficits felt from learning during a pandemic
- Discuss support received by new graduate nurses after graduation
- Determine the most effective support provided to new graduates

STRATEGY & IMPLEMENTATION

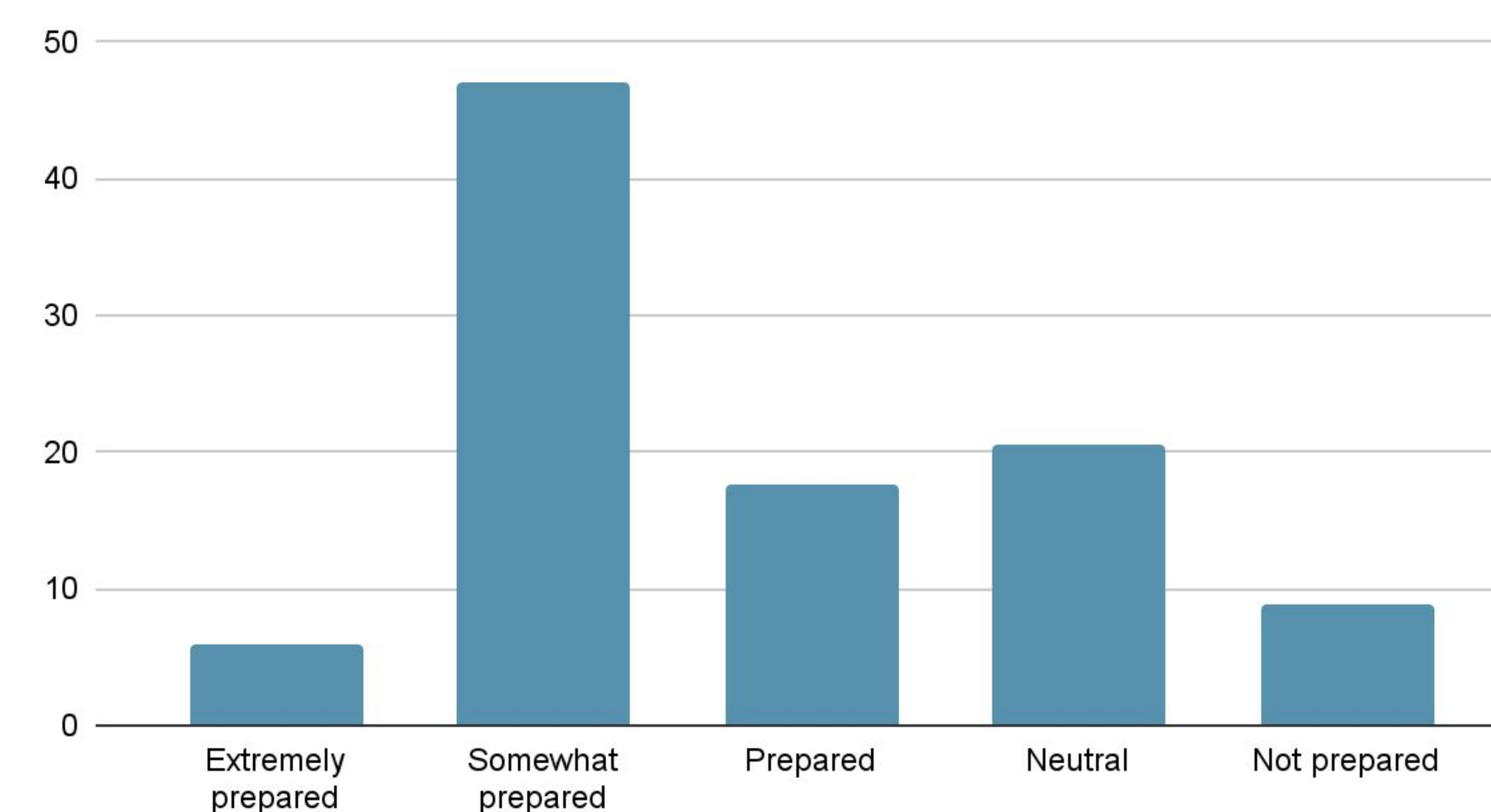
- An eight question survey was created.
- Questions were designed to assess any loss of clinical hours experienced during the pandemic as well as the support new graduates received and its effectiveness during the transition from student to nurse.
- The survey was distributed to new graduate nurses at several Maryland hospitals.

RESULTS

- 34 responses obtained
- 38% (n=13) of respondents reported having less clinical experience in nursing school due to the pandemic

Nurse Graduates' Reported Preparation of Clinical Skill Set to Enter the Workforce

Percentage of Respondents



- New graduate nurses reported feeling supported by preceptors, nurse educators, unit staff, and the nurse residency program with preceptors and the nurse residency programs being the most beneficial.

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IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Factors for Success for new graduate nurses include:

- Having an open line of communication between residents, preceptors and nursing leadership
- Organized, structured orientation plan to ensure new graduate nurse has clear defined roles and expectations outlined
- Hospital based Nurse Residency Programs are a big element in the support of new graduate nurses transitioning into their professional careers
- Biweekly check ins with nurse educator and nurse manager to review measurable, attainable and realistic goals with nurse residents
- Conducting needs assessment surveys to address areas of concern and gauge engagement
- Scheduled structured additional skills training to increase confidence and competence with new graduate nurses entering the nursing workforce- ie, (Mock Codes, Role play activities, case studies)
- Providing easily accessible evidence based learning tools, modules and applications- ie. (Elsevier, Clinical Nursing Key, Lippincott, Medscape, Up to Date, John Hopkins Evidence Based Modules, Essentials of Critical Care Orientation (ECCO), Micromedex)
- Additional time to review policies and procedures
- Support from preceptor, fellow nurses, clinical supervisors, support staff, nursing educators, nursing managers, and nursing directors is imperative to the success of new graduate nurses during a pandemic
- Incorporate simulated clinical experiences to assist students in clinical skills and meeting core competencies.

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