



## Review

Exploring experienced nurses' attitudes, views and expectations of new graduate nurses: A critical review<sup>☆</sup>Michelle Freeling<sup>a,\*</sup>, Steve Parker<sup>b,1</sup><sup>a</sup> 5/123 Hawker Street, Ridleyton, Adelaide 5008, Australia<sup>b</sup> School of Nursing and Midwifery, Flinders University, GPO Box 2100, Adelaide 5001, Australia

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## SUMMARY

**Objectives:** This critical review evaluates the existing primary research literature to identify experienced registered nurses' attitudes, views and expectations of graduate nurses which may create a barrier for optimal graduate nurse performance.

**Design/Data Sources:** Relevant primary studies were identified by searching online databases using a wide variety of appropriate keyword combinations. Online databases including Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Scopus, PsycINFO and Google Scholar were comprehensively searched for relevant research. The selected studies were subjected to a rigorous critical appraisal to evaluate the studies and to determine if the findings were applicable to practice.

**Review methods:** A manual method of thematic analysis was conducted to highlight explicit and implicit themes from the reviewed studies. Themes were grouped and continually reduced until only essential themes remain. Themes and subthemes emerged which were then compared and contrasted to analyse results. The four major themes identified include nursing skills, inadequate preparation during academic program, attitudes and ward culture and concerns with confidence. Subthemes were identified within these categories.

**Results:** Findings indicate experienced registered nurses discussed themes including 'nursing skills', 'inadequate preparation during academic program', 'attitudes and ward culture' and 'concerns with confidence'. Concerns were raised including the value of traditional training versus tertiary education programs, coping with unprofessional behaviour and inadequate preparation for practice.

**Discussion and implications for practice:** Further research is required to fully address management of the theory–practice gap, as well as the attitudes of experienced registered nurses educated in traditional programs versus those in tertiary education programs. Nurse managers should be aware of the possible occurrence of unprofessional behaviour, and increased workplace training regarding lateral violence would assist in raising awareness regarding negative and unacceptable behaviour.

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## Introduction

The challenges accompanying new nursing graduates entering the workforce are numerous and multifaceted. There is a plethora of research which examines the graduate nurse journey and subsequent feelings and attitudes towards work place integration (Pellico et al., 2009; Wangenstein and Johansson, 2008; Halfer and Graf, 2006 and McKenna and Green, 2004). However, little research exists regarding the view of the experienced registered nurse. It is evident that experienced registered nurses significantly contribute to the development of the graduate nurse, and experienced registered nurses as preceptors are widely recognised

to play an essential role in graduate nurse development (Sayers and DiGiacomo, 2011; Giallonardo and Wong, 2010 and Johnstone et al., 2008).

Negative staff attitudes have been highlighted as one of the most powerful barriers of graduate nurse support (Johnstone et al., 2008). It has been noted that a negative approach from senior nurses towards graduate nurses creates a barrier for optimal skill utilization by the graduate (Bircumshaw, 1989). Nursing is a profession which has been perceived both historically and contemporarily as 'eating its young' (Meissner, 1986; Stanley et al., 2007 and Wolff et al., 2010) and many graduate nurses find it challenging to become accepted in the culture of the unit (Baumberger-Henry, 2012). To enable graduates to fulfil their potential, the attitudes, views and expectations of experienced registered nurses and graduate nurses must be explored. Only then can these attitudes and feelings be addressed and methods put in place to facilitate healthy graduate nurse/experienced registered nurse relationships. This may ultimately allow graduate nurses to utilize

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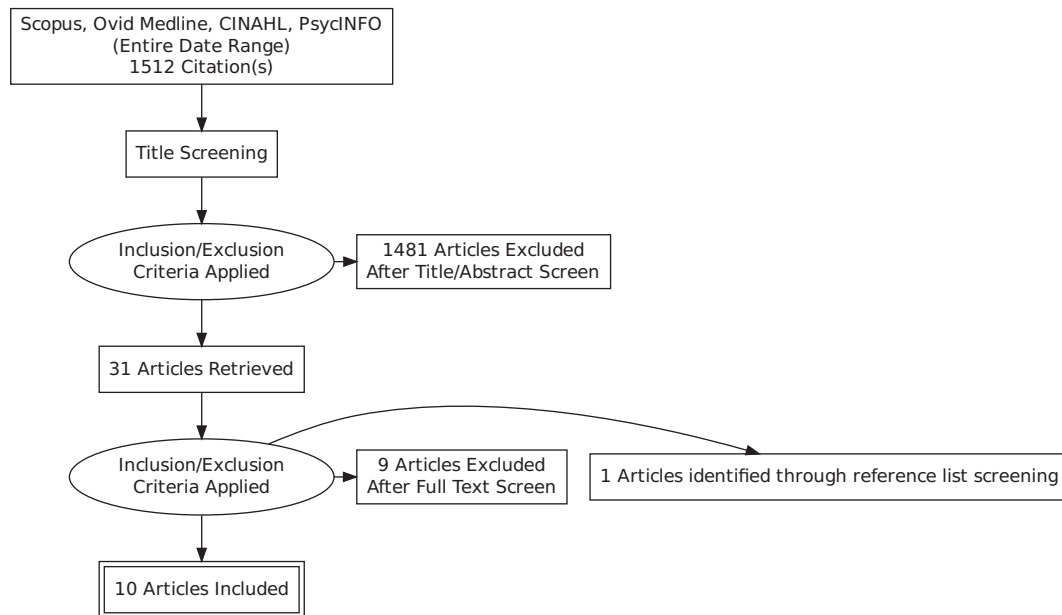


Fig. 1. PRISMA flow diagram demonstrating the search process.

their full range of skills, practice confidently and comfortably and become a valuable part of the healthcare team.

## Aim

The aim of this paper is to explore primary research literature to identify experienced registered nurses' attitudes, views and expectations of graduate nurses which may create a barrier for optimal graduate nurse performance.

## Search methods and outcomes

This literature review was undertaken to systematically evaluate existing knowledge to inform a defined area of clinical practice (Schneider et al., 2007, p. 47). Online databases Ovid Medline, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Scopus and PsycINFO were comprehensively searched for relevant research. Various keywords and combinations were utilised for example: graduate and experienced and nurse and attitudes, nurse or health personnel attitudes and graduate students and attitudes, new graduate nurse and nurse attitudes, nurse manager and perspective or attitude or view, graduate nurse and attitude of health personnel, graduate and nurse and perception, preparation for practice and perception and nursing staff, practice readiness and graduate nurse, registered nurse and new graduate and perspective. 'Nursing' and 'peer reviewed' were selected as criterion for the search.

A total of 1512 studies were identified and after title screening and applying inclusion/exclusion criteria (Table 1), 31 articles were retrieved and read. No parameters were applied regarding the year the study was undertaken, as all studies regarding thoughts and feelings of experienced registered nurses were considered to potentially contain

relevant, applicable information. For the purpose of this review, experienced nurses are defined as having three or more years of post-graduate experience and have some involvement in the supervision of graduate nurses. The graduate nurse is defined as having 2 or less years of post-graduate experience.

The full-text screening method required the study to be from the perspective of experienced registered nurses, and to focus on the attitudes, views and expectations of graduate nurses. After rejecting 22 studies, the reference lists were screened and one more relevant study was located. Ten studies were read in full and a decision was made to include all ten articles in the review. A total of 35 studies were located and after applying the exclusion criteria (Table 1), 10 studies were considered relevant. Out of these 10 studies, eight were identified from database searching and two from the reference lists of studies which did not meet the inclusion criteria. The search process is demonstrated in Fig. 1 and the results are summarized in Table 2.

## Critical appraisal

The 10 selected studies were subjected to a rigorous critical appraisal to evaluate the studies, scrutinize the reliability between the research problems and approaches, and determine if the findings were applicable to practice (Schneider et al., 2007, p. 24). A total of 33 questions from The Critical Review Guidelines for qualitative and quantitative studies (Schneider et al., 2007) were applied to enable research processes, strengths and weaknesses and significant aspects of each study to be evaluated. Two of the studies incorporated mixed method designs so both qualitative and quantitative Critical Review Guidelines were utilised.

Findings reveal that none of the studies met all the criteria of the critical appraisal. However, strengths and weakness of the studies were

Table 1  
Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Published in English language	Published in a language other than English
Related to graduate nurses (2 years or less experience) and experienced nurses (3 years or more experience)	Related to student nurses
Related to the experiences and perceptions of experienced nurses	Related to the experiences and perceptions of graduate nurses
Related to the attitudes of experienced nurses towards graduate nurses	
Primary research article or thesis	Literature other than primary research articles or thesis

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