



Letting go: How newly graduated registered nurses in Western Canada decide to exit the nursing profession

Kathryn M. Chachula^{a,*}, Florence Myrick^{b,1}, Olive Yonge^{b,2}

^a Faculty of Health Studies, Brandon University, 270-18th Street, Brandon, Manitoba R7A 6A9, Canada

^b Faculty of Nursing, University of Alberta, Level 3, Edmonton Clinic Health Academy, 11405 87 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 1C9, Canada

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Accepted 26 February 2015

Keywords:

Newly graduated nurses

Grounded theory

Exit from profession

Workload

Shiftwork

Bullying

Intention to leave

Student–teacher relationships

SUMMARY

Background: The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) estimates a nursing shortage in Canada will rise to 60,000 registered nurses by 2022. Further compounding this crisis is the approximate 14–61% of new nursing graduates who will change nursing roles or exit the profession.

Aim: To explore the factors and basic psychosocial process involved in the decisions of newly graduated registered nurses in Western Canada who permanently exit the nursing profession within five years.

Design: Data was collected through unstructured and semi-structured interviews using the Glaserian grounded theory method.

Findings: Participants were found to be in a process of *letting go* of nursing that commenced as students and continued as they entered practice as registered nurses. Four major themes were identified. 1) Navigating constraints of the healthcare system and workplace: participants encountered difficulties adjusting to shiftwork and workload. 2) Negotiating social relationships, hierarchies, and troublesome behaviors; specifically hierarchal and horizontal violence. 3) Facing fears, traumas and challenges. 4) Weighing competing rewards and tensions which resulted in leaving the nursing profession.

Conclusion: Students and subsequently new nursing graduates require a variety of supports to establish a nursing identity and remain in the profession. These supports include a manageable workload; meaningful orientation; interprofessional teamwork; and engagement within transformational and authentic leadership constructs. New nurses require a sense of being welcomed, valued, respected and accepted into the workplace environment, as well as constructive feedback, emotional support and debriefing to face workplace challenges.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

In 1974, Marlene Kramer first posed the question, ‘why do nurses leave nursing?’. Over the subsequent four decades, few Canadian studies have addressed this issue. Many changes have taken place in health care delivery and nursing education since Kramer’s theory of *reality shock* was first published. Men have entered the profession. Nursing education has moved from hospital-based training to baccalaureate and graduate level education. Hospitals have adopted business models replacing the head nurse role, resulting in what some researchers describe as the fragmentation of health care (King and O’Toole-Gerard, 2013). Patient acuity has increased, resulting in greater workplace demands, paperwork, turnover, overtime, and burnout (Reineck and Furino, 2005). For the first time in history, four generations—Silents, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and

Millennials—comprise the workforce. Through all these developments, nurses have continued to abandon their profession.

Boychuk-Duchscher’s (2012) theory of *transition shock* extends the work of Kramer through emphasis on the experience of newly graduated nurses entering clinical practice, with a focus on new registered nurses (RNs) who remain within the nursing profession. However, neither Kramer nor Boychuk-Duchscher has explored the process of new RNs who exit the profession in today’s health care climate.

Background

Despite efforts to address the RN shortage in Canada, the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) predicts this shortage will rise to approximately 60,000 by the year 2022 (Canadian Nurses Association, 2013). Owing to lack of data, it is unclear how and why many newly graduated Canadian nurses decide to leave the profession. Educational preparation as it relates to new RN attrition is also understudied.

Canadian data from 2005 to 2008 place the exit rate of RNs under the age of 30 between 11.58% and 14.51%, with an estimated mean of 13% (Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2010). It is important to note that these data do not differentiate between permanent exit,

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 204 571 8580; fax: +1 204 571 8568.

E-mail addresses: chachulak@brandonu.ca (K.M. Chachula), flo.myrick@ualberta.ca (F. Myrick), olive.yonge@ualberta.ca (O. Yonge).

¹ Tel.: +1 780 492 0251; fax: +1 780 492 2551.

² Tel.: +1 780 492 3443; fax: +1 780 492 1438.

temporary exit, or movement across borders and jurisdictional boundaries. The data also exclude many registrants over the age of 30, graduating from university level, second-degree programs in Canadian universities.

Other countries have begun collating data pertaining to new nurses who exit the profession. In the United States, 33–61% of new nursing graduates will change employment roles or quit nursing within two to three years of practice (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2010). In New Zealand, approximately 30% of new graduates leave the nursing profession (New Zealand Nurses Organisation, 2011), while 20% of new Australian graduates leave after 12 months of employment (Armstrong, 2004). The Nurses' Early Exit Study (NEXT), funded by the European Union, found 9.3% of new European nurses left the profession, ranging from 4.5% in Italy to 14.6% in Germany (Hasselhorn et al., 2005).

These findings reveal a significant international trend in new RN attrition, placing further constraints on a global climate of fiscal deficits, financial pressures, increasing patient acuity, and aging populations. Increased nursing shortages result in reduced patient care and poorer health outcomes (Twigg et al., 2010). Further examination of the factors associated with new RN exit from the profession is therefore warranted.

Literature Review

A literature search of the Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System Online (MEDLINE), Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), and Health Policy Reference Centre yielded 422 articles after duplicates removed of which six met the search criteria. Refer to Table 1: Search methods to view the search details. A majority of studies examine lateral movement or position change among newly graduated nurses but neglect to adequately address new RN departure from nursing. To distinguish between these two types of data requires careful interpretation. Three key themes were identified in the literature relating to new RN exit from the profession: level of job satisfaction; exhaustion and burnout; and quality of practice environment.

Level of Job Satisfaction

Newly graduated nurses who experience dissatisfaction within the workplace are likely to seek alternative employment (Parry, 2008). Conversely, high workplace satisfaction is correlated with intentions to stay in a current position (Suzuki et al., 2010). Low levels of organizational commitment and affective commitment to the profession “are antecedents of intention to change professions ... interestingly, the relationship between job satisfaction and intention to change professions are not direct” (Parry, 2008, p. 163).

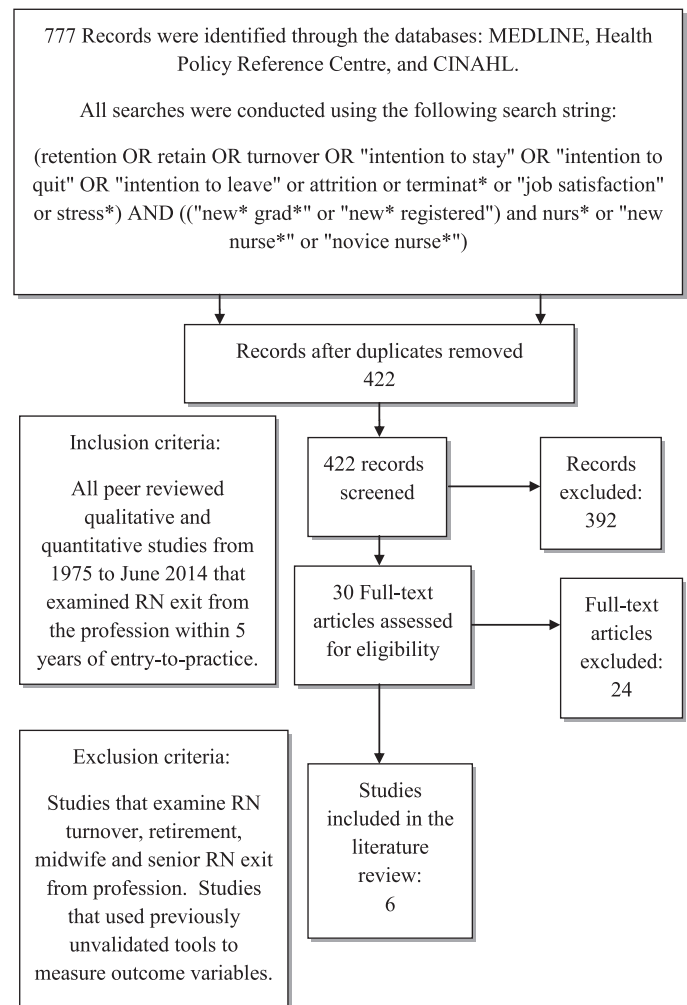
Exhaustion and Burnout

Exhaustion and burnout are common themes in the nursing literature. While often attributed to a nurse's intention to change job roles, these themes are seldom associated with novice nurses entering the clinical practice environment. Suzuki et al. (2010) found that Maslach Burnout Inventory scores were significantly higher in newly graduated Japanese nurses who quit their jobs, when compared to new graduates who stayed in their positions. New graduates who entered practice while feeling burnout were more likely to leave their positions after approximately 10 to 15 months; 9.7% of participants indicated they wished to leave the profession (Suzuki et al., 2010).

Approximately 47% of Swedish graduates experienced a significant increase in burnout during their second year in the workforce, while every fifth nurse was at some point ‘burned out’ with the intention of leaving the profession within five years (Rudman et al., 2014). Mackusick and Minick (2010) found three in ten newly graduated nurses, who experienced the effects of exhaustion for six months, moved laterally into alternative nurse employment after one to two years of practice.

Table 1

Search methods.



Quality of Practice Environment

Work environment affects nurse turnover and retention. Lavoie-Tremblay et al. (2011) found that Quebec nurses who scored poorly on their ability to participate in hospital affairs, provide quality care, and relate to physicians were more likely to leave their jobs; those with severely low scores indicated their intent to leave the profession. Among newly graduated Australian RNs, Parry (2008) found a significant correlation between the intention to change employers and the intention to leave the profession altogether.

Newly graduated RNs frequently encounter horizontal or lateral violence from their co-workers, in addition to the hierarchical bullying of managers and physicians (Vessey et al., 2011). MacKusick and Minick (2010) observed that the three newly graduated nurses taking part in their study experienced verbal, physical, and sexual abuse before permanently exiting the profession.

Method

Guiding Research Questions

- 1) What is the basic psychosocial process involved in the decision of newly graduated RNs to permanently exit the nursing profession?

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/368261>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/368261>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)