Changing the culture: Introducing fledgling nurses into an exclusively experienced crew

Lisa Wood, RN, BSN, CPAN; Elizabeth Bonaccorso, RN, BSN; Kathleen Ferrari, RN, BSN, CPAN; Carly Oddi, RN, BSN; Cindy Tran, RN, BSN
Strong Memorial Hospital, Rochester, NY

Introduction
• The Post Anesthesia Unit (PACU) historically declined to accept new graduate nurses
• This practice was challenged and a program was created to enable a new graduate nurse to start in this critical care setting

Background
• A shortage of registered nurses and a growing demand at an 800+ bed facility inclined nurse managers to consider who is being hired to fill these positions

Purpose
• The goal of this trial was to create a program in which new graduates receive an appropriate orientation to PACU
• Nurses are also able to solidify newly gained nursing skills historically gained from prior experience

Methods
• 12-month orientation program was implemented.
• New graduate nurses were carefully selected.
• First 3 months – new nurses were trained to care exclusively for non post-surgical patients
• Second 3 months – standard PACU orientation and care of immediately post-surgical patients of various needs
• Upon successful completion of these phases of orientation, nurses cared for patients on their own and selected a nurse mentor
• Met with mentor on a monthly basis to discuss what was going well, where they needed further assistance, and other concerns during their first months as nurses

Outcomes/Results
• Through proper and systematic training, new graduate nurses are able to become competent PACU nurses
• Created an environment for learning that gives new graduate nurses the confidence to ask questions without fear of judgment

Discussion
• Training nurses with no prior experience has had a positive effect on experienced nurses
• Experienced nurses are reminded of where they come from, reaffirming how much they know and creates a culture of continual learning

Conclusion
• New graduate nurses can be successfully integrated into the PACU and still have a great nursing foundation for a prosperous career

Implications/Future research
• This residency program prepares new graduate nurses to be successful and excel in the fast-paced, critical care environment
• Future research can focus on the retention of these individuals

Orlando, FL, April 25 – 29, 2021