

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

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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

