

Perception of Nurses Towards the Stressors, Challenges and Reality Shock in Transition to Practice – Khartoum State 2019

Prepared by:

Sulafa Ali Salama Elehaimir¹, Randa Zaki Abdelrahman Mohamed Khair², Marium Abdalla Gabir Abdalla³ and Eslah Mohammed Alradi Alhaj.

¹Sulafa Ali Salama Elehaimir

Lecturer, Department of fundamental of nursing and basic science, University of Khartoum, Sudan

²Randa Zaki A M Khair, MD

Associate Professor of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine, University of Khartoum, Sudan

³Marium Abdalla Gabir Abdalla

Assistant Professor of medicine, Department of fundamental of nursing and basic science, University of Khartoum, Sudan

⁴Eslah Mohammed Alradi

Assistant Professor of medicine, Department of fundamental of nursing and basic science, University of Khartoum, Sudan

ABSTRACT

Background: The transition of graduate nurses from an educational program into the professional nursing practice setting is a long-standing issue and is widely recognized as a period of stress, role adjustment and reality shock. This study aimed to explore perception of nurses towards the stressors, challenges and reality shock in transition to practice.

Methodology: This is a descriptive comparative study conducted in teaching hospitals of the University of Khartoum. Simple random sampling was used, including 183 nursing graduates divided in two groups: 61 nursing graduates in first or second year of professional nursing practice and 122 nursing graduates with more than two years of professional nursing practice that met selection criteria. Data was collected by using self administered questionnaire. Data was analyzed using SPSS program version 20.

Results: The participants with less than two years in clinical practice experience of stress at the beginning of their clinical practice related to lack of practical skills and lack of practical experience in dealing with various medical conditions with (26.2% to 9.0%) and (36.1% to 9.8%) respectively compared to participants with more than two years in clinical practice. Also this study showed tendency to change the nursing career after graduation was the choice of 42.6% of nurses who are practicing less than two years in nursing profession while it was the choice of 36.1% of nurses who are practicing two years and more in nursing profession, male: female almost 2:1 (65.2% to 34.4%).

Conclusion: The novice nurses' tendency to change the nursing career after graduation this may due to the novice nurses' experience of stress at the beginning of their clinical nursing practice, related to lack of practical skills and lack of practical experience in dealing with various medical conditions compared to participants with more than two years in clinical practice.

Introduction and Background:

The most stressful time was the first three months, but the stressful time that was correlated with new graduate nurses' intention to leave their job was between the sixth and twelfth months after employment ^(1,2). Novice nurses face stress during their first year of clinical experience and that could influence the quality of patient care and also their quality life. The causes of stress in novice nurses are insufficient competency, clinical workplace, clients' challenges and colleagues' behavior ⁽³⁾.

Lack of competency can produce a lot of stress for novice nurses. Nurses experience high level of stress related to their insufficient scientific and practical competency ⁽³⁻⁴⁾, Despite ongoing improvements in nursing education in 21st-century, nurses come to the complex health care environment without the skills and knowledge needed to practice ⁽⁵⁾. Competency is one of the most important and basic qualifications necessary for working in clinical environments ⁽³⁾. About 25% of new graduate nurses lack critical reasoning and problem-solving skills which make them unable to provide safe patient care. These nurses, lack the capacity to maintain and enhance the knowledge base for continued safe and high-quality patient care ⁽⁵⁾. Many studies show that insufficient competency problem can cause low self confidence and motivation of novice nurses ⁽³⁾.

Understanding the obstacles that new graduate nurses encounter may allow for the creation of stimuli promoting adaptive responses, thereby avoiding disequilibrium of the personal self and support an easier transition through the phases of reality shock⁽⁵⁾.

Aim of the study:

To study the perception of nurses towards the stressors, challenges and reality shock in transition to practice.

Methodology

Research design: Descriptive comparative study design.

Study Setting: The study is conducted in the teaching hospitals of the university of Khartoum, all of them placed in Khartoum state (Soba University hospital is general hospital founded in 1973, Saad Abul- Ella Teaching hospital specialized in obstetrics and gynae, Medical & Health Services University hospital is general hospital and Dr.Salma Dialysis Center based in 1985 specialized in dialysis and renal transplantation).

Population Study: is conducted in two groups:

- Nurses in their first or second year of professional nursing practice.
- Nurses for more than two years in professional nursing practice.

Inclusion criteria:

- Nursing graduates who have completed the Bachelor program.
- Nurses in their first or second year of professional nursing practice.
- Nurses for more than two years in professional nursing practice.

Exclusion criteria:

- Nurses who are not willing to participate in the study
- Nurses who were not present during the period of data collection
- Nursing graduates of diploma program.

Sample size:

Nurses in their first or second year of professional nursing practice = 61.

Nurses for more than two years in professional nursing practice = 122.

Total number = 183.

Methods of data collection: The selection was by simple random sampling. Data was collected by self administered questionnaire.

Data collection tool: Data is collected by using a structured questionnaire.

The Questionnaire: Closed and open ended structured questionnaire, including brief personal data, hospital stressors items, some general stressors, reality shock and the items used were selected from different similar studies^(1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10-12, 13, 15) in preparation of nursing graduates to practice in hospital after graduation.

Data collection techniques:

WHO informed consent form is used. The participant is informed verbally. Then each participant was filled the structured questionnaire.

The variables of study:

3. Stressors and challenges.
4. Reality shock.
5. Transition to practice.

Data analysis:

Data entry and statistical analysis is conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program for windows, version 20.0. Chi-square test and Fisher exact test are used to study the significant association between the two groups in study population and the items of study. P-value less than 0.05 is considered as being significant.

Ethical issues:

- ✓ Official letter is obtained from the Graduate College Medical & Health Studies Board & Research Committee faculty of Nursing Sciences - University of Khartoum.
- ✓ An official consent is obtained from the managers of teaching hospitals of Khartoum University.
- ✓ Informed Consent from the participants is conveyed.

Results

4- Demographic Data:-

The total number of respondents is 183. Most of them were females; male to female ratio is approximately 1:7 (12.6% and 87.4 respectively). Age is ranging between 21 and 61 years. Mean age is 30.6 (± 9.5 std) and median age is 27 years. The most common age group was 20-29 years (63.9%), followed by 30-39 years (21.9%), while 14.2% of the total population was 40 years and above.

5- **Association between being uncomfortable in hospital and insufficient competency (lack of scientific knowledge, lack of practical skills, lack of practical experience in dealing with various medical conditions and deficiency of good communication skills with hospital staff and beneficiaries of services) between two groups (more than two years and less than two years) in professional nursing practice:-** The association between being uncomfortable in hospital and lack of practical experience in dealing with various medical conditions among both groups of nurses was statistically significant with P value of **0.000**. Insufficient competency related to lack of practical experience in dealing with various medical conditions was the first cause of uncomfortable in hospital for 36.1% of nurses practicing less than two years while it was cause of uncomfortable in hospital for 9.8% of the nurses who are practicing two years and more (**Figure 1**) and the association between being uncomfortable in hospital and lack of practical skills among both groups of nurses was statistically significant with P value of **0.002**. Insufficient competency related to lack of practical skills was the second cause of uncomfortable in hospital for 26.2% of nurses practicing less than two years while it was cause of uncomfortable in hospital for 9.0% of the nurses who are practicing two years and more (**Figure 2**).

6- Also this study showed tendency to change the nursing career after graduation was the choice of 42.6% of nurses who are practicing less than two years in nursing profession while it was the choice of 36.1% of nurses who are practicing two years and more in nursing profession, male: female almost 2:1 (65.2% to 34.4%).

Figure 1: Association between being uncomfortable in hospital and lack of practical experience in dealing with various medical conditions between two groups (N= 183).

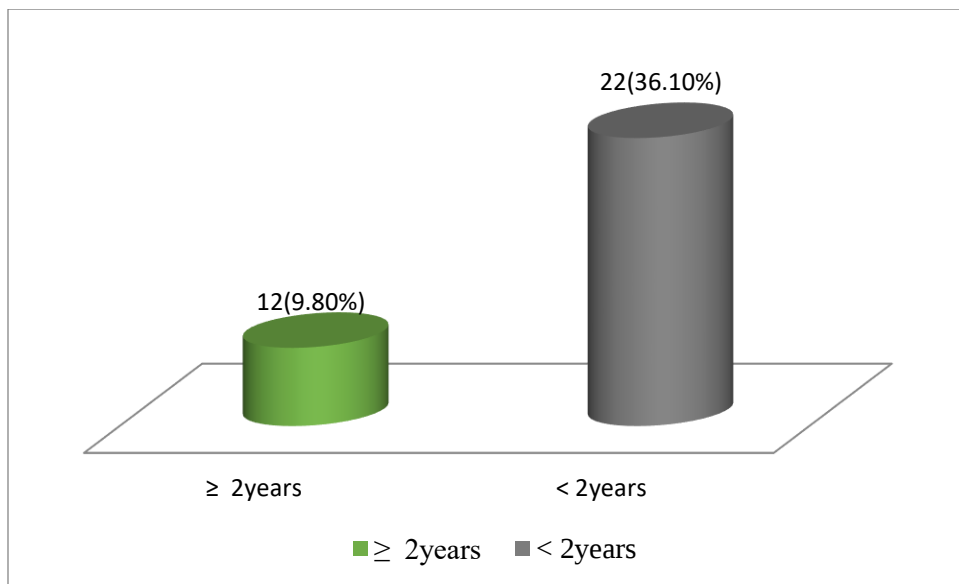
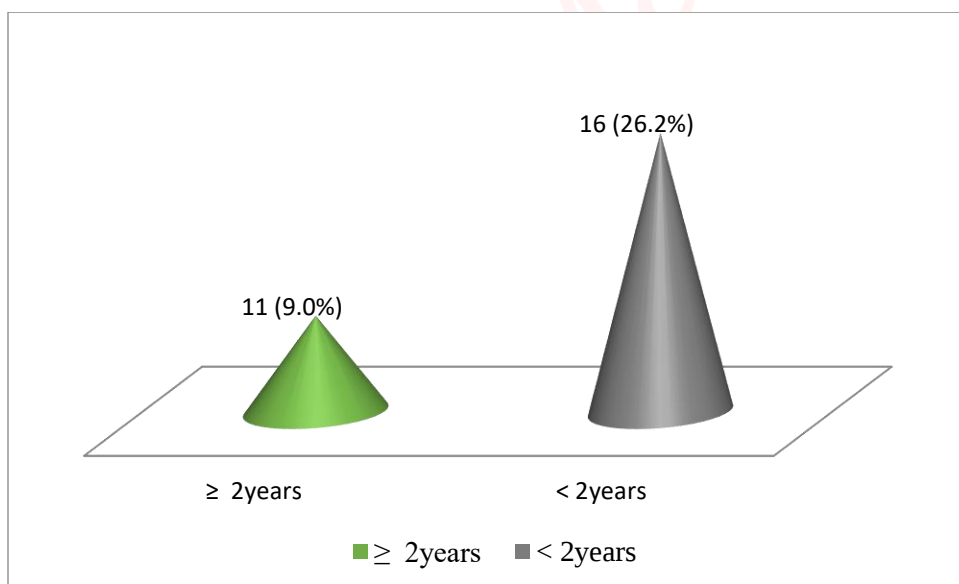


Figure 2: Association between being uncomfortable in hospital and lack of practical skills between two groups (N= 183).



Discussion

Many studies which showed many causes of stress in novice nurses which may result in quitting their work including insufficient competency, clinical workplace, clients' challenges, poor communication skills and colleagues' behavior^(1, 3, 4).

In this study there is significant association between participants with less than two years in practice of nursing career and being uncomfortable in hospital related to lack of practical skills compared to participants with more than two years in nursing practice (26.2% to 9.0%).

Also there is significant association between participants with less than two years in practice of nursing career and being uncomfortable in hospital related to lack of practical experience in dealing with various medical conditions compared to participants with more than two years in nursing practice almost 3:1 (36.1% to 9.8%). These two stressors mentioned above are related to insufficient practical competency including inadequate skills in routine care and inadequate skills in advanced care. These results are similar to study which showed that first year registered nurses (FYRNs) reported lack of sufficient attention to the development of nursing skills during their undergraduate education⁽⁴⁾. These results support effectively the studies which showed that the causes of stress in novice nurses were insufficient competency in those two items and that the beginning of clinical practice that most newly graduated nurses realized the difference between the expectations of workplace and their abilities. Some studies showed that values and ideals in education are not completely compatible with those of workplace^(11, 14). The differences between the university and the workplace are realized and this could be shocking for the newly graduated nurse^(3, 4). Another study showed that novice nurses are coming out of school without adequate preparation for practice in the real world⁽⁷⁾. A study of 135 chief nursing officers reported that only 10.4% of new nurses are prepared for hospital nursing, whereas 89.9% of nursing school leaders felt that graduates were fully prepared to provide safe and effective care in hospital settings⁽¹⁰⁾. This may reflect that the nurse's performance when subjected to real hospital practices is better than what is shown theoretically in faculty records.

Many studies showed that some novice nurses may leave their occupation or change their career due to stress^(1, 3, 7-9). This study shows change of nursing career after graduation in 42.6% of nurses who are practicing less than two years in nursing profession and 36.1% of nurses who are practicing two years and more in nursing profession. Also there is significant association between gender of participants and change of nursing career after graduation; males more than females their tendency to change their career almost 2:1 (65.2% to 34.4%) (**P-value .004**).

Conclusion:

Nursing faculties, practicing nurses and nursing administrators jointly hold the excellence of nursing education in their hands, they can help to reduce novice nurses' stress, increase their motivation to continue their work and enhancing positive impact on patient outcomes.

This study emphasized the participants with less than two years in clinical practice experience of stress at the beginning of their clinical practice related to lack of practical skills and lack of practical experience in dealing with various medical conditions with (26.2% to 9.0%) and (36.1% to 9.8%) respectively compared to participants with more than two years in clinical practice. These stressors may reflex in novice nurses' tendency to change the nursing career after graduation, also this study showed tendency to change the nursing career after graduation was the choice of 42.6% of nurses who are practicing less than two years in nursing profession while it was the choice of 36.1% of nurses who are practicing two years and more in nursing profession, male: female almost 2:1 (65.2% to 34.4%).

Further studies on this subject of this study are recommended.

Recommendations:

- Increasing student-patient ratios during the later clinical courses, student nurses can begin learning how to prioritize patient care needs and time management skills.
- Nursing faculty's responses in difficult or challenging situations provided a basis for decreasing anxiety and stress when the new graduate encountered unexpected or unknown situations and set an example for the new graduate nurse to follow in rendering patient care.
- Study recommended student nurses work in hospitals during faculty to improve time management and direct patient care skills.
- Longer orientation programs produce nurses with a greater sense of belonging and job satisfaction.

Further studies on the following recommendations mentioned in other studies are recommended:

- Assessments such as the performance based development system can provide information about learning needs and facilitate individualized orientation targeted to increase performance level.
- Transition to practice courses, seminars or other educational interventions may need to raise awareness among novice nurses.
- Formal part of nursing education could be specific critical thinking oriented parts of the curriculum in which critical thinking and decision making is assessed and improved as part of the transition to practice.
- The use of technology may be an important step in error reduction.

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