Integrating EBP Experience in Graduate-Nurse Internship Programs
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Background:
Nurse clinicians are in the important position of questioning practice and using scientific knowledge for decision-making. Newly hired graduate nurses [GNs] are expected to make clinical decisions quickly, yet they often struggle while assimilating novice knowledge and skills in work environments comprised of varied practices and conflicting viewpoints. Internship programs that support GNs by providing mentorship to utilize the evidence-based practice [EBP] process for decision-making can help to narrow the ’gap’ between theory and practice so EBP becomes a reality as GNs transition to safe clinical practice.

Level of Educational Program:
The GN-Intern Program at a county hospital provides a 12-24 week transition period for newly hired GNs through supportive clinical preceptorship and classroom activity. The program includes completion of EBP projects to learn how to identify practice questions, gather and appraise evidence, identify best-practice recommendations, and evaluate current nursing practice to validate or identify the need for change projects.

Targeted Learning Outcomes:
Aims: Expand understanding and use of EBP to promote quality care and improve outcomes; facilitate integration of EBP into practice; prepare interns to mentor nurse-peers about the EBP process; and promote professional growth and development of GNs.

Teaching-Learning Activities:
GN-interns work with educators, preceptors and peers to promote adoption of EBP by nurse clinicians in their clinical areas. The program includes coursework, team meetings, and facilitated project work-time. Interns prepared and presented tri-fold posters demonstrating the EBP steps: Ask, Gather, Appraise, Act and Evaluate

Evaluation of Approach:
The internship incorporated use of EBP process steps to address 11 clinical questions through implementing, evaluating, and integrating recommended best practices. Interns (n=36) gained expertise while working through challenges of implementing EBP in their clinical areas. Organizational benefits can include: improved care, cost avoidance, improved customer satisfaction, and decreased length of stay/associated costs. Supporting new graduates in learning and acquisition of new skills, promoting EBP, and enhancing professional development may also contribute to the retention of newly hired GNs.

Bibliography:
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