



(REVIEW ARTICLE)



Effective clinical preceptorship in supporting nurses' intention to stay at their workplace: A protocol for scoping review

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Abstract

Introduction: Preceptorship has been used in nursing to bridge the gap between nursing education and nursing practice. It is usually employed as part of the transition program for newly graduate or newly joined nurses. The support given by the preceptors can help nurses to adjust to their work environment. The initial clinical experiences of new nurses can have an impact on their career intentions and their sense of well-being, including their intention to stay in the profession. High turn-over rate and shortage of nurses have negative consequences that affect patient care. Thus, several strategies have been employed to retain nurses in their workplace. This study aims to know the extent at which effective clinical preceptorship can have a positive effect in the nurses' intention to stay.

Methods: The goal of this study is to determine the extent of published scientific literature on clinical preceptorship and its effect on the retention of nurses in their workplace. Hence, a scoping review will be utilized to map out the existing literature on the topic. The results will be presented in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systemic Reviews and Meta-analyses extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR).

Results: The data will be collated and analyzed systematically and will be presented in a data charting form and reported in a descriptive narrative format.

Conclusion: The findings will identify, understand, map out the literature, and identify research gaps on clinical preceptorship and its effect on retention of nurses. The results may help nursing administration and policy makers to adapt strategies that may reduce turnover rate and retain nurses to avoid staff shortage.

Keywords: Clinical Preceptorship; Nurse Retention; Barriers and Facilitators for Nurse Retention; Effective Clinical Preceptorship; Newly Recruited Nurses; Intention to Stay

1. Introduction

Globally, there is a shortage of nurses. This became more apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic. A 2023 report from the International Council of Nurses (ICN) says that the worldwide shortage of nurses is a global health emergency. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that there will be a shortage of 4.5 million nurses by the year 2030. Additionally, high turnover rate in the workplace, especially for newcomer nurses, adds to the challenges that nurses face that contribute to understaffed unit. This may negatively affect the physical and mental health of the nurses and the quality of care provided to the patients. A study done by The National Academies of Medicine found that more than half of the nurses they surveyed experienced burnout that impacted turnover rate in the workplace (Kelly, et. al., 2021). Because of this, strategies to retain nurses should be studied and implemented to support a healthy workforce and maintain adequate staffing.

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There are a lot of factors that contribute to the intention of nurses to leave their workplace. These include job satisfaction, stress, and burn out. In a systematic review done, it was determined that overall, job demands and adequate support and resources are crucial factors in determining the retention of nurses. Furthermore, a positive work environment was shown to positively affect retention while a negative work environment such as lack of professional solidarity, lack of support from management, and inadequacy of preceptorship process, were shown to contribute to the intention of nurses to leave their organization (De Vries, et. al., 2023).

Some strategies to retain nurses include competitive financial compensation and benefits, sign-on bonuses, tuition reimbursements, and preceptor incentives, among others. A systematic review done to explore factors that affect the intention of nurses to stay in the workplace found that job satisfaction and organizational commitment that impacted the intention to stay, were the two overarching outcomes that will make them stay (Pressley and Garside, 2023).

A supportive work environment is one of the facilitators of nurse retention. When a newly recruited staff feels a sense of meaningfulness and belongingness in the workplace, they will feel motivated to work and will have job satisfaction. In a qualitative study done, results showed that the nurses' work-related health was greatly affected by the sense of meaningfulness and belongingness in work culture, support and rewards from the management team, workload and protection against work-related hazards, and motivation through opportunities and activities (Thapa, et. al., 2022). Thus, a preceptor's role in ensuring a supportive work environment may have a benefit in increasing job satisfaction of newly recruited nurses.

Clinical preceptors are registered nurses who teach new graduates or newly recruited nurses to apply knowledge in clinical settings. They are critical to the successful transition of new nurses to the practice environment. Clinical preceptorship has been reported to facilitate new nurses' adjustment to the workplace (Hong and Yoon, 2021). It also serves to bridge the gap between their learnings as undergraduate students to the real-world practices once they are employed as registered nurses. Nurses who are new to the job can also benefit from preceptorship by improving their confidence and making their assimilation into a new environment a smoother process. During a preceptorship, a new nurse is paired to a preceptor for a period of time. Having the support of a preceptor has been found to be critical to the new nurse's job satisfaction, professional development, confidence and socialization as well as increase retention rate (Pine & Tart, 2007). Thus, clinical preceptorship may positively affect the intention of nurses to stay at their workplace.

Preceptorship can impact work environments by providing support where needed. In a study done, the implementation of a pilot clinical skills facilitator has showed improvements in clinical skills, job satisfaction, and well-being at work (Dowers, 2021). These factors are influential and important for staff retention.

To ensure a positive and beneficial preceptorship, preceptors need to have clinical skills as well as positive characteristics to guide their preceptees. In a grounded theory study, it was determined that skills and individual characteristics may lead to the improvement of the quality of nursing preceptorship. The skills identified include communication skills, relational skills, reflective skills, technical-scientific skills, and emotional skills. On the other hand, individual characteristics include perceptiveness, responsibility, motivation, and professional initiative (Amaral and Figueiredo, 2023). These skills and characteristics have been developed throughout their career as nurses and are helpful in choosing effective clinical preceptors. Also, in the selection of preceptors, it is imperative that they have the necessary skills and expertise such as coaching, counselling, facilitating, setting standards, assessing and giving feedback (Gopee, 2015). This is to make sure of a positive experience for both the preceptee and the preceptor.

Most studies explore the benefits of preceptorship, this study will try to determine the extent to which effective clinical preceptorship may lead to the intention of nurses to stay in their workplace.

1.1. Aims

- To determine the extent and nature of published scientific literature on clinical preceptorship, including research designs used and models of clinical preceptorship used in healthcare setting
- To determine the extent at which clinical preceptorship support nurses' intention to stay at their workplace

2. Methodology

This study will use a scoping review approach because it is the best method to map out existing literature and evidence on clinical preceptorship and its effect on nurses' intention in the workplace. A scoping review does not aim to produce a critically appraised and synthesized result to a particular question but rather aim to provide an overview or map of the evidence (Munn, et. al., 2018).

As there are several strategies employed to retain nurses, the goal of this study is to examine the extent, range, nature of research activity, and identify research gaps in the existing literature in clinical preceptors' role in the retention of nurses.

To get a comprehensive picture of the existing research, studies with different designs will be included.

The proposed scoping review will be conducted in accordance with the JBI methodology for scoping reviews and Arksey and O'Malley's scoping review methodology which includes: (1) identifying the research question, (2) identifying relevant studies, (3) selecting studies, (4) charting the data, (5) collating, summarizing, and reporting the results, and (6) consultation(optional).

2.1. Identifying relevant studies

The search strategy will aim to locate both published and unpublished studies. An initial limited search of MEDLINE via Pubmed, Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, and JBI Evidence Synthesis will be undertaken to identify articles on the topic. The initial phase will be searching for terms such as "effective clinical preceptorship" and "barriers and facilitators of nurse retention" in the titles and abstracts of relevant articles to develop a full search strategy. The search strategy, including all identified keywords and index terms, will be adapted for each included database and/or information source. The reference list of all included sources of evidence will be screened for additional studies.

2.2. Eligibility of studies

The PEO framework will be utilized to guide screening for the studies as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 PEO framework

Population	Nurse preceptors, newly joined nurses
Exposure	Clinical preceptorship
Outcomes	Attitudes, feelings, views, perspective

2.2.1. Inclusion criteria

- Newly joined nurses with preceptorship program
- Studies with clinical preceptorship
- Qualitative and quantitative studies, including scoping and systematic reviews
- Studies that are published in English

2.2.2. Exclusion criteria

- Studies without clinical preceptorship
- Studies with mixed participants (newly joined and tenured nurses)
- Studies where full text are unavailable
- Studies not published in English

2.3. Study/Source of evidence selection

Following the search, all identified citations will be collated and uploaded into *Endnote* and duplicates removed. Following a pilot test, titles and abstracts will then be screened by two or more independent reviewers for assessment against the inclusion criteria for the review. The full text of selected citations will be assessed in detail against the inclusion criteria by two or more independent reviewers. Reasons for exclusion of sources of evidence at full text that do not meet the inclusion criteria will be recorded and reported in the scoping review. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers at each stage of the selection process will be resolved through discussion, or with an additional reviewer/s. The results of the search and the study inclusion process will be reported in full in the final scoping review and presented in a Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses extension for scoping review (PRISMA-ScR) flow diagram (Tricco, et.al., 2018).

2.4. Charting the data

If an article is eligible for inclusion in the review, data related to clinical preceptorship will be extracted by the lead reviewer and will be reviewed by the second reviewer. Data extracted will be entered into data extraction records and synthesized in a summary format as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Detailed characteristics and findings of included studies

Author, year and country	Aim	Methodology	Sample	Data Analysis	Outcome of interest and measure used	Result	Factors related to the outcome of interest
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3. Collating, summarising and reporting results

Data collected will be analyzed systematically and will be presented in a descriptive narrative format.

4. Conclusion

High turnover rate and staff shortage are major problems in nursing. This study will provide a comprehensive review of the literature on how clinical preceptorship affect the intention of nurses to stay at their workplace. The findings may help policy makers in incorporating strategies to enhance work environment and improve turnover and retention.

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