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Research Article

IMPACT OF EDUCATION IN NURSING PRACTICE AFTER POST RN DEGREE PROGRAM IN MAYO HOSPITAL LAHORE

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Abstract:

Introduction: Due to latest health reforms, growing environment of competition and modification in job eligibility and promotion criteria many nurses working in undergraduate cadre have enrolled themselves in a post graduate RN program. Literature search is full of mixed opinions with respect to how this shifting trend has impacted the quality of care and clinical outcomes. Therefore this study was conducted with the aim to find the potential and nature of impact a post graduate RN program can make on the health system. **Methods:** A quantitative descriptive study was undertaken for the purposely selected 100 nurses having completed their Post RN program and working in Mayo Hospital Lahore with a nursing experience of more than 5 years at least in different capacities during January 2019 to March 2019. Data was analyzed by SPSS 21. **Results:** It was observed that the clinical orientation and practice of registered nurses was perceived to have improved to some extent as a result of postgraduate course. **Conclusion:** Though the positive impact on various aspects of personal and professional development there still exists a need to identify barriers in achieving career oriented goals and in the practical application of post graduate expertise at the workplace for the welfare of patients.

Keywords: Post RN Program, clinical practice, nursing education

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INTRODUCTION:

Postgraduate education has the potential to optimize nursing practice and influence patient's clinical outcome (Aitken, Currey, Marshall, & Elliott, 2008; Cragg & Andrusyszyn, 2004). There has been a shifting trend among the nurses in seeking post-graduation courses worldwide supported by the health government For example from 2007 Health Workforce New Zealand (HWNZ) (formally the Clinical Training Agency, a subunit of the New Zealand Ministry of Health) has provided District Health Boards (DHBs) with significant funding to support nurses to undertake postgraduate training with at least one published paper (McDonald, Willis, Fourie, & Hedgecock, 2009). Similarly in Pakistan due to latest health reforms, growing environment of competition and modification in job eligibility and promotion criteria many nurses working in undergraduate cadre have enrolled themselves in a post graduate RN program which previously was mostly adopted for mere renew their certificates.

It has been advocated that postgraduate education it is a source of exceling in nursing practice and professional development (Armstrong & Adam, 2002; Cooley, 2008; Cragg & Andrusyszyn, 2004; Pelletier et al., 2003; Spence, 2004a, 2004b; White, 2009). Globally, masters' level education is considered as a symbol of competence (Aiken et al., 2003; Currie &

Watterson, 2009; Pelletier et al., 2003; Wilson-Barnett, 2006). Postgraduate study harvests logical reasoning and practical application of knowledge (Armstrong & Adam, 2002; Cragg & Andrusyszyn, 2004; Hardwick & Jordan, 2002; Pelletier, Donoghue, & Duffield, 2003; Spence, 2004a, 2004b; Whyte, Lugton, & Fawcett, 2000). Higher study broaden the perspective and is good for confidence building (Cotterill-Walker, 2012), and to better assessment of patients. (Hardwick & Jordan, 2002; Pelletier et al. 2003; Spence, 2004a). Literature search is full of mixed opinions with respect to how this shifting trend has impacted the quality of care and clinical outcomes. Therefore this study was conducted with the aim to find the potential and nature of impact a post graduate RN program can make on the health system.

METHODS:

After approval from the Ethical Review Committee Mayo Hospital Lahore a quantitative descriptive study was undertaken for the purposely selected 100 nurses having completed their Post RN program and working in Mayo Hospital Lahore with a nursing experience of more than 5 years at least in different capacities during January 2019 to March 2019. Data was analyzed by SPSS 21.

RESULTS:**Table.1: Impact of post RN program on the professional life of the participants**

Statements	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Increased your knowledge and understanding?		
Yes	97	97
No	03	03
Enhanced your practical application of knowledge?		
Yes	84	84
No	16	16
Enhanced your critical thinking and decision making power?		
Yes	86	86
No	14	14
Improved quality of patient care?		
Yes	72	72
No	28	28
Improved your communication and knowledge sharing at workplace?		
Yes	77	77
No	23	23

Increased efficiency related to tasks assigned?		
Yes	94	94
No	06	06
Source of professional development?		
Yes	91	91
No	09	09

It is observed from the above statistics that Post RN program had a positive impact on the personal and professional lives of nurses: 97% agreed that post graduate education increased their knowledge and understanding, 84% stated that it enhanced their practical approach, 86% were in the favor that it enhanced their critical thinking and decision making, whereas only 72 % agreed that it improved the quality of patient care and 77% said that it improved the communication and knowledge sharing at their workplace, 94% stated that post –graduation increased their workplace efficiency and 91% referred to it as a source of professional development and achieving career oriented goals.

DISCUSSION:

The majority of the participants agreed to most of the statements. The highest percentage was observed in the column stating that the knowledge and skills had increased after completing a postgraduate qualification. This is consistent with the literature (Armstrong & Adam, 2002; Cragg & Andrusyszyn, 2004; Hardwick & Jordan, 2002; Pelletier, Donoghue, & Dufheld, 2003; Spence, 2004a, 2004b; Whyte, Lugton, & Fawcett, 2000). Impact on the practical application of knowledge was comparatively on the lower side owing to possibility of some workplace barriers. Contrary to the international research are the findings that as only 72 % of participants perceived patient outcomes as likely to improve as a result of postgraduate education (Aiken, Clarke, Cheung, Sloane, & Silber, 2003; Considine et al., 2001; Hardwick & Jordan, 2002; Pelletier et al., 2003; Spence, 2004a, & b). This can be justified by the lack of optimum physical and biological resources associated with a developing country. Findings from this research also suggested that there exist numerous hidden factors that prevent to harness the productivity of the post-graduation. That finding is consistent with international literature (Hardwick & Jordan, 2002.; Cragg & Andrusyszyn, 2004.; Garrish et al., 2000.; Gijbels, O'Connell., Dalton-O'Connor & O'Donovan, 2010). Koh, Manias, Hutchinson, Donath and Johnson (2008).

Limitations of the study is lies in the relatively smaller number of participants and a busy hospital setting.

CONCLUSION:

Though the positive impact on various aspects of personal and professional development there still exists a need to identify barriers in achieving career-oriented goals and in the practical application of post graduate expertise at the workplace for the welfare of patients.

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