Experiences of newly registered nurses transitioning from nursing student to registered nurse: a qualitative systematic review

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

► This is a summary of See et al.1
► Newly registered nurses experience high levels of emotional exhaustion, stress and burnout, with high attrition rates in the first-year post-qualification.
► The purpose of this review was to consolidate the available evidence on the experiences of newly registered nurses transitioning from the role of student nurse to that of registered nurse.

METHODS

Inclusion criteria

► Papers included in the review were qualitative and mixed-method studies, where qualitative data could be clearly extracted.
► All papers were written in English, between 2010 and 2022.

Search strategy

► The PRISMA guideline2 was used to develop and organise the review.
► The following databases were used: PubMed, Embase, CINAHL, PsycINFO, Scopus, and ProQuest Dissertation and Thesis.

Appraisal and analysis

► Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) tools3 and the Authority, Accuracy, Coverage, Objectivity, Date, Significance (AACODS) checklist4 were used to appraise the quality of studies and to ensure suitability for inclusion.

RESULTS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

► Thirty-one studies were included in the review, comprising thirty qualitative and one mixed-method study.
► A total of 452 newly registered nurses were enrolled across the studies from Australia, Canada, Singapore, England, Nepal, Netherlands, Pakistan and Taiwan.
► Four themes were identified: knowledge deficit, overwhelming clinical practice, importance of workplace support and the meaning of ‘being a nurse’.
► Twenty-four studies discussed how newly graduated registered nurses experienced anxiety, stress and fear in relation to ‘not knowing enough’ during the transition process.
► Twenty-three studies cited newly registered nurses’ feelings of being overwhelmed with: a lack of staffing, high workload, high acuity patients, fast-paced environment and lack of experience.
► Future research should focus on the development of effective reality-based education initiatives to prepare students for their role as a registered nurse, and to reduce ‘reality shock’ and on structural empowerment strategies focusing on workplace support.

TAKE HOME MESSAGES

► Newly registered nurses often experience feelings of inadequacy and ill-preparedness in relation to knowledge deficits and limited exposure as students.
► Formal, standardised preceptorship programmes and support from colleagues and preceptors help newly registered nurses transition into their new roles, and have a positive impact on their learning experience, patient safety, and motivation to remain in nursing.
► Universities and organisations should consider using technology, such as virtual reality, to create more reality-based education opportunities to help prepare student nurses for registration.

Authors  Jennie Brady1,2 and Michael J Tatterton 1,3
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Twitter Jennie Brady @JennieBrady and Michael J Tatterton @MJTatterton

ORCID iD
Michael J Tatterton http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7933-5182

References
1 See ECW, Koh SSL, Baladram S, et al. Role transition of newly graduated nurses from nursing students to registered nurses: a qualitative systematic review. *Nurse Educ Today* 2023;121:105702.