Retention program to reduce turnover in medical surgical department

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Abstract

Background and Purpose: Retaining nurses is a significant challenge for healthcare leaders globally. This has further been intensified by the high turnover rate of nurses in acute care settings since the COVID-19 pandemic. High turnover leads to lower staff morale, skill mixes, retention rates, higher burnout, and poor patient outcomes. Retention strategies like formal one-on-one mentorship programs have been shown to reduce turnover. The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a 12-week one-on-one mentorship program in the medical-surgical department.

Methods: A pretest-posttest design was used to evaluate a one-on-one mentorship program at an inpatient acute care community hospital. Participants included nurses from the medical-surgical department. Their intention to stay was measured using the *Turnover Intention (TIS-6) Survey*, while job satisfaction and professional development of nurses were measured using the *Casey Fink Retention (CFNR) Survey*. A Wilcoxon-signed rank test was used to analyze the pre-and post-intervention findings. The feasibility and acceptability were evaluated using the *Munich Evaluation of Mentoring Questionnaire (MEMeQ)* post-implementation.

Results: A total of 32 nurses, or 16 pairs of mentor-mentee were enrolled in this pilot out of which 28(87.5%) participants completed the pilot program. There was no statistically significant changes in turnover, job satisfaction, or professional development. However, the turnover intention score decreased for 63% of the participants with a 4-point median change, p value =.090. Positive relationship indicates feasibility and satisfaction for the nurses in this pilot. Program also served as a catalyst for job satisfaction and professional development.

Conclusion: The evidence-based formal mentorship program is feasible and effective in reducing intention to leave, supporting retention of nurses. Based on the findings from this project, there will be a hospital-wide expansion of the program. Nurse leaders in different clinical settings should implement similar mentorship programs to better understand nurse turnover and determine the generalizability of these findings.

Keywords: *mentorship program, formal mentoring, nurse turnover, nurse retention*