

INCREASING SPECIALTY CERTIFICATION RATE

Increasing Specialty Certification Among Early-Career Perioperative Nurses

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*On my honor, I pledge that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance.*

*April 23, 2023*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joshua A. Wymer', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

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## Abstract

### Background and Purpose

Nursing specialty certification represents a nexus of progressive professional development, validation of clinical competence, and alignment of clinical practice with the current body of knowledge. As a predominantly voluntary decision, certification is a complex and personal consideration. Lower rates of certification may also negatively influence rates of certain infections and injuries.

### Methods

This project leveraged a pretest-posttest design with the implementation of 12-week evidence-based perioperative credentialing education activity seeking to influence the perceived value of certification and the likelihood of sitting for a professional credential among early-career perioperative nurses. The intervention highlighted key steps in the nursing certification journey, extrinsic and intrinsic influences, and certification-driven outcomes data as expressed in the literature. A paired *t*-test for dependent samples, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, was used to assess pretest and posttest differences across the single group.

### Results

Project findings demonstrated that an evidence-based educational intervention may positively influence the perceived value of certification among early-career perioperative nurses (0.976,  $p=0.965$ ). The effort did not demonstrate an ability for the intervention to increase the self-reported likelihood of testing for the professional nursing credential when eligible (0.877,  $p=0.080$ ).

### Conclusions

The project findings demonstrate some promise and contribute to the body of

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evidence available to those looking to influence the perceived value of certification among early-career perioperative nurses.

### **Implications**

Key elements of the project and the relevant findings may also serve to inform future efforts more broadly aimed at influencing the perceived value of certification and specialty certification across the nursing profession. While the project demonstrated an ability to positively influence the perceived value of certification, the effort also demonstrated the need for further efforts in promoting the known influence of nursing specialty certification on personal, professional, and clinical outcomes.

**Key Words:** competency; certification; credentialing; lifelong learning; perioperative nurse