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Policy Brief

The Effect of Preceptorship Training on Clinical Nurses' Participation in Nursing Student Education

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Abstract

Clinical nursing education represents one of the most fundamental pillars of professional training in the field of healthcare. It plays a decisive role in shaping the competence, confidence, and readiness of future nurses, thereby directly influencing the overall quality of patient care and the effectiveness of healthcare delivery systems. A well-structured clinical education not only equips nursing students with essential technical skills but also fosters critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and the ability to adapt to complex clinical environments.

Within this context, the preceptorship model has gained recognition as a highly effective approach to strengthening clinical learning. In this model, experienced clinical nurses assume the role of mentors and guides for nursing students, offering them practical insights, emotional support, and professional role modeling. By working closely with seasoned practitioners, students are able to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge acquired in classrooms and the realities of clinical practice. This mentorship fosters a supportive learning environment where students can gradually build confidence, refine their skills, and develop professional values essential for nursing practice.

The present study was designed to examine the impact of a structured preceptorship training program on the active participation of nurses in educating nursing interns. The program provided nurses with systematic guidance, resources, and strategies to enhance their teaching abilities and to address common challenges encountered in clinical education. Findings from the study revealed notable improvements in several key areas: nurses reported higher levels of motivation to engage in student education, greater satisfaction with their teaching role, stronger commitment to mentoring responsibilities, and enhanced capacity to overcome barriers such as time constraints, workload pressures, and lack of prior teaching experience.

These outcomes underscore the critical importance of institutionalizing preceptorship training programs within healthcare organizations. By embedding such programs into the organizational culture, institutions can ensure that clinical nurses are well-prepared and supported in their dual role as caregivers and educators. Ultimately, this contributes to elevating the quality of nursing education, fostering the professional growth of future nurses, and improving patient care outcomes. The study highlights that investment in structured mentorship not only benefits students but also enriches the professional development of nurses, creating a sustainable cycle of learning and excellence in healthcare delivery.

Keywords: Preceptorship, Clinical Education, Nursing Students, Nurse Participation, Motivation, Satisfaction, Commitment, Quality of Care

1. Background

Nursing education plays a vital and irreplaceable role in shaping the future of healthcare systems by preparing competent, knowledgeable, and ethically responsible professionals. It is through nursing education that students acquire not only theoretical foundations but also the practical skills and professional attitudes necessary to deliver safe and effective patient care.[1] Among the various components of this educational journey, clinical education stands out as a critical stage. In clinical settings, students are given the opportunity to translate theoretical knowledge into real-world practice, interact with patients, and develop the clinical competence and confidence required for professional nursing practice.[2] This experiential learning process helps ensure that nursing graduates are not only academically prepared but also better equipped to manage the complexities and unpredictability of contemporary healthcare environments.[3]

With the growing number of nursing students and the increasing complexity of clinical environments, the preceptorship model has emerged as a valuable approach to supporting clinical education.[4] In this model, experienced nurses assume the role of preceptors, guiding students through the challenges of clinical practice. Preceptors provide direct supervision, constructive feedback, and professional role modeling, helping students integrate theoretical knowledge with hands-on patient care.[5] This mentorship process can enhance students' clinical learning

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experiences, strengthen their professional confidence, and foster a sense of belonging within healthcare teams. By observing and working alongside experienced practitioners, students gain deeper insights into professional standards, ethical considerations, and effective communication strategies.[6]

Despite these recognized benefits, the implementation of preceptorship programs often faces significant challenges. Common barriers include inadequate training and preparation of preceptors, limited communication and coordination between academic institutions and clinical settings, and heavy clinical workloads that restrict nurses' ability to devote sufficient time to teaching and mentoring students.[7] These challenges may undermine the effectiveness of preceptorship programs and limit opportunities for students' clinical learning and professional development. Addressing these barriers requires sustained institutional support, formal recognition of preceptors' educational responsibilities, appropriate workload management, and structured training programs to equip nurses with the necessary teaching, supervision, and mentoring competencies.[8]

International research has demonstrated that structured preceptor training programs can improve preceptors' teaching competencies and the quality of clinical learning experiences.[9] These programs provide nurses with systematic guidance, practical strategies, and pedagogical tools to strengthen their mentoring, supervision, and student assessment skills. Consequently, students may benefit from more consistent supervision, constructive feedback, and better-supported clinical learning experiences, thereby facilitating their preparation for professional practice.[10] Moreover, collaboration between academic institutions and healthcare organizations in designing and implementing preceptor training programs can strengthen the alignment of clinical education with educational objectives and clinical practice requirements. Ultimately, investing in structured preceptorship training can contribute to the development of competent nursing professionals and the enhancement of clinical nursing education.

2. Methods

A quasi-experimental, two-group pretest–posttest design was conducted in 2023 at a teaching hospital in Tehran. Sixty-six nurses meeting inclusion criteria were randomly assigned to intervention and control groups. The intervention group attended two three-hour workshops covering the role of preceptors, student needs, strategies for effective support, and management of common challenges. Data were collected using the validated IMSOC questionnaire, which measures nurse participation across five dimensions: implementation, motivation, satisfaction, commitment, and obstacle management.[11,12] One month later, both groups completed the questionnaire again, and results were analyzed using appropriate statistical tests.

3. Results

The intervention group showed significant improvements across all dimensions of participation. Nurses reported higher motivation to engage with students, greater satisfaction with their educational role, stronger commitment to mentoring, and enhanced ability to identify and manage barriers. In contrast, the control group exhibited no meaningful changes. These findings indicate that preceptorship training not only increases participation but also improves the quality of nurse–student interactions. Students benefited from more structured guidance, while nurses gained confidence in their teaching role.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study provides clear confirmation that preceptorship training programs are highly effective in enhancing the active participation of clinical nurses in the education of nursing students. By equipping nurses with structured guidance and pedagogical tools, these programs foster improvements in motivation, satisfaction, and professional commitment. As a result, nurses become more confident and willing to engage in teaching roles, which in turn strengthens the overall foundation of clinical education. This supportive environment ensures that students are better prepared for independent practice, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world clinical responsibilities.

The findings of this study are consistent with growing international evidence highlighting the importance of formal preparation and training for clinical preceptors. Previous research has demonstrated that structured preceptor development programs can improve preceptors' teaching competencies, confidence, and ability to support students' clinical learning.[13] Furthermore, studies have shown that training preceptors can enhance students' perceptions of preceptor competence and increase their satisfaction with the quality of clinical placements.[6] Well-prepared preceptors can provide more effective supervision, constructive feedback, and guidance, thereby supporting students' clinical learning and professional development. These findings reinforce the importance of structured preceptorship training as an essential component of quality nursing education.[9]

From a policy perspective, the implications of these findings are significant. Hospital administrators and nursing schools are encouraged to adopt preceptorship training as a standard practice rather than an optional initiative. Institutionalizing such programs ensures consistency, sustainability, and equity in the quality of clinical education across different settings. Furthermore, the development of national guidelines for preceptor

preparation would provide a unified framework, ensuring that all nurses receive adequate training and support regardless of their workplace.

Organizational support is another critical factor. Healthcare institutions must recognize the dual role of nurses as both caregivers and educators, providing them with sufficient time, resources, and incentives to fulfill their teaching responsibilities effectively. Integrating simulation-based training into preceptorship programs can further enhance outcomes by allowing nurses and students to practice complex scenarios in a safe, controlled environment before encountering them in real clinical practice.

Ultimately, investing in preceptorship programs yields long-term benefits for the entire healthcare system. It contributes to higher-quality nursing education, better-prepared graduates, and safer patient care. By strengthening the mentorship capacity of clinical nurses, healthcare organizations not only improve student learning but also promote professional development among their staff, creating a cycle of continuous improvement and excellence in nursing practice.

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Author Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this work.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures

All authors declared that they have no conflict of interest.

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