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Designing a U.S. Hospital Competency- Based Orientation for Internationally Educated Nurses

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Nursing shortage remains to be one of the healthcare issues worldwide. Despite of the growing population of nurses, the demand of patient services and patient volume remain to be progressively increasing. This poses a challenge with supply and demand in healthcare. Recruitment ofinternationally educated nurses remain to be one of the solutions to the nursing shortage worldwide. Most internationally educated nurses recruited from other country undergo didactic and clinical orientation prior to clinical employment. Compliance with standards of practice and organizational policies are vital in healthcare organizations.

In the U.S. nursing community, heightened awareness of practice standards and competency-based staff-development programs make it imperative for U.S. hospitals offering employment to internationally educated nursesto plan their orientation programs for new hires based on the latter's summative self-assessment of clinical competencies. It is crucial to study the type of orientation program that will utilize their self-perceptions of clinical competencies prior to their employment and clinical practice in the United States.

Descriptive analysis of the self-assessment of clinical competencies of nurse graduates from the other countries in SE Asia was used to design a U.S. hospital competency-based orientation program. An extensive review of the literature provided an in-depth look into the clinical practice standards and clinical competency models in the United States. The survey findings identified specific content and instructional strategies tailored to the needs of internationally educatednurses recruited to work in U.S. hospitals. The following research questions were established to guide this research study: 1. What clinical competency-based professional-development models are used in the United States (e.g., the ANA model, the Benner novice-to-expert model adapted from the Dreyfus skills-acquisition model and the Lenburg competency COPA model)?; 2. How do clinical practice standards impact on clinical competency expectations in the workplace?; 3. Based on a summative clinical competency self-assessment survey of internationally educated nurses, what content should be included in the U.S. hospital competency-based orientation program?; 4. What are the factors influencing the workplace acculturation of internationally educated nursesin U.S. hospitals?

This study investigated how findings generated by a summative self-assessment of clinical competencies ofinternationally educated nurses recruited for U.S. employment were utilized in designing a competency-based U.S. hospital orientation program. A sample of foreign educated nurses in SE Asia and nurses with ages ranging between 20 and 65 years participated in the study. A modified clinical competency survey was used to assess the self-perceived clinical competencies of internationally educated nurses prior to practice in U.S. healthcare settings. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data.

Identification of the orientation needs of newly recruited internationally educated nurses will assist nurse educators and clinical coaches in developing professional development and educational programs that will enable internationally educatednurses to acquire mandated competencies based on U.S. clinical practice standards. The research study guided the development of a U.S. hospital competency-based nursing orientation program that took into consideration the clinical competency gaps identified by internationally educated nurse respondents, the instructional strategies that they preferred and their perceived acculturation needs.