Residency Isn’t Just for Doctors?
Effects of Nurse Residency Programs on Turnover & Retention Rates

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Question
Do higher retention rates exist among “new grad” nurses who participate in nurse residency programs compared to those who do not?

Background
A nurse residency program (NRP) is a program of varying length (typically 6-12 months) that allows newly licensed registered nurses (NLRNs) to acclimate to their new career through additional didactic coursework, clinical simulation, preceptorship & mentorship.

New nurse grad turnover rates are roughly 30% in the first year of practice, and as high as 57% in the second year (Lippincott Solutions, 2017).

New nurse attrition is costly and can negatively impact patient-care quality.

STUDY DESCRIPTION RESULTS
Impact of healthy work environments and multistage nurse residency programs on retention of newly licensed RNs (Halfer et al., 2012)
Descriptive study
Retrospective data collection from 28 hospitals involving retention data from 5316 NLRNs
At 6 months post-hire, there existed a 93% retention rate among NLRNs

Exploring the structure and content of hospital-based pediatric nurse residency programs (Brostoff et al., 2015)
Descriptive study
Retrospective analysis was performed that included 45 hospitals
One year retention rates between 84-100% for NLRNs who participated in the NRP

Longitudinal outcomes of an institutionally developed nurse residency program (Brassil et al., 2017)
Descriptive study
Data collection & retrospective analysis completed
Involved 1638 NLRNs
Survey administered before & after NRP
One year retention rate >90% for NLRNs who participated in NRP

Outcomes of a comprehensive nurse residency program (Amato et al., 2015)
Prospective cohort study
79 respondents
Surveys administered before and 6, 8, & 12 months after hire
One year retention rates remained elevated between 90-94% for NLRNs since implementation of NRP at the participating facility

Nurse residency program designed for a large cohort of new graduate nurses: Implementation and outcomes (Costello et al., 2017)
Descriptive study
46 participants who took part in a nurse residency program were given a survey at 6 months and 1 year post-hire
At 6 months post-hire, 45/46 new grad RNs remained (98% retention rate)
At 1 year post-hire, 42/46 new grad RNs remained (91% retention rate)

Evaluating the short- and long-term outcomes of a post-BSN residency program (Capobianco et al., 2017)
Descriptive, retrospective study
671 participants
A survey was sent to nurses after completion of NRP (from 2005-2012)
One-year retention rate of 90.6% from 2005-2012 for NLRNs who participated in the NRP

Conclusions
- Overall, the research is inconclusive.
- There is not enough adequate research available to answer the PICOT question with confidence, but some of the research does suggest that NRPs may increase retention rates among NLRNs.

Applications
- Nurse residency programs may ease the stress that accompanies entering the nursing profession as a new grad nurse.
- Decreased turnover & increased retention rates may positively impact patient outcomes & reduce attrition costs.
- Nurses may consider advocating for the implementation of NRPs at their institution, as research suggests that NRPs have the potential to increase the competency of their newly-licensed co-workers.