An Advanced Medical Surgical Course: Fostering Bedside Leadership and Excellence in Medical Surgical Nursing.

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An Advanced Medical Surgical Course: Fostering Bedside Leadership and Excellence in Medical Surgical Nursing

Lehigh Valley Health Network, Allentown, Pennsylvania

Background:
- Increased staff turnover on Medical Surgical Units
- Dynamic work environment
- Medically-complex patients
- Opportunity for professional development of the medical surgical nurse

- Recognize the specialty of medical surgical nursing
- Enhance job satisfaction
- Encourage certification

Theoretical Framework:
- Patricia Benner’s Competency Model
- Ives Erickson’s Professional Practice Environment
- Lehigh Valley Health Network Professional Practice Model

Initiative:
- An Advanced Medical Surgical Course
  - Focus on evidence based care, enhancement of critical thinking skills, and RN leadership development

Methodology:
Target Audience:
- RN with minimum 2 years of experience in medical surgical nursing
  - Active involvement in unit Professional Practice Model
  - Preceptor for new RN employees
  - Director recommendation

Course Content:
- 48 hours in length, modular approach
- Intentional small class size
- Use of case presentations to prompt critical thinking skills in complex patient situations
- Leadership module topics:
  - Ethical decision making
  - Role of the nurse as leader
  - Team communication
  - Coordination of care

Measurement Tools:
- Achievement of Medical Surgical Certification
- Pre and post course knowledge test, developed and validated by course presenters
- Revised Professional Practice Environment Scale (R-PPE) (Ives Erickson 2007)
  - Measures perceived leadership, autonomy and control over practice
- Program evaluation measuring achievement of course objectives and participant satisfaction

Results:
1. Professional Certification:
   - Within 6 months of completion of the course, 100% of participants who took a certification exam, passed. N=11
   - 3 participants transferred to other specialties
   - 2 participants have goals to take certification exam in near future

2. Pre/Post Course Knowledge Test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-course</th>
<th>Post-course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean test scores (%)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>88</td>
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3. R-PPE Scale Results

4. Program Evaluation:
   - “above average” to “excellent” satisfaction ratings for achievement of course objectives, content and presenters

Lessons Learned and Future Plans:
- Careful selection of course participants is key to achievement of program goals
- There will be an annual offering of the course
- The Medical Surgical Basic Knowledge Assessment Test (BKAT) will replace the original pre and post course knowledge assessment