The Use of an Advanced Medical-Surgical Course for the Retention and Professional Development of Medical-Surgical Nurses in an Acute Care Hospital

Marie-Claude Gutekunst MSN, RN, PCCN  
Lehigh Valley Health Network, Marie_C.Gutekunst@lvhn.org

Jeanine DeLucca MSN, RN-BC  
Lehigh Valley Health Network, Jeanine.DeLucca@lvhn.org

Beth A. Kessler BSN, RN, BC

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlyworks.lvhn.org/patient-care-services-nursing

Part of the Curriculum and Instruction Commons, Medical Education Commons, and the Nursing Commons

Published In/Presented At  

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by LVHN Scholarly Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in LVHN Scholarly Works by an authorized administrator. For more information, please contact LibraryServices@lvhn.org.
An Advanced Medical Surgical Course: Fostering Bedside Leadership and Excellence in Medical Surgical Nursing

Authors
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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean test scores (%)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. R-PPE Scale Results

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

1. Professional Certification:
2. Pre/Post Course Knowledge Test Scores
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