

Title: An Interpretive Description of Registered Nurses' Experiences as Preceptors for Newly Hired Registered Nurses in Acute Pediatric Clinical Settings

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ABSTRACT

Background: The responsibilities of frontline registered nurses (RNs) include providing patient care as well as precepting students and new staff nurses. The preceptor role has been acknowledged as demanding and challenging in the acute healthcare setting. The importance of nurse preceptors to the new nurses' transition to practice has also been discussed in the literature. However, less is known about nurses' experiences as preceptors, particularly in specialized clinical areas, such as pediatrics. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the experience of nurse preceptors in the acute pediatric settings.

Method: An interpretive descriptive design guided the research process. Semi-structured one-on-one interviews, both in-person and virtual, were carried out with five nurse preceptors employed at a specialized pediatric unit in Ontario. The real-life experiences of participants were reported using their rich descriptions of events. Data collection and analysis were conducted concurrently and informed by the Braun and Clark (2006) framework.

Results: Findings were grouped into the following three themes: the duality of the role of the pediatric nurse; the experiences of the pediatric nurse preceptor; and the needs of the pediatric nurse preceptors.

Implications: This study found that the preceptor role is diverse and demanding. Preceptors require support from various stakeholders to ensure that their dual role is carried out effectively. Recommendations are made for future practice, education, and research.