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An Academic-Practice Partnership in Emergency Nursing: Evaluation of a Collaborative Emergency Nursing Elective

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Background

- Spring 2020 New York City was the U.S. epicenter of COVID-19 pandemic
- As the pandemic slowed emergency departments (EDs) saw RNs resigning for higher paying travel assignments or less stressful clinical settings
- Staffing the EDs of a large health system became a challenge given the limited pool of experienced emergency RNs



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Background

- Prior to 2019 New York State required RNs to have one year of nursing experience before independent practice in an ED
- Some EDs established extensive one-year residency programs to meet this requirement
- Other EDs simply did not hire newly licensed RNs as this requirement was too burdensome
- In November 2019 New York State changed this requirement to allow EDs to develop competency-based pathways within a less restrictive timeframe (NY Code, Rules, and Regulations, 2023)



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Background

- In 2020 one New York-based academic health system established a 3-month ED residency for newly licensed RNs across its EDs - “Practice partner”
 - ANCC Magnet Accredited hospital system
 - 4 EDs across the system
- Included both classroom-based learning and clinical learning with a preceptor
- Allowed for extensions as needed to ensure safe, independent practice of all RNs



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Background

- Some newly licensed RNs in the residency expressed that emergency nursing was different than they had expected
- ED nursing leadership's observations about program
 - Many of the newly licensed RNs required extensions to the 3-month residency
 - Those who had a practicum or externship in emergency nursing during school transitioned into emergency RN role more quickly than those who did not have previous experience
- ED nursing leadership suggested a partnership with their affiliated nursing college as a potential solution



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Academic-Practice Partnerships

- AACN and AONL published *The Guiding Principles for Academic-Practice Partnerships* in 2012
- Academic-Practice partnerships may provide benefits to both partners (AACN, 2016)
- Academic-Practice partnerships can be an effective strategy for health systems to recruit nurses (Robertson et al., 2021)
- Graduates from one academic-practice partnership completed their new grad nursing orientation on average 1.18 weeks sooner than their peers hired from other nursing schools (Robertson et al., 2021)



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College of Nursing

- “Academic partner”
- Part of a research-intensive university
- Traditional and accelerated plans of study
- Over 400 baccalaureate graduates per year
- Located within walking distance to one of the practice partner’s hospitals
- 4-semester long, upper division type baccalaureate program
 - 4th and final semester students take:
 - Leadership & Management w/ clinical
 - Community Health Nursing w/ clinical
 - 2 electives (no clinical hours)



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Our Partnership Model

- Core team consisted of 2 ED nursing directors, ED nurse educator, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Program, Nurse faculty with emergency nursing background
- Developed the elective titled Emergency Nursing as part of a more comprehensive academic-practice partnership
- Students enrolled in the elective would be placed in one of the practice partner’s EDs for the Leadership and Management clinical experiences
- Limited to 12 students –selected through an application process



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Our Partnership Model

- Course content developed by ED nursing directors, ED nurse educator, and college faculty
- Guest lecturers included clinical nurses from practice partner units, ED nurse educators, ED nurse administrators, physicians, respiratory therapists, emergency management
- Elective met weekly in “smart classroom” on the practice partner's campus



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Our Partnership Model

- Clinicals for the corequisite Leadership and Management course were held at two of the practice partner's EDs
- Clinical instruction was managed by academic partner employed clinical instructors
- Both clinical instructors were ED nurses with graduate degrees in nursing and both were also employed in the practice partner's EDs



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Partnership Evaluation Methods

- Developed 10-item online survey to examine learner outcomes
 - Academic-practice partnership classroom-based learning experiences
 - Concurrent academic-practice partnership Leadership clinical experiences in ED
 - Initial plans for employment as professional nurses
- Received University IRB approval
- Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and participants could skip any questions
- Survey was emailed to participants 3 months after graduation



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Results

- 100% response rate, $N = 12$

Classroom-based Learning $N = 12$	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Classroom-based instruction led by the practice partner nurses was a valuable teaching strategy to improve my knowledge of emergency nursing.	100%	0%	0%
Classroom-based instruction led by practice partner non-nursing professionals (e.g. physicians, respiratory therapy) was a valuable teaching strategy to improve my knowledge of emergency nursing.	100%	0%	0%
I enjoyed having a classroom-based elective held at the medical center rather than at the nursing building.	66.7%	25%	8.3%
Overall, this elective increased my knowledge of emergency nursing.	100%	0%	0%



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Results

Emergency Department Clinical Experiences <i>N</i> = 11	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
The clinical experiences in the emergency department allowed me to apply knowledge learned in this course.	100%	0%	0%
The clinical experiences in the emergency department improved my clinical skills and/or clinical judgement.	100%	0%	0%
Having Leadership and Management clinical experiences at a site that matched my elective specialty was a valuable learning experience.	91%	9%	0%

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Results

Employment Plans <i>N</i> = 11	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
This course confirmed or increased my desire to seek employment as an emergency nurse immediately upon obtaining licensure.	100%	0%	0%
	Yes	No	Undecided
I accepted employment as an emergency nurse.	72.7%	9.1%	18.2%
I accepted employment as a registered nurse with the practice partner.	63.6%	27.3%	9.1%

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Limitations

- Small sample size
- Could only use descriptive statistics and no inferential statistics
- Data gathered just 3 months post graduation so no long term outcomes measured

Lessons Learned

- Communication is essential for success
- Working in partnerships can create logistic challenges
- Larger teams might increase chances of turnover
- Clinical placements in a specialized department require additional planning for faculty absences

Next Steps

- Plan to continue partnership
- Evaluate long-term outcomes
- Consider expanding class size and including more of the practice partner's EDs
- Consider using this model for other specialty units within practice partner's system

Questions?



References

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