Building Nurses’ Leadership and Research Capacity through International Mentoring

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Background

- Nurses need to be actively involved in using research findings and in conducting collaborative, multi-disciplinary research because:

- Building nursing research and knowledge translation capacity and including nursing expertise in decision-making arenas, can potentially enrich health policy effectiveness and improve quality of care (WHO 2004).
Nurses work across all sectors of the health system, and are thus well-positioned to identify and pursue highly pertinent health services and policy research questions.

As frontline providers who have a 24/7 presence with patients and families, nurses’ work provides fertile ground for important clinical research questions.

Examining and adopting evidence-based approaches are highly relevant to nursing practice and patient outcomes, and to the quality and cost-effectiveness of health services.

Active engagement of nurses in researching critical health services issues has the potential to foster more pragmatic and evidence-informed service delivery and policy recommendations.
Despite the above significance for engaging nurses in research there is very limited discussion on strengthen their research capacity especially in the low middle income countries.

Without the requisite training or an enabling environment for research, nurses are unlikely to either demand research training opportunities or initiate research examining nursing practice and health system challenges.

Nurses need both the financial and research knowledge support in order to effectively conduct and use nursing research findings in their practice.
Building leadership capacity is essential in the nursing profession.

Nursing organizations and relevant stakeholders need to invest some resources to build the capacity of nurses in the area of research and health policy through strategies such as mentoring:
- Within countries
- Within Regions
- Across international boundaries
What is Mentorship?

- The guidance of a trusted and experienced person for the purpose of enhancing the development of a less experienced individual.

- A professional activity that goes beyond a peer conversation.

- A long term relationship which provides support, knowledge, and the impetus to facilitate success.

- A personal process that combines role modeling, apprenticeship and nurturing.
Benefits of Mentoring

Mentee
- Personal growth
- Enhanced role transition
- Empowerment
- Political and strategic power development
- Increased job satisfaction
- Increased self esteem
- Improved knowledge base

Mentor
- Reciprocal learning
- Pride in observing others grow
- Sharing of knowledge
- Positively challenged and stimulated
- Increased job satisfaction
- Reflective practice and gaining new ideas
- Increased self-esteem
A Mentor is:

- An individual who has the experience and genuine interest to guide, teach, advise and support the professional and personal developmental of another individual with less experience.

- The person who:
  - asks how you are and then wait to hear the answer
  - gives emotional and moral encouragement
  - gives feedback on performance
  - May come into your life and may leave, however, she or he may leave footprints and memories in your heart forever.
Qualities of an Effective Mentor

- **A desire to help** – Individuals who are interested in and willing to help others.

- **Have had positive experiences** – Individuals who have had positive formal or informal experiences with a mentor tend to be good mentors themselves.

- **Good reputation for developing others** – Experienced people who have a good reputation for helping others develop their skills.

- **Time and energy** – People who have the time and mental energy to devote to the relationship.

- **Up-to-date knowledge** – Individuals who have maintained current, up-to-date technological knowledge and/or skills.

- **Learning attitude** – Individuals who are still willing and able to learn and who see the potential benefits of a mentoring relationship.

- **Demonstrated effective managerial (mentoring) skills** – Individuals who have demonstrated effective coaching, counselling, facilitating and networking skills.
Components of Mentoring

Components

- Continuing Education
  - Helping mentee to acquire and integrate new learning

- Personal Support
  - Helping mentee to manage transitions

- Professional Development
  - Helping mentee to maximize his or her potential to become an accomplished professional.

- It can also be formal
- Informal Characteristics
- Teaching
- Counselling
- Coaching
- Negotiating
- Communication especially, listening
Both mentors and mentee must work together to:

- discover the potentials within themselves that permit growth
- avoid over-dependency
- recognize relationship boundaries
- recognize when goals of relationship has been met
Project Specific Strategies

- Team composition
- Research process
  - Data collection
  - Data analysis
  - Virtual meetings
- Workshops
- E-mentoring
- GSEP–Student Exchange
- Knowledge Translation Activities
- Using qualitative and quantitative research for evidence-based policies
- Evaluation
Outcomes

Organizational:
- Improves retention of targeted people
- Improves productivity
- Creates a supportive study and work environment
- Integrated workforce who is able to promote organizational goals
- Effective mentoring = Success for all

Individual
- Active involvement in research
- Completed Graduate (MSc.N) thesis in a timely manner
- Obtained admission in Canada for PhD work
- Developing a network of researchers for mutual mentoring
Evaluating Mentorship

- Degree and duration of relationship
- Support of mentee interests
- Support for mentee’s new endeavors not suggested by the mentor
- Teaching provided
- Influence of mentor on mentee career choices or opportunities
References

- Walker, L., Gilson, L. (2004). "We are bitter but we are satisfied": nurses as street-level bureaucrats in South Africa. *Social Science and Medicine, 59* 1251–61.