



media alert

6 December 2007

“Reality shock” a reality for newly graduate nurses

A study of new graduate nurses who spent their graduate year in a neonatal intensive care unit has identified factors essential to retaining nurses in the workforce. The study by Catherine Litchfield and Keri Chater is published in Volume 25 Issue 2 of the Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing (AJAN).

The study found that nurses experienced “reality shock” when transitioning from university to the workplace and had difficulty in managing their time to meet the demands placed on them. This led to a deterioration in the quality of care provided, job dissatisfaction, role overload, stress and burnout.

The nurses felt they lacked the knowledge and skills to manage their time effectively, making them feel out of their depth, anxious and scared. Not knowing what was important made prioritising work difficult for them. They identified a need for: increased support and mentoring in the workplace; time to adjust in the workplace to convert their conceptual knowledge into clinical practice; and better educational preparation in time management.

Another study in the same issue of AJAN by Gaynor et al highlights the inadequacy of the data available on undergraduate nursing students. Despite a significant investment by governments in the education of nurses there is no national demographic data on undergraduate student nurses (eg gender or age), no data on attrition rates, graduate outcomes, graduate retention or graduate career plans. The study authors are calling for the establishment of a minimum national demographic dataset to track trends over time to inform future workforce planning.

AJAN is a quarterly internationally peer reviewed journal of nursing research and practice published by the Australian Nursing Federation. AJAN is freely available online:

<http://www.ajan.com.au>.

Jill ILIFFE 0419 576 590
Publisher of AJAN

Catherine LITCHFIELD 0407 330 587
Can I do everything? time management in neonatal unit.

Lynda GAYNOR 0409 638 529
The future nursing workforce in Australia: baseline data for a prospective study of the profile, attrition rates and graduate outcomes in a contemporary cohort of undergraduates.