

Characteristics and Clinical Experiences of Informatics Nurses on their Transition to the Specialty: Results of Pilot National Convenience Survey

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Introduction and Background

Implementation of Meaningful Use requirements has accelerated the implementation of technology in healthcare. This has required more nurses from different backgrounds to leave direct patient care to assist with the evolution of bedside technology and electronic documentation. It is important to understand the characteristics and perceptions of this growing cohort of nurses during their transition to informatics practice. Patricia Benner's model From Novice to Expert provided the framework for this research on nurses who have made the transition to the non-clinical specialty of Nursing Informatics. The objective of this research was to obtain a snapshot of the characteristics of Informatics Nurses and to find out if the years of nursing experience directly relates to the perception ease of transition from healthcare provider to Informatics Nurse. The experience of the transition from one setting to another is important because factors such as having a mentor could facilitate the process and create a more positive experience.

Methods

A 17-item survey with questions about the nurses' educational and work background and transition to the role of the Informatics Nurse was developed. It was posted on the American Nursing Informatics Association (ANIA) e-list serve from May 22, 2012 to June 5, 2012. A frequency distribution and chi square analysis was conducted on the results to determine its statistical significance. A comparison of variables such if the respondent had a mentor and their self-reported ease of transition to the informatics practice. Another comparison was done by looking at the experience of the nurse and their ease of transition. Both of these questions were validated or nullified through the chi square analysis.

Results

The convenience sample of 300 respondents had diverse backgrounds and skill levels. The most frequent response in the age range was 50-59 with over 30+ years of nursing experience but only 0-4 years of Nursing Informatics experience. The most significant finding is that the respondents who did have a mentor did have a self reported ease of transition than those who did not. ($p=0.01$). While the years that a respondent was a nurse and how long it took them to transition to their new role as an informatics nurse was not statistically significant. ($p=0.38$).

Discussion

This survey indicates as more Nurses transition to the field of Informatics, there is a corresponding growth in the need for mentors as the data shows that having a mentor makes a significant difference. The processes that occur during this transition require further study and analysis.

References

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