

**Commentary****Nursing residency program: A solution for overcoming transition challenges for newly graduated nurses**Mahdi Nabi Foodani<sup>1</sup>, Kimya Amouei<sup>1</sup>, Reza Negarandeh<sup>2\*</sup><sup>1</sup>Department of Medical-Surgical Nursing, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran<sup>2</sup>Nursing and Midwifery Care Research Center, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran**Introduction**

The concept of transition, first explored by Van Gennepe and later introduced into nursing by Meleis, is a transformative process involving significant changes in identity, roles, relationships, and behavior (1). In the context of nursing, this transition is particularly pronounced for newly graduated nurses as they move from academic preparation to professional practice (2). This transition often presents challenges such as stress, role ambiguity, and difficulties in adapting to the high-pressure demands of clinical environments. Additional factors, such as demographic characteristics and the personal and professional attributes of mentors and colleagues, further influence the success of this transition (3). Failure to navigate this critical period effectively can lead to disruptions in role perception and performance, ultimately impacting the individual's professional growth and patient care outcomes.

The transition period is often marked by "reality shock," where the expectations of newly graduated nurses clash with the realities of the workplace (4). Many nurses experience unmet expectations, leading to disillusionment and decreased commitment to their roles and institutions. This challenge frequently contributes to high turnover rates, with studies showing that 35% to 60% of nurses leave their positions within the first year (5). The repercussions of such turnover extend beyond individual experiences, exacerbating global

nursing shortages and straining healthcare systems (6). The inability to retain new nurses disrupts workforce stability and limits the equitable delivery of healthcare services, particularly in underserved regions. These challenges underscore the urgent need for effective strategies to support nurses in this critical transition period. Nursing residency programs are established to ease the transition described above.

***Nursing residency programs***

Research shows that a stable and standardized work environment is crucial for retaining nurses in hospitals during their first year (7,8). In 2010, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) introduced various programs to advance the nursing profession, including the Nursing Residency Program (NRP)(6). The NRP is a structured and comprehensive initiative designed to facilitate the transition process for nursing graduates, enabling them to evolve from students to independent healthcare professionals who can confidently and competently manage patient care.

Various types of nursing residency programs, including General Nurse Residency Programs, Specialized Programs, Hospital-Based Programs, Academic Programs, and Community Health Programs, are designed to support new graduate nurses as they transition from academic settings to clinical practice.

General Nurse Residency Programs are distinct due to their broad-based training,

\*Corresponding Author: Reza Negarandeh, Nursing and Midwifery Care Research Center, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran. E-mail: megarandeh@tums.ac.ir

DOI: 10.18502/npt.v12i1.17520



preparing nurses for diverse clinical environments rather than a specific specialty. These programs provide exposure to various patient populations, ensuring well-rounded clinical competency. These programs emphasize mentorship and support, helping new nurses transition smoothly into practice. Unlike specialized residency programs, which focus on fields like critical care or pediatrics, General Nurse Residency Programs develop a wide array of skills applicable across different healthcare settings, offering more flexible career paths for graduates.

The advantages of general NRPs are well-documented. For newly graduated nurses, these programs enhance confidence, critical thinking, and leadership skills, enabling them to adapt effectively to high-stress clinical environments (9). General NRPs provide a structured platform for professional development, reducing feelings of isolation and uncertainty during the transition period. For healthcare institutions, these programs contribute to reduced turnover rates and increased workforce stability, resulting in cost savings on recruitment and training. Additionally, general NRPs improve patient care outcomes by fostering higher safety standards, communication, and evidence-based practice. However, challenges such as high implementation costs, variability in program quality across institutions, and the time-intensive nature of training must be addressed. Furthermore, inconsistent evaluation frameworks can complicate efforts to assess the long-term impact of these programs (10).

Despite their benefits, general NRPs face significant barriers to implementation. Financial constraints pose a major challenge, particularly for institutions with limited budgets or those in resource-constrained settings. Additionally, resistance within the organization, such as reluctance from experienced staff to embrace new training models, often hampers the successful integration of these programs (11). Designing and standardizing curricula that balance theoretical knowledge with practical exposure presents another common obstacle. Participants may also face challenges such as managing the

high workload associated with residency programs alongside their clinical responsibilities, which can lead to burnout and diminished engagement (12). Addressing these barriers requires strategic planning, resource allocation, and continuous dialogue among stakeholders to ensure the program's sustainability and effectiveness.

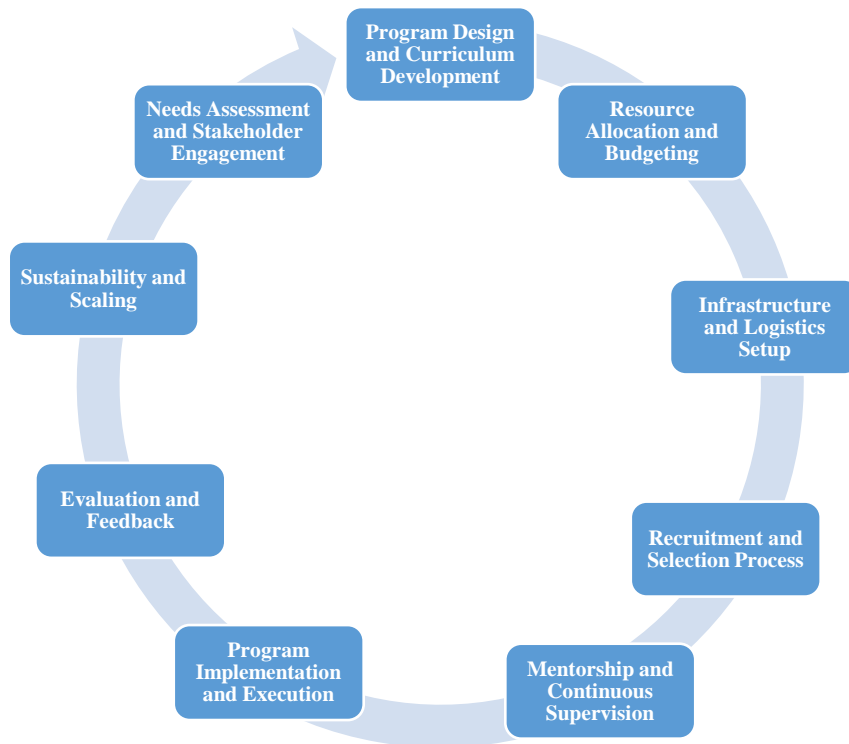
For general NRPs to be effective, several conditions must be met. Adequate infrastructure, including simulation labs, training spaces, and access to medical equipment, is essential to create a conducive learning environment. Organizational support, characterized by robust collaboration between academic institutions and healthcare facilities, is crucial for aligning program objectives with clinical practice requirements. Financial investment is another critical factor, as these programs require funding for faculty salaries, training materials, and operational costs (13). Governments, healthcare institutions, and private sponsors play vital roles in ensuring the availability of necessary resources. Additionally, experienced mentors and faculty are essential to guide residents, and fostering both their professional and emotional development. Clear policies, program guidelines, and continuous evaluation mechanisms are also necessary to maintain program consistency and quality (14).

### *Implementation in countries considering the NRP*

NRPs have been effectively adopted in certain countries to address specific needs, yielding significant benefits. In the United States, these programs focus on improving retention rates among novice nurses through evidence-based training and targeted mentorship. In Saudi Arabia, NRPs emphasize leadership development and cultural adaptation, tailoring specialized residency programs to prepare nurses for diverse and challenging healthcare environments (15). In Australia, these programs aim to address workforce shortages in rural areas by leveraging innovative methods such as tele-mentorship to provide education and support for nurses (16).

These examples demonstrate how NRPs can be aligned with the unique demands of each country, playing a crucial role in enhancing healthcare quality and advancing the professional skills of nurses. Despite these successes, many countries have yet to prioritize

or implement NRPs. This commentary, therefore, presents a framework for establishing Nursing Residency Programs in countries seeking to adopt them, drawing on credible and reliable sources to ensure effective implementation and sustainability (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Framework for establishing nursing residency programs in countries seeking to adopt them

Implementing nursing residency programs requires a strategic and comprehensive approach, beginning with a detailed needs assessment to identify the challenges faced by new nursing graduates. Understanding these challenges enables the design of targeted solutions that address skill gaps and ease the transition into clinical practice. Stakeholder engagement is crucial in this phase, as collaboration with universities, hospitals, and nursing associations ensures the alignment of program goals with industry requirements while securing the necessary support and resources (17).

The development of the program involves setting clear objectives aimed at enhancing clinical competence, fostering professional growth, and boosting job satisfaction among residents. A well-designed curriculum combines hands-on training, theoretical education, and mentorship to create a

robust learning experience while adhering to accreditation standards (18). Allocating resources effectively is another cornerstone, with careful budgeting to cover costs such as faculty salaries, educational materials, and training equipment. Securing additional funding from government agencies and healthcare institutions can further enhance the program's reach and quality (19).

Establishing the necessary infrastructure, including training centers in reputable hospitals and advanced simulation labs, is vital to providing a supportive and practical learning environment. The recruitment process must be transparent and equitable, targeting recent graduates who demonstrate motivation and a strong potential to benefit from the program (20). Once residents are selected, mentorship becomes the backbone of the residency experience. Experienced nurses serve as guides, offering continuous supervision,

regular feedback, and tailored support to foster individual growth and ensure alignment with program objectives.

Implementation begins with an orientation to acclimate residents to the program structure, followed by structured clinical rotations across various departments to build a diverse and comprehensive skill set. Regular evaluations and feedback mechanisms allow for monitoring of residents' progress, ensuring that the program remains adaptive to their needs (10). Sustainability and scalability are long-term considerations, requiring efforts to secure consistent funding and explore expansion opportunities. By standardizing training and extending the program across regions, healthcare systems can enhance the readiness of new nurses and ultimately improve patient care outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, nursing residency programs are essential for supporting new graduate nurses as they transition into professional roles. By addressing the challenges of the transition period through structured training and support, these programs benefit nurses, healthcare institutions, and patients alike. While barriers such as financial constraints and organizational resistance exist, the advantages of NRPs—including improved nurse retention, enhanced professional competencies, and better patient outcomes—underscore their importance in modern healthcare. Future efforts should focus on cost-effective implementation models and standardized evaluation frameworks to optimize their impact and scalability.

## **Conflicts of interest**

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

## **Funding**

This manuscript did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or non-profit sectors.

## **References**

1. Barton TD. Student nurse practitioners—A rite of passage? The universality of Van Gennepe's

model of social transition. *Nurse education in practice*. 2007;7(5):338-47.

2. Hampton KB, Smeltzer SC, Ross JG. The transition from nursing student to practicing nurse: An integrative review of transition to practice programs. *Nurse Education in Practice*. 2021;52:103031.

3. Mahmoud Hassan R, Mohammed Rashad R, El-Tukhy Adly Barak M. Factors Affecting Nurse Students' Perception Regarding Role Transition at Faculty of Nursing—Benha University. *Egyptian Journal of Health Care*. 2018;9(3):60-71.

4. Kim J-S. Relationships between reality shock, professional self-concept, and nursing students' perceived trust from nursing educators: A cross-sectional study. *Nurse Education Today*. 2020;88:104369.

5. Lin PS, Viscardi MK, McHugh MD. Factors influencing job satisfaction of new graduate nurses participating in nurse residency programs: A systematic review. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*. 2014;45(10):439-50.

6. Andrews MC, Woolum A, Mesmer-Magnus J, Viswesvaran C, Deshpande S. Reducing turnover intentions among first-year nurses: The importance of work centrality and coworker support. *Health Services Management Research*. 2024;37(2):88-98.

7. Huang M-H, Wang H-H, Hsu M-T. Role transition experiences of female novice head nurses: An analysis using hermeneutic phenomenology. *Nursing Practice Today*. 2024;11(4):378-387.

8. Nabi Foodani M, Abbasi Dolatabadi Z, Goudarzian AH, Mosazadeh H, Poortaghi S. Factors Effective in Lowering Professional Commitment in Nursing and Strategies to Address Them: A Scoping Review. *SAGE Open Nursing*. 2024;10:23779608241299291.

9. Mohammad Z, Al-Hmairat N. The effectiveness of nurse residency programs on new graduate nurses' retention: Systematic review. *Heliyon*. 2024.

10. Shaw KK. Closing the New Graduate Nurse Practice Gap: A Multi-Perspective Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis of the Efficacy of a Nurse Residency Program: Tarleton State University; 2023.

11. Pickens JB, Palokas M. Barriers and facilitators for implementing a nurse residency program for new graduate nurses: a scoping review protocol. *JBIEvidence Synthesis*. 2023;21(7):1461-8.

12. Javelona G, Kurtzman Y. Improving Patient Care While Decreasing Costs: The Benefits, Barriers,

and Student Perspectives on Nurse Residency Programs. *RNJOURNAL: Journal of Nursing*. 2017.

13. AbuAlRub R, Abu Alhaja'a M. Perceived benefits and barriers of implementing nursing residency programs in Jordan. *International Nursing Review*. 2019;66(1):43-51.

14. Cadmus E, Roberts ML. First-year outcomes: Program evaluation of a statewide nurse residency program. *JONA: The Journal of Nursing Administration*. 2022;52(12):672-8.

15. Al Qannass SM, Al Ahmari R. Factors Affecting Training Efficacy in Residency Program Adopted by New Graduate Nurses in Saudi Arabia. *Open Journal of Nursing*. 2021;11(12):1042-51.

16. Arowolo D, Olarinde O, Tola Y, Ogunlowo B, Akingbade O. Advancing the Nigerian health system through advanced practice nursing. *Nursing Practice Today*. 2023;10(1):7-12.

17. Ackerson K, Stiles KA. Value of nurse residency programs in retaining new graduate nurses and their potential effect on the nursing shortage. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*. 2018;49(6):282-8.

18. Warren JI, Perkins S, Greene MA. Advancing new nurse graduate education through the implementation of statewide, standardized nurse residency programs. *Journal of Nursing Regulation*. 2018;8(4):14-21.

19. Kesten KS, El-Banna MM. Facilitators, barriers, benefits, and funding to implement postgraduate nurse practitioner residency/fellowship programs. *Journal of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners*. 2021;33(8):611-7.

20. Leary M, Villarruel AM, Richmond TS. Creating an innovation infrastructure in academic nursing. *Journal of Professional Nursing*. 2022;38:83-8.