



The Experience of Nurses New to the Paediatric Intensive Care Environment



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Background

The transition to working in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) for either newly qualified or ward nurses, can be immensely challenging¹. There is a dearth of literature exploring how best to provide new starters to Paediatric ICU both education and clinical support. Understanding what the experience of working in this highly specialised area as a new starter is like is important in order to support staff, reduce stress, ensure staff retention and provide a positive working environment.

Aim

To understand the experience of new starter nurses (newly qualified or with experience [excluding any ICU experience]) starting in PICU.

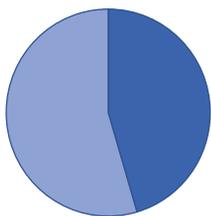
Recruitment:

Purposive recruitment using invitations in new starter induction packs

Sample:

11 new starters participated

Participants



- Newly qualified (n=5)
- Ward nurses (n=6)

Conclusions

- Newly qualified nurses and experienced nurses equally found challenges when starting in PICU and this must be supported through this.
- The need for support is key – educational support and peer support need to be separate.
- Peer support is needed early within the PICU career due to the stressful, demanding environment.
- The educational program was felt to be beneficial, but bedside learning varied and requires consistency to aid development and provide career long learning opportunities.

Methods:

1. Face to face interviews conducted by DA with the new starters at:



2. Focus groups conducted at:



Interviews and focus groups were semi-structured, audiotaped and transcribed verbatim.

Results

- 2 weeks**
 - Overwhelming, feeling unprepared,
 - Low confidence and high expectations
- 3 months**
 - “Drowning”, need for sense of belonging,
 - Challenge of managing a patient on your own, fear of autonomous decision making
- 6 months**
 - Widening their horizon to seeing other types of patients and understanding the processes of the unit,
 - Finding support in their peers, comparison with peers
- 12 months**
 - Seeking feedback and reassurance, Fear of having to take sicker patients, fear of not being the newest staff any longer
- 18 months**
 - Where to go next with less support, how they are viewed within the unit,
 - New opportunities, global awareness

Muldoney, Y. & McKee, G. (2011) Nurses new to intensive care: perceptions of their clinical learning environment, *Nursing in Critical Care*, 16 (4), pp 201-209.¹