Transition program and its Effect on Nurse Interns' Role Perception

Amina A.Abd Elfatah [(1)], **Samia M.Adam**[(2)], **Hanaa M.Abdrabu & Galila Abd Elgafar**

* Assistant Lecturer at Nursing Administration, Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University.
** Professor of Nursing Administration, Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University.
*** Assist. Professor of Nursing Administration, Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University.
Lecturer at Nursing Administration, Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University.

Abstract

Background: the ultimate goal of transition programs is to increase competence of new nurses and consequently augment the quality and safety of healthcare provided to all patients, and adapt to their new role. For that, it is importance of nurse interns to know their future roles to facilitate and prepare them socially to work and decrease the reality shock when go outside to the labor market **Aim of the study:** assessing the effect of transition program among nurse interns on their role perception. **Design:** Quisi-experimental research design. **Setting:** Ain Shams University Hospitals. **Subjects:** (100) nurse interns whom are path from fourth year at faculty of nursing Ain Shams University. **Tools of data collection:** Nurse Interns' knowledge regarding role transition questionnaire, and role perception questionnaire. **Result:** at pre role transition program phase minority of nurse interns had high total knowledge, and total roles perception level. Moreover, at post program and follow up phases the total knowledge and total roles perception level was improved markedly respectively. Additionally, there were a positive highly statistically significance correlation between total nurse interns' transition knowledge score and total roles perception score throughout transition program phases. **Conclusion:** The level of total transition knowledge, and total roles perception level was improved markedly among nurse interns throughout program phases. **Recommendations:** Introducing a mandatory preceptorship program would assist with a smoother transition, academic institutions must provide ongoing support and resources for new faculty nurse intern, further attention to academic preparation of nursing interns to promote their perceptions about role transition, A future research must be made to improve perceptions of nursing interns about role transition.

Keywords: Transition, Nurse Interns, Role perception.

Introduction

Nursing interns are baccalaureate student nurses who start the role transition from senior student to professional nurse though an internship training program. One of the mechanisms designed and implemented to support new graduate nurses in the work place is internship program which is offered by most hospitals in various format **(Marcia et al., 2011).**

The Oxford English Dictionary (2010) defined perception as one's awareness and understanding of sensory information attained through interplay between past experiences, one's own culture and the interpretation of the perceived.

Preparation of nurse interns is an important component in the clinical experience. After preparing students in the nursing lab, the school of nursing should provide and select a suitable real clinical learning setting, so that theory and practice would complement each other in the place where students learn their technical skills. Preparation includes: orientation to the clinical setting (patient, environment), using communication skills, patient

education, nursing management and leadership **(Hallin and Danielson, 2010; Ali, 2010)**.

The internship period is considered the mechanism that facilitates easy transition into the role of beginning-level staff nurse in health care settings. During this transitional period, it is not only the learning and refinement of technical skills that nurse interns must master, but also includes maturation into the role of being a professionally licensed individual and the inherent responsibilities that accompany licensure **(Drewry et al., 2015)**.

Transition from nurse student to nurse intern can be problematic issue during which the graduate nurse needs to learn how to function independently in the rapidly changing and fast spaced healthcare environment, while the newly qualified nurses often feel poorly prepared for the role of staff nurse. There for, supportive measures are needed to reduce stress during the transition period **(Jessica and Crossman, 2015).**

Transition means anytime someone makes a 'change' from what they know to what they do not know or are not entirely familiar with; they experience a transition a journey from what was to what is **(Boychuk, 2012)**. Besides, a transition as passages or movements from one state or condition to another, and they can profoundly influence and alter the lives of the individuals involved as well as their significant others friends, family, and co-workers **(Bjerknes and Bjork, 2012)**. However, the transition also begins with events that create instability and make the change necessary graduating as a nurse and moving from being a nursing student to a fully responsible professional nurse is such an event **(Kaihlanen et al., 2013; Chang and Daly, 2012).**

Role transition begins during the graduate educational program when students are socialized into the role. The transition does not complete until later in the first year of practice. To facilitate and support their transition, students are expected to be orientated to their new role and to receive regular feedback from colleagues and line managers **(Maten-Speksnijder et al., 2015).**

Role transition is any event or non-event that results in change in relationships, routines, assumptions, and/or roles within the settings of self, work, family, health, and/or economics. For a normal individual, transitioning to a new event includes having the ability to expect the change, interpret the change, and acknowledge it. Nature of transitions refers to physical, social, emotional, or environmental changes caused by, or being a result of transitions. Changes occur sequentially to or simultaneous with critical events such as disruptions in relationships and routines or in response to ideas, perceptions and identities that trigger the transitions **(Bongaarts, Mensch, & Blanc, 2017).**

Support during a period of transition is essential for any nurse or midwife. Transition support will be an individualized, planned process and include quality induction and orientation to the new work context, meeting the requirements of the department's performance management Framework. A high level of additional support assists in a soft and positive transition to the practice setting as well as to the new role **(Department of Health and Human Services, 2010).**

The roles of nurses in the health care delivery system are multiple and complex. Nurses collect data, diagnose human responses to health problems, and plan, provide, and evaluate outcomes of care. They work in various settings; adhere to facility policies and state nurse practice acts. Moreover, nurses educate clients, families, and staff. They manage resources, and act as advocates for clients. In addition, they participate in disease prevention and

health promotion activities for clients, families, and communities **(Thies, 2017).**

Nursing roles today constitute a vast and complex system. They reflect changes in society, as well as changes in the populations that require nursing care. They are also influenced by the recent trends of emphasis on health promotion as well as illness care. The roles of nurse have broadened in response to these changes. Thus, nurses are not only caregivers, but also managers of care, communicators, teachers, and researcher **(Maskery, 2016)**. For that, it is importance of nurse interns to know their future roles to facilitate and prepare them socially to work and decrease the reality shock when go outside to the labor market **(Mohamed and Abdalla, 2014).**

Finally, Transition from nurse students to nurse intern can be a challenging and stressful for new nurses. The health care organizations must provide transition programs to support nurse students' perception through this vulnerable time and to assist in increasing graduates' job satisfaction and retention rates **(Phillips et al., 2014).**

Therefore, the ultimate goal of transition programs is to increase competence of new nurses and consequently augment the quality and safety of healthcare provided to all patients. The transition period is a time when nurses' knowledge and skills are consolidated, and adapt to their new role. The potential benefits of easing this transition could be reduction in stress and anxiety, enhanced job satisfaction and improved retention rates **(Edwards et al, 2009)**.

Aim of the Study

This study aimed at assessing the effect of transition program among Nurse Interns on their role perception through:

1. Assess Nurse Interns 'role perception before and after program

2. Designing and implementing transition program

Research hypothesis:

1- The implementation of program will improve the nurse interns' perception regarding their role

Subjects and Methods

Research Design:

Aquisi-experimental design was used in carrying out this study.

Setting:

The study was conducted in the Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University and the related assigned areas in four hospitals affiliated to Ain-Shams University, where nurse interns have their training, namely; Ain-Shams University Hospital, El-Demerdash Hospital, Pediatrics Hospital, Cardiovascular hospital.

Sampling:

The subjects of the study included all available (100) nurse interns who completed the fourth year of Faculty of nursing- Ain Shams University and had their training at Ain-Shams University Hospitals during their internship year (2017-2018).

Data Collection Tools:-

Two different types of data collection tools were used to carry out this study. These were, role transition knowledge questionnaire and role perception questionnaire. These tools were used three times through the study intervention phases: at the beginning of the program (pre-test), at the end of the program immediately (post-test), and three months after implementation of the program (follow-up).

First Tool: Role transition knowledge questionnaire, was developed and constructed by the researcher based on review of related literature (***Chang & Daly,***

2017& Duchscher, 2009). It aimed to assess the nurse interns' knowledge related to role transition. This tool consisted of two parts.

Part 1: It includes data pertaining to the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents such as age, gender, marital status, current training department and education before enrollment in the faculty.

Part 2: This part was aimed to assess nurse interns' knowledge regarding role transition, it consists of (23) close ended questions. These questions are classified to thirteen multiple-choice questions (M, C Q s), and ten true and false questions. These questions are grouped into eight main dimensions

Scoring system The participant answers according two dichotomies, (one) for the correct answer and (zero) for the incorrect answer. The maximum possible total score was (twenty four). The scores of the items were summed up and the total was divided by the number of the items. Mean and standard deviation were calculated then converted into a mean percent. The subject knowledge was considered as high if the percent score was above 75%, moderate level if the percent score ranged from 60% to 75% and low if the percent score was less than 60%.

2-Role perception questionnaire

This tool was adopted from *(Soliman, 2011).* It intended to assess role perception level of the nurse interns.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts:

Part 1: It includes data pertaining to the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents such as age, gender, marital status, current training department and education before enrollment in the faculty.

Part 2: This part was aimed to assess role perception level of nurse interns,

it consisted of (91 items) grouped into six main dimensions as shown in table 3namely :I-Care giver (61items), II- Health educator (7items), III- Communicator (6items), IV- Documentation (6items),V- Manager (9 items), and VI- Researcher (2items). Care giver dimension is divided into three subgroups namely, nursing care planner (4items), nursing care provider (54items), nursing care evaluator (2items). At the same time nursing care provider also divided into five sub items, performing nursing activities(13 items),Performing technical procedures(13 items), Nursing activities in surgical units and operation room (14items), Nursing activities in heamo dialysis unit (7 items), Nursing activities in premature unit (7 items). Table (3)

❖ Scoring System:

The scoring system ranged from (1) for agree and zero for "disagree". Total score was summed up for each dimension and the overall score gave the intern perception for their role. The scores were converted into percent scores. The subject perception level was considered high if the percent score was above 75%, moderate if the percent score ranged from 60% to 75% and low if the percent scoreless than 60%.

Tool validity& Reliability

After the construction of data collection tools (Role transition knowledge questionnaire and role perception questionnaire for nurse interns) two types of validity tests were used in this stage, face validity and content validity. Face validity aimed at determining the extend to which the tools represent all facts of the role perception. Content validity was conducted to determine whether the tool cover the appropriate and necessary contents. The validity of the tools were judged by five jury members having experience in nursing administrations. They were asked to express their opinions regarding the face and content of the

proposed tools. The jury members were consisted of two professors of nursing administration in Cairo University and Three in Ain Shams University. Based on their recommendation corrections, addition and / or omission of some items were done.

The reliability test was done to assure the consistency, determine how strongly the attribute were related to each other and to the composite score.

Reliability statistics of data collection tools:

Data collection tools	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Role transition knowledge questionnaire	23	0.866
Role perception questionnaire	91	0.916

2. Pilot study:

A pilot study was conducted on sample representing 10% of the main study sample at the beginning of September 2018. It aimed to examine the applicability, clarity of language, test the feasibility and suitability of the designated tools, estimate the time needed to complete the questionnaires and identifying potential obstacles and problem that may be encountered during the period of data collection. The questionnaire sheets were distributed to ten participants who are chosen randomly. Data obtained from the pilot study was analyzed, and no modifications were done. So, Thoseparticipants included in the study subjects. The time consumed in answering the questionnaires was 30minutes.

Data Collection Procedure:

An official approval to conduct the study was obtained from medical and nursing directors of the hospitals. This was done by issuing letters from the Faculty of Nursing Ain Shams University clarifying the aim of the study to the hospital directors.

Data collection for this was carried out within a period of ten months, from the first week of March (2018) up to the end of January (2019). The data were collected from all available nurse interns who completed the fourth year of Faculty of Nursing- Ain Shams University The researcher met nurse interns to explain the purpose and nature of the study then they were reassured that any information obtained would be confidential. Before program planning the researcher distributed, data collection tools, role perception questionnaire and role transition knowledge questionnaire, to the study subjects to assess their knowledge and perception related to their roles. This stage started on October, 2018, the researcher was present during this process to explain how to answer the questionnaires, and give the necessary instructions. The participants took 30 minutes to answer the two questionnaires. The filled forms were handed back to the researcher. The researcher check each one to ensure its completeness.

Ethical Considerations:

The research approval was obtained from a scientific research ethics committee of the Faculty of the Nursing Ain Shams University. The aim and purpose of the study were explained to hospital administrators as well as the nurse interns who were included in the study. Also, they assured maintaining confidentiality of the subject data. Nurse interns were informed that they were allowed to choose to participate or not in the study and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

IV. Statistical Design:

Data collected from the studied sample was reviewed, coded and entered using the computer software PC. Data entry and statistical analysis were fulfilled using the statistical package for social sciences (Data were presented using descriptive

statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages for non-numerical data and mean, standard deviation ($\pm$ SD) for parametric numerical data. Also, using analytical statistics in the form of chi square test to examine the relationship between two qualitative variables but when the expected count is less than 5 in more than 20% of the cells, fisher's exact test was used, Pearson correlation coefficient (r): used as a measure of the strength of a linear association between two quantitative variables. Statistical significant (HS) was considered at $P<0.05$.

Results:

Table (1): socio demographic characteristics of the study sample, shows that, slightly more than two thirds (69.0%) of study sample had age ranged between22-23years old with mean age of 23.07±0.92. and (72.0%) of them were single. Also, (71.0%) of study sample had general secondary education.

Figure (1) reveals that, slightly less than three quarters of nurse interns' was female.

Figure (2) show attending of training program of the study sample shows that, majority of nurse interns was not attending training programs**.**

Table (2) represents that, at pre role transition program phase minority of nurse interns had high total knowledge level. As observed at post program and follow up phases the total knowledge level was improved markedly respectively.

Table (3): shows that, minority of nurse interns had high total roles perception level at preprogram phase. As observed, at post program phase the nurse interns' total roles perception level was improved markedly .While some declines occurred in follow up phase.

Table (4): shows that, there were a positive highly statistically significance correlation between total nurse interns' transition knowledge score and total roles perception score throughout transition program phases.

Table (1): Distribution of socio demographic characteristics of the study sample

Items	Nurse interns (100)	
	Frequency	Percent
Age (in Years)		
<22	3	3.0
22-23	69	69.0
24-25	28	28.0
Mean ± SD	**23.07±0.92**	
Range	**21-25**	
Marital status		
Single	72	72.0
Married	28	28.0
Previous education before enrollment in the faculty		
General secondary education	71	71.0
Nursing teaching institution	29	29.0
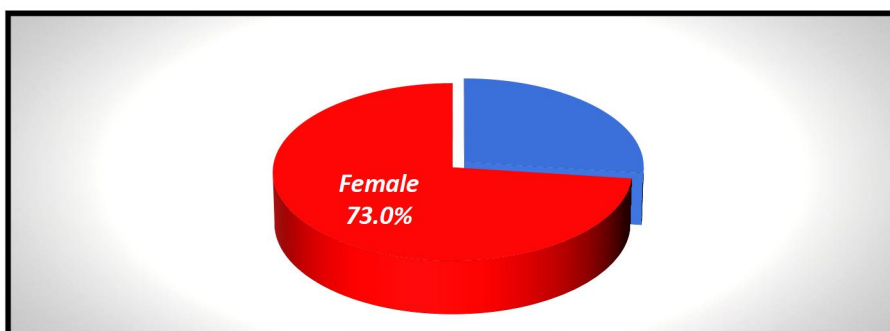
Figure (1): Distribution of nurse interns' gender (n= 100).
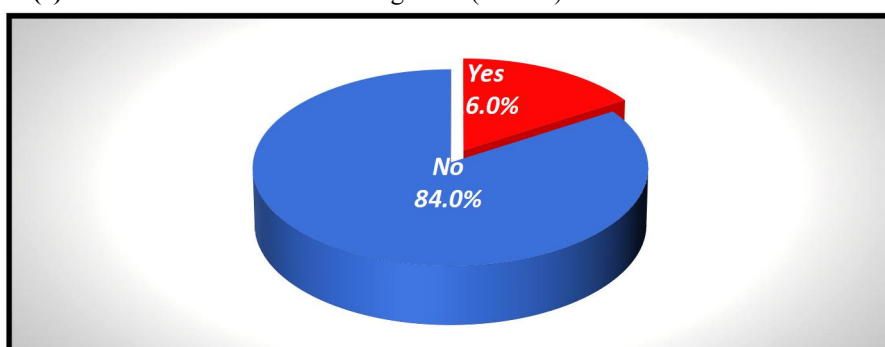
Figure (2): Distribution of nurse interns' training programs (n= 100).

Table (2): Distribution of nurse interns' total knowledge regarding role transition throughout program phases (n= 100*).*

Items	Levels ofknowledge	Program phases						X^2	P-value
		Pre		Post		Follow up			
		No	%	No	%	No	%		
Total transition knowledge	Low	70	70.0	5	5.0	10	10.0		
	Moderate	23	23.0	8	8.0	9	9.0	137.8	0.000**
	High	7	7.0	87	87.0	81	81.0		

Table (3): Distribution of nurse interns' total perception regarding their roles through program phase (n= 100**).**

Dimensions of roles perception	Levels of roles perception	Program phases						X^2	P-value
		Pre		Post		Follow up			
		No	%	No	%	No	%		
Total role as nursing care planner.	Low	61	61.0	6	6.0	9	9.0	155.0	0.000**
	Moderate	35	35.0	14	14.0	17	17.0		
	High	4	4.0	80	80.0	74	74.0		
Total role as nursing care provider	Low	55	55.0	4	4.0	5	5.0	129.4.6	0.000**
	Moderate	18	18.0	4	4.0	7	7.0		
	High	27	27.0	92	92.0	88	88.0		
Total role as nursing care evaluator	Low	54	54.0	9	9.0	12	12.0	67.52	0.000**
	Moderate	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0		
	High	46	46.0	91	91.0	88	88.0		
Total role as a care giver	Low	53	53.0	2	2.0	5	5.0	156.5	0.000**
	Moderate	29	29.0	8	8.0	6	6.0		
	High	18	18.0	90	90.0	89	89.0		
Total role as a health educator	Low	34	34.0	2	2.0	4	4.0	131.3	0.000**
	Moderate	35	35.0	4	4.0	3	3.0		
	High	31	31.0	94	94.0	93	93.0		
Total role as a communicator	Low	48	48.0	4	4.0	4	4.0	122.6	0.000**
	Moderate	27	27.0	6	6.0	12	12.0		
	High	25	25.0	90	90.0	84	84.0		
Total role in recording and reporting	Low	43	43.0	2	2.0	5	5.0ii	121.7	0.000**
	Moderate	30	30.0	6	6.0	10	10.0		
	High	27	27.0	92	92.0	85	85.0		
Total role as a manager	Low	39	39.0	1	1.0	3	3.0	143.7	0.000**
	Moderate	38	38.0	7	7.0	8	8.0		
	High	23	23.0	92	92.0	89	89.0		
Total role as a researcher	Low	51	51.0	5	5.0	8	8.0	78.93	0.000**
	Moderate	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0		
	High	49	49.0	95	95.0	92	92.0		
Total roles perception	Low	51	51.0	2	2.0	3	3.0	183.6	0.000**
	Moderate	32	32.0	3	3.0	4	4.0		
	High	17	17.0	95	95.0	93	93.0		

(**) Highly statistically significant at P<0.01

Table (4): Correlations between nurse interns' total nurse interns' roles score and total transition knowledge score (n=100).

Parameter	Total knowledge score					
	Pre		Post		Follow up	
	r	P–value	r	P–value	r	P–value
Total nurse interns 'roles score	0.652	<0.000**	0.584	<0.000**	0.790	<0.000**

(*) Statistically significant at p<0.05(**) High Significant at P < 0.01

Discussion

Transition is a period of learning, adjustment and socialization, when the nurse applies, consolidates and increases their existing knowledge, gaining competence (knowledge, skills and attitude) that is applicable to the nursing practice of the clinical setting or patient population in which they are expected to perform *(Patterson, 2015)*. This study aimed at assessing the effect of transition program among Nurse Interns on their role

perception through: Assess Nurse Interns 'role perception before and after program, and Designing and implementing transition program.

Regarding Nurse Interns' knowledge regarding role transition throughout program phases

The present study findings showed that, at pre role transition program phase minority of nurse interns had high total knowledge level. This means that those nurse interns had lacking the opportunity to develop their skills as a nurse, administrative skills and to discuss the transition from student role to nurse.

This result may be due to nurse interns had never been prepared to their roles or allowed to practice it during their undergraduate education. Also, nurse interns had limited clinical placement experience and were rarely given responsibility for a full patient workload. The finding of the present study agree with *MacLellan et al., (2014)* who concluded that, consequence of role ambiguity, insufficient experience, lack of confidence, feeling with responsibility, and the gap between theory and practice lead to inadequate preparation of student nurses for the professional practice role, as a result of all that the shock happened.

As observed at post program phase the total knowledge level was improved markedly. This finding may be due to the transition program helping nurse interns to learn information and skills required to provide patient care and professional role as nurse, professional skills, retention in the profession, and coping with transition. In agreements with study finding *MatenSpeksnijder et al., (2015)* found that, to facilitate and support transition, students are expected to be orientated to their new role and to receive regular feedback from colleagues and line managers. In addition,

Moreover, slightly decline of total knowledge level at follow up phase among nurse interns. This result may be due to organizational stressors include lack of support within the unit and from management, as well as a lack of resources such as time, guidance, and lack of available equipment to accomplish daily nursing tasks. Similarly, *Al-Mahmoud et al., (2013)* reported that, organizational stressors unique to today's new graduate nurses include a chaotic workplace characterized by nursing short age and high patient acuity. These stressors may lead to acute moral distress, depression and role transition shock.

Also, the result showed that, there were highly statistically significant differences in knowledge throughout program phases. This finding may be due to transition program for nurse interns entering professional practice making a significant adjustment to changing personal and professional roles at the start of one's nursing career, and allows them to develop their thinking and practice expertise assist them to move through the stages of professional role transition.

This finding consistent with *Megahed et al., (2017)* who mentioned that, the orientation program have a high extremely statistically significant impact on intern nurses Knowledge throughout program phases.

In the same line, *Eldeeb* Additionally*, Khanna et al., (2018)* found that, there was statistically significant improvement in the knowledge and skills of health care providers and administrators after competency training program.

Nurse Interns' total perception level regarding their roles throughout program phases

The finding of current study revealed that, minority of nurse interns total roles perception level at preprogram phase. This finding may be due to nurse interns cannot apply the theory they learned during their formal education to the daily

work and, as a result, find it hard to implement what they learned. Also, may be due to lack of standardized training, and lack of continuing education of nurse interns.

This findings were agree with *Velhal et al. (2013),* in their study that was carried out to assess awareness among nursing staff about their roles and responsibilities on sixty nurses in Topical National Medical College and Nair Hospital, Mumbai, India, where they found that, most of the nursing staff were not aware about their roles and responsibilities and more or less there was overlapping of their roles and responsibilities.

As observed, at post program phase the nurse interns' high total roles perception level was improved markedly. This may be due to the transition training program contributing to the development of nurse interns' professional knowledge, which will be applied and, would be able to improve practical skills. In congruent with the study finding *Hassan et al., (2018)* who concluded that, conduct an orientation program for nursing students before internship year is very beneficial and prior each clinical training area to explain objectives, responsibilities and discuss nurse students' expectations.

While some declines occurred in follow up phase however the levels remained significantly high compared with preprogram phase. This may be due to organizational stressors include lack of support within the unit and from management, as well as a lack of resources such as time, guidance, and available equipment to accomplish daily nursing tasks.

On the same line *Zinsmeister and Schafer (2009)* who conducted a study about the exploration of the lived experience of the graduate nurse making the transition to registered nurse during the first year of practice reported that,

organizational stressors include lack of support within the unit and from management, as well as a lack of resources such as time, guidance, and available equipment to accomplish daily nursing tasks.

Also there were highly statistically significant differences in all roles levels as well as the total role among nurse interns throughout program phases. This finding may be due to the training was an essential factor contributing to greater efficiency of the staff and organizations. It's a vital investment that will lead to internal promotion, nurse interns developing.

In the same line *Chaghar et al., (2017)* reported that, training is an essential factor contributing to greater efficiency of the staff and organizations. It's a vital investment that will lead to internal promotion, staff developing and success of organizational plans, training is important in achieving productivity and nurse retention through providing career development and job satisfaction in the long run.

Regarding correlations between nurse interns' total roles perception and total transition knowledge score

The results of this study revealed that, there were a positive highly statistically significance correlation between total nurse interns' transition knowledge score and total roles perception score throughout transition program phases. This may be due to the transition programs increased the competence of nurse interns and consequently augment the quality and safety of healthcare provided to all patients. The transition period is a time when nurse interns' knowledge and skills are consolidated, and adapt to their new role.

This finding is supported by *Edwards et al., (2009)* concluded that, the ultimate goal of transition programs is to increase competence of new nurses and

consequently augment the quality and safety of healthcare provided to all patients, and adapt to their new role. Similarly, *Cubit and Ryan, (2011); Shipman, (2014)* stated that intern nurses are faced with increased responsibility during transition, as intern nurses undergo transition they are able to understand their multiple roles and accept the multitude of responsibilities associated with it.

Conclusion

According to the study findings, it can be concluded that, at role transition program phase minority of nurse interns had pre high total knowledge level. As observed at post program and follow up phases the total knowledge level was improved markedly. Furthermore, there was a highly statistically significant difference among nurse interns regarding role transition knowledge and role perception of nurse intern throughout program phases. Moreover, minority of nurse interns had high roles perception level at preprogram phase. As observed, at post program phase the nurse interns' high roles perception level was improved markedly in all roles. While some declines occurred in follow up phase however the levels remained significantly high compared with preprogram phase.

Also there were highly statistically significant differences in all roles levels as well as the total role among nurse interns throughout program phases. Furthermore, there was a positive effect of transition knowledge in improving roles perception throughout program phases among nurse interns. These confirm the research hypothesis. Finally, nurse interns total transition knowledge score was a positive dependent predicator for the score of total roles perception immediate post, and follow up transition program.

Recommendation

Based on the results of the present study following recommendations are suggested:

- Implementation of an educational program for internship student's nurses on nursing process
- Further attention to academic preparation of nursing interns to promote their perceptions about role transition.
- Developing and implementing comprehensive nurse interns' development and training programs.
- Conducting training program and continuing education for the nurse interns to encouraging activity for reducing barriers to patient education. .
- Conduct an orientation program for nurse students before internship program and before each training period to explain objectives, roles and responsibilities and discuss nurse students' expectation
- Promote collaboration between hospital staff and faculty staff to facilitate nurse students' induction to real work world through support, empowerment and motivation in clinical area.

Further studies are suggested as:
- Relationship between role transition process and stress among nurse students.
- Assess the clinical learning needs of nurse intern periodically and develop a training program for them to the challenges facing in clinical practice.
- Future areas of inquiry include extending study to other institutions, to assess whether the same role transition can be identified, as well as if similar discrepancies are observed between nurse intern and nurses' role perceptions and their actions.
- A future research must be made to improve perceptions of nursing interns about role transition.

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