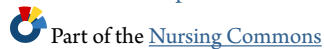

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**GRADUATE NURSE TRANSITION
PROGRAMS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THEIR
PERCEIVED EFFICACY**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the
degree of Doctor of Nursing by**

**Ce (Cecilia) Kealley, RN, BaSc (HProm),
Grad Dip (HSM), M (HSM)**

**School of Nursing
The University of Notre Dame, Australia, Fremantle**

2012

STATEMENT OF SOURCES

This thesis is my own work and contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution. To the best of my knowledge the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis. All research procedures reported in the thesis have received the approval of the relevant Ethics Committee.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This doctoral thesis is dedicated to my parents, who worked hard to ensure my siblings and I had the opportunities they did not. Were they still alive, I know their pride in me achieving this level of academia would have been immeasurable.

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ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AIN	Assistant in Nursing
ANF	Australian Nursing Federation
ANMC	Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council
CNM/S/C	Clinical Nurse Manager/ Specialist/ Consultant
DoHA	Department of Health and Ageing
ED	Emergency Department
EN	Enrolled Nurse
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
GNC	Graduate Nurse Connect
GNP	Graduate Nurse Program
GRN	Graduate Registered Nurse
HWA	Health Workforce Australia
ICN	International Council of Nurses
ICU	Intensive Care Unit
LOS	Length of Stay
N³ET	National Nursing and Nursing Education Taskforce
NBWA	Nurses Board of Western Australia
NHPPD	Nursing Hours per Patient Day
NHWT	National Health Workforce Taskforce

NMBA	Nurses and Midwives Board of Australia
NMBWA	Nurses and Midwives Board of Western Australia
NMO	Nursing and Midwifery Office
OMR	Optical Mark Recognition
PCA	Patient Care Assistant
RN	Registered Nurse
SDE	Staff Development Educator
SDN	Staff Development Nurse
SRN	Senior Registered Nurse
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
UWA	University of Western Australia
WA	Western Australia
WACHS	Western Australian Country Health Service
WHO	World Health Organisation

ABSTRACT

This research compares the findings of a survey questionnaire sent to 858 newly graduated Registered Nurses (RNs) in 2010, with those from a similar study conducted 10-years previously. The purpose of the present was threefold. Firstly, to investigate how current transition programs compared to those of 10-years ago; second, to gain insight into how well formal programs assisted the transition of the novice nurse into the workforce; and thirdly, to examine what effect transition programs have for making decisions to remain in the nursing workforce.

A mixed methods triangulation design was selected to investigate the research questions. Additional questions to those used in 2000 were incorporated into the study to determine the degree to which a supportive program may have had an effect on the novice RN's intended career trajectory. A small web-based survey of graduate nurse coordinators was utilised to corroborate selected aspects of participant findings.

Findings indicated that the novice nurses' experiences differed on several measures in the period between the two studies. The 2010 nurses indicated that a robust transition program was conducive to becoming a confident and competent practitioner. Adequate and appropriate support was found to be the most consistent theme respondents perceived as necessary for satisfactory transition. Data revealed that current programs are much more structured, and that nurses are more satisfied with their efficacy. The research findings also demonstrated that supportive transition programs positively influence the nurse's career pathway, and their tenure within the nursing workforce. Due to the increase in the complexity of nursing science, findings also indicated that undergraduate education was not able to

comprehensively prepare the student nurse for all aspects of nursing practice.

Suggestions are presented for addressing this concern.

To ensure that all nurses graduating from universities as a Registered Nurse are appropriately supported in becoming competent practitioners, a mandatory period of transition ought to be considered; one based on a robust framework and comprehensive guidelines. This research provides a platform for the development of such guidelines.