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Examining the Relationship of Transformational Leadership and New Graduate Nurse Turnover Intention During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Findings Summary

Due to the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic and the progressive shortage of nurses across Canada, it is vital to investigate methods to retain nurses in our organizations as well as the profession. New graduate nurses are particularly vulnerable to attrition due to the typical stressors of transition to a professional role (Duchscher, 2009; Duchscher et al., 2021; Sessions et al., 2021) as well as the problematic nature of the clinical environment created by COVID-19 (Duchscher et al., 2021). The current study aimed to examine transformational leadership of nursing leadership and new graduate nurses' turnover intention and organizational commitment. An online survey was conducted from March 2023 – May 2023 and was distributed to prospective participants. The survey included the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio & Bass, 2004), the Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer et al., 1993), and the Turnover Intention Scale-6 (Bothma & Roodt, 2013) seeking to examine the three variables of interest in the study. Social media was the main source of recruitment along with the distribution of emails and announcements through universities in southwestern Ontario. 106 participants took part in the study, all of whom were new graduate nurses who obtained their registered nurse license with the College of Nurses of Ontario between March 2020 and February 2023. Results indicated the majority of participants intend to leave their positions with the highest intention to leave among participants that obtained their registered nursing license between March 2020 and August 2020. The study showed a weak negative correlation between transformational leadership and turnover intention indicating as the presence of transformational leadership behaviours increases turnover intention of new graduate nurses will decrease. Continuance commitment had the highest mean score of the three measures of organizational commitment. Indicating that new graduate nurses feel most inclined to stay with their organization due to the financial strain associated with leaving. Improving the skills surrounding transformational leadership may help to retain nurses in their position. Nursing leadership should be equipped with the best leadership skills using the nursing model to promote healthy workplaces that encourage intention to stay among new-graduate nurses. The results of this study should be used to formulate strategies for retaining nurses for the future of the nursing profession.