

"Critical investigation, of nurse mentors' perceptions of their preparation for mentorship practice"

Ms Anna Chrysafi, Dr Andreas Charalambous

Cyprus

Session 4C

13/3/2010

Mentoring has become a high profile topic in business, press and nursing and it found to have its place in teacher preparation and medical profession. (Smith & West Breeham 1993, Tomlinson, 1995, Freeman, 1997). It has also associations with the personal and professional development of individuals. Mentors are a key to the future of nursing professionalism (Cooper, 1990). The aim of the present study was to investigate whether registered nurses were satisfied about their role as mentors and to identify the weaknesses and strengths between policy making and practice.

A qualitative descriptive study was employed using semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion interviews was used as well. Ten registered nurses with experiences acting as mentors were interviewed. Focus groups had five to six participants. Two registered nurses were interviewed as a pilot study and a focus group discussion was used as a pilot. Results revealed that the majority of mentors perceived that not only a preparation is necessary to undertake their role as mentors but also they suggested the content of such preparation. Nearly all the participants stated they had inadequate preparation for that role.

Various researchers and policy makers and professional bodies have been reported on mentors' preparation. The UKCC's announced recommendations on "Fitness for Practice" (1999) the centrality of which is about the professional learning support to ensure fitness for practice, addressed the necessity of mentors and assessors preparation. It is also recognised that for mentor schemes to develop, mentors need some sort of development activity themselves (Garvey B and Alfred G. 2000). The significant changes in pre-registration nurse education, illustrate the need to provide detailed preparation and continuous support to ensure that mentors feel confident and effective in their role. (Hyatt SA, Brown L. Lip A, 2008). Furthermore, results also shown that workload is a major factor in relations to understaffing regarding nurses in the clinical area.