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Report of Findings from the **2001 Employers Survey**

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**National Council
of State Boards of Nursing, Inc.**

Research Services

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National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc.

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J.S.
L.C.

Executive Summary

Empiric evidence from National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) RN practice analyses has demonstrated that associate degree and baccalaureate degree graduates are hired into the same types of positions and perform the same tasks within their first six months of practice; however, the employers of entry-level nurses have not been systematically surveyed about their actual hiring and employment practices. This survey addressed those practices and also asked employers to rate new RNs and LPNs on their preparation for various practice tasks.

Specific Research Questions

1. Do employers prefer hiring newly licensed nurses with specific types of educational preparation?
2. Do employers prefer hiring or promoting experienced nurses with specific types of educational preparation?
3. Do employers differentiate RN job descriptions, pay scales, or job performance expectations by educational preparation?
4. Do employers perceive newly licensed nurses to be adequately prepared for entry-level practice?
5. How do employer perceptions of preparation for practice compare to those of newly licensed RNs and LPNs?

Survey Tool

A survey was specifically created for this study.

Section One contained four demographic questions for the nursing administrator completing the survey.

Section Two was composed of questions related to the numbers of entry-level nurses hired in the last 12 months, their educational preparation, and the preference of the respondent's employing institution for graduates of one or more types of nursing education programs.

Section Three asked respondents to rate the preparation of newly licensed nurses for specific practice duties. The respondents were asked to provide ratings for the newly licensed nurses they had hired within the past 12 months.

Section Four of the survey contained questions about preferences when hiring or promoting nurses with experience beyond entry-level.

Section Five asked about the desired "skill mix" of the respondent's employing institution, and about any differentiation of job descriptions, pay scales, or job performance expectations by educational preparation.

Rating Scale Used

A rating scale of "Yes, definitely," "Yes, somewhat," or "No" was used for selected survey questions

because the literature has demonstrated that the five-point “Excellent” to “Poor” scale and other similar scales tend to demonstrate a ceiling effect, i.e., most respondents answer Very Good or Excellent even when they are actually not satisfied. This scale has been found to overcome that tendency and is commonly used by the well-known Picker Commonwealth Foundation in its patient satisfaction surveys. The scale is generally converted to dichotomous designations with “Yes, definitely” considered the desired answer and the percent of the sum of the “Yes, somewhat” and “No” responses representing “problems” or “opportunities for improvement.”

Sample

Surveys were sent to 993 acute care facilities and 509 nursing homes from across the United States. Twenty acute care facilities were randomly selected from each state’s listing in the *2000 American Hospital Association (AHA) Guide to Acute Care Facilities*. Ten nursing homes were randomly selected from those listed for each state in a database of federally certified nursing homes downloaded from the Medicare Web site. The survey was addressed to the nursing administrator of each facility.

Survey Process

A five-stage mailing process was used to collect data. A letter was sent announcing the arrival of the survey and explaining its purpose. The survey was sent five days after the letter. One week after the initial

survey mailing, a reminder postcard was sent to all participants. A second postcard was mailed a week later to non-respondents. Another survey, cover letter and return envelope was mailed to continued non-respondents two weeks following the second postcard.

Results

Return Rates

Of the total 1,502 surveys mailed to nursing administrators, 70 were returned with bad addresses. A total of 798 surveys were returned for an overall 56% return rate. Nursing administrators from 513 acute care facilities and 241 nursing homes returned surveys. Forty of the respondents indicated that they worked in “other” types of facilities.

Respondent Demographics

The majority of the respondents (57.7% overall, 44% acute care, and 86.7% long-term care) reported holding the title of director. The respondents reported an average of 13 years (SD 8.6 years) in management, and 5.6 years (SD 6 years) in their current positions.

Hiring of Newly Licensed Nurses by Respondents

Of those responding to the survey, 68.1% reported hiring ADN graduates in the past 12 months, 49.7% reported hiring BSN graduates, and 57.8% of the respondents reported hiring LPN/VNs. The respondents’ institutions had hired a total of 4,263 ADN graduates, 2,804 BSN graduates, and 2,057 LPN/VNs. On average 5.7 ADN (SD 12.3), 3.6 BSN (SD 10.5), and 2.6 LPN/VN (SD 5.2) newly licensed graduates had been hired in the past 12 months.

Educational Level Preferences When Hiring Newly Licensed Nurses

Overall, only 1.5% of the respondents reported requiring* a BSN for all nursing positions; 2.5% reported requiring a BSN for some specific positions. Sixteen percent reported having a preference** for a specific type or types of educational preparation when hiring newly licensed RNs. Fifteen percent of all respondents favored graduates with a BSN.

Adequacy of Educational Preparation

Respondents were asked to rate the adequacy of preparation of the newly licensed nurses hired by their facilities. They rated new RNs on 14 specific practice setting tasks and the LPN/VNs on 10 tasks. They were asked to provide ratings of “Yes, definitely,” “Yes, somewhat,” or “No.”

Ratings from the employers followed a pattern similar to that formed by a recent group of new nurses (*Smith & Crawford, 2002*), but were much lower for every variable. The highest employer rating for new RNs (43%) was for “Administer medications by common routes.” All of the other RN ratings fell below 40% with four of the ratings falling below 20%. The lowest rated activities were “Respond to emergency situations” (11%), “Supervise care provided by others” (13%), “Perform psychomotor skills” (19%) and “Recognize abnormal diagnostic lab findings” (19%).

The ratings provided by the employers for newly licensed LPN/VNs were much lower than those given by a recent group of new LPN/VNs (*Smith & Crawford, 2002*).

The highest LPN/VN rating was 36% for “Administer medications by common routes,” and six of the nine remaining tasks were rated below 20% or lower.

The employers were asked if the various groups of newly licensed nurses were prepared to provide safe, effective care. “Yes, definitely” ratings were given to ADN graduates by 35% of respondents, to BSN graduates by 40%, to diploma graduates by 45%, and to LPN/VN graduates by 30%.

Preferences When Hiring or Promoting Experienced Nurses

Respondents were much more likely to express a preference for BSN graduates when hiring experienced nurses for management or RN specialty positions. Fifty-six percent of respondents had a preference when hiring for management positions, with 92% of those preferring BSN graduates. Forty-nine percent had a preference when hiring for specialty positions such as patient educators or care coordinators and 90% of those preferred nurses with baccalaureate degrees. Overall, 37% of respondents reported preferring to hire experienced nurses holding certification.

Desired “Skill Mix”

Very few (8.3%) employer respondents reported having a desired skill mix of ADN/diploma to BSN prepared nurses. The 23 respondents who reported a desired mix, reported desiring an average of 45% BSN prepared nurses. More of the respondents expressed a desired percent of LPN/VNs (38.6%). Overall they desired an average of 33% LPN/VNs.

*Setting-specific policy or RN job descriptions required that all RNs have a BSN.

**Nurses with certain types of degrees were desired but not required.

Differentiation of RN Practice

Only about a fourth of the respondents reported differentiating RN practice by educational preparation and they most frequently did so with different pay scales (19%).

Conclusions

Data from this study support the following conclusions:

1. Few employers have a preference for certain types of educational preparation when hiring new nurses. They are much more likely to have a preference for BSN graduates when hiring experienced nurses into management or specialty positions. Very few employers have a desired “skill mix” of ADN/diploma to BSN RNs. They are much more likely to have a desired percentage of LPN/VN positions. Only about a fourth of facilities differentiate RN practice according to type of educational preparation, and those are most likely to do so only monetarily, and not with different job descriptions or performance expectations.
2. Health care employers perceive that newly licensed RNs are not fully prepared for basic practice setting tasks. They view them as especially deficient in recognizing abnormal physical and diagnostic findings, responding to emergencies, supervising care provided by others, and performing psychomotor skills.
3. Employers perceive newly licensed LPN/VNs to be inadequately prepared for the majority of listed basic tasks.

REFERENCES

Smith, J., & Crawford, L. (2002). *Report of the Findings of the Practice and Professional Issues Survey*. Chicago: National Council of State Boards of Nursing.

Report of Findings from the 2001 Employers Survey

Background of Study

Empiric evidence from National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) RN practice analyses has demonstrated that associate degree and baccalaureate degree graduates are hired into the same types of positions and perform the same tasks within their first six months of practice; however, the employers of entry-level nurses have not been systematically surveyed about their actual hiring and employment practices. Newly licensed nurses and their employers are in a unique position to provide information relevant to both these issues.

The results of a recent survey of newly licensed RNs and LPNs (*Smith & Crawford, 2002*) asked respondents to evaluate their preparation

for various practice tasks. Results indicated variable preparation for the realities of practice with less than 60% of the respondents expressing complete satisfaction with their educational preparation on more than half of the variables. This survey asked employers to rate new RNs and LPNs on the same variables allowing correlation of the two sets of data for validation and understanding. The *2001 Employers Survey* was performed December 2001 through January 2002.

The findings from the *2001 Employer Survey* are reported here in the third of a series of monographs. These research briefs provide the means to quickly disseminate NCSBN research findings.

Methodology

This section provides a description of the methodology used to conduct a survey of employers of nurses. Descriptions of the sample selection and data collection procedures are provided, as well as information about response rates, data collection instrument, assurance of confidentiality, and the degree to which participants were representative of the population of employers.

Specifically, the research questions were:

1. Do employers prefer hiring newly licensed nurses with specific types of educational preparation?
2. Do employers prefer hiring or promoting experienced nurses with specific types of educational preparation?
3. Do employers differentiate RN job descriptions, pay scales, or job performance expectations by educational preparation?
4. Do employers perceive newly licensed nurses to be adequately prepared for entry-level practice?
5. How do employer perceptions of preparation for practice compare to those of newly licensed RNs and LPNs?

Sample Selection and Data Collection Procedures

The *2001 Employers Survey* was a non-experimental, descriptive study of employers of newly licensed nurses. A stratified random sample of 1,502 employing facilities was selected, and stratified by type of setting and by area of the country. Surveys were sent to 993 acute care facilities and 509 nursing homes

from across the United States. Twenty acute care facilities were randomly selected from each state's listing in the *2000 American Hospital Association (AHA) Guide to Acute Care Facilities*. Ten nursing homes were randomly selected from those listed for each state in a database of federally certified nursing homes downloaded from the Medicare Web site. The survey was addressed to the nursing administrator of each facility.

A five-stage mailing process was used to collect data. A letter was sent announcing the arrival of the survey and explaining its purpose. The survey was sent five days after the letter. One week after the initial survey mailing a reminder postcard was sent to all participants. A second postcard was mailed a week later to non-respondents. Another survey, cover letter and return envelope was mailed to continued non-respondents two weeks following the second postcard.

A total of 70 surveys were sent to bad addresses. Responses were received from 798 overall respondents for a 56% response rate. Five hundred and thirteen of the respondents identified their agencies as acute care, and 241 reported working in long-term care facilities. Forty of the respondents reported that their agencies fell into another category.

Data Collection Instrument

A survey was created specifically for this study.

Section One contained four demographic questions for the

nursing administrator completing the survey.

Section Two was composed of questions related to the numbers of entry-level nurses hired in the last 12 months, their educational preparation, and the preference of the respondent's employing institution for graduates of one or more types of nursing education programs.

Section Three asked respondents to rate the preparation of newly licensed nurses for specific practice duties. The respondents were asked to provide ratings for newly licensed nurses hired within the past 12 months.

Section Four contained questions about preferences when hiring or promoting nurses with experience beyond entry-level.

Section Five asked about the desired "skill mix" of the respondent's employing institution, and about any differentiation of job descriptions, pay scales, or job performance expectations by educational preparation.

Rating Scale Used

A rating scale of "Yes, definitely," "Yes, somewhat," or "No" was used for selected survey questions because the literature has demonstrated that the five-point "Excellent" to "Poor" scale and other similar scales tend to demonstrate a ceiling effect, i.e., most respondents answer Very Good or Excellent even when they are actually not satisfied. This scale has been found to overcome that tendency and is commonly used by the well-known Picker Commonwealth Foundation in its patient satisfaction surveys. The scale is

generally converted to dichotomous designations with "Yes, definitely" considered the desired answer and the percent of the sum of the "Yes, somewhat" and "No" responses representing "problems" or "opportunities for improvement."

Confidentiality

All potential participating facilities were promised confidentiality with regard to their participation and their responses. Pre-assigned code numbers were used to facilitate cost-effective follow-up mailings and for merging data files generated from scannable and non-scannable data. However, files containing mailing information were kept separate from the data files. The study protocol was reviewed by NCSBN's executive director for compliance with organizational guidelines for research studies involving human subjects.

Representativeness of Sample

The sample for this study was selected to maximize returns from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Of the nursing administrators returning surveys, 513 reported working in acute care facilities (about 54% of the acute care sample), and 241 reported working in nursing homes (approximately 50% of the nursing home sample). Forty of the respondent nursing administrators reported working in "other" types of facilities. Representative numbers of surveys were returned from every area of the country.

Summary

A data collection instrument was disseminated to 1,502 employers of newly licensed nurses selected at random from among all employing facilities in the United States. A 54% response rate was obtained. Seven hundred and ninety-eight employers participated in the study.

Survey Findings

Information was obtained about those responding to the survey on behalf of their institutions, the hiring preferences of their institutions, and the perceived adequacy of preparation of newly licensed nurses.

Respondent Demographics

Most respondents held administrative positions in their institutions (see Table 1). The majority of the respondents (57.7% overall, 44% acute care, and 86.7% long-term care) reported holding the title of director. Respondents reported an average of 13 years (SD 8.6 years) in management (see Table 2), and 5.6 years (SD 6.1 years) in their current positions (see Table 3).

Hiring of Newly Licensed Nurses by Respondents

Of those responding to the survey, 68.1% of employers reported hiring ADN graduates in the past 12 months, 49.7% reported hiring BSN graduates, and 57.8% of the respon-

	Overall		Acute Care		LTC	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Vice President	26.2	208	37.7	193	2.1	5
Director	57.7	458	44.1	226	86.7	208
Manager	6.2	49	8.0	41	2.1	5
Assistant Mgr	1.5	12	2.0	10	0.8	2
Supervisor	1.5	12	1.8	9	0.4	1
Other	6.9	55	6.5	33	7.9	19

dents reported hiring LPN/VNs (see Table 4). Of those employers hiring new BSN graduates, most were acute care facilities. Only 24% of long-term facilities hired BSN graduates during the past 12 months. Both acute care and long-term facilities hired newly licensed LPN/VNs.

The respondents' institutions had hired a total of 4,263 ADN graduates, 2,804 BSN graduates, and 2,057 LPN/VNs (see Table 5). On average across all responding institutions, 5.7 ADN (SD 12.3), 3.6 BSN (SD 10.5), and 2.6 LPN/VN (SD 5.2) newly licensed graduates had been hired in the past 12 months. Although acute care facilities hired the largest numbers of new graduates in all categories, long-term care facilities hired more LPN/VNs than RNs.

Educational Level Preferences When Hiring Newly Licensed Nurses

Overall, only 1.5% of respondents required* a BSN for all entry-level nursing positions and 2.5% reported requiring a BSN for some entry-level positions (see Table 6).

*Setting-specific policies or RN job descriptions required that all RNs have a BSN.

Table 2. Years in Management

	Overall	Acute	LTC
n	794	512	240
Range	0-63	0-40	0-63
Average	13.4	14.3	12.1
SD	8.6	8.0	9.6

Table 3. Years in Current Position

	Overall	Acute	LTC
n	795	512	241
Range	0-39	0-30	0-39
Average	5.6	6.1	4.9
SD	6.1	6.2	6.0

Table 4. Facilities that Hired Newly Licensed Nurses in Past 12 Months

	Overall		Acute Care		LTC	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
ADN	68.1	543	78.0	400	49.4	119
BSN	49.7	396	62.8	322	24.1	58
LPN/VN	57.8	461	56.0	287	63.5	153

Table 5. Numbers of Nurses Hired

	Overall	Acute Care	LTC
ADN			
Sum	4263	3929	280
Range	0-140	0-140	0-13
Average	5.7	8.2	1.2
SD	12.3	14.7	1.9
BSN			
Sum	2804	2645	127
Range	0-100	0-100	0-8
Average	3.6	5.3	0.5
SD	10.5	12.8	1.3
LPN/VN			
Sum	2057	1531	483
Range	0-70	0-70	0-30
Average	2.6	3.1	2.0
SD	5.2	6.1	3.0

Table 6. Requirement for BSN for Entry-Level RN Positions

	Overall		Acute Care		LTC	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes, all positions	1.5	12	1.6	8	0.4	1
Yes, for some positions	2.5	20	3.3	17	0.8	2

Table 7. Preference for Newly Licensed Nurse Educational Preparation

	Overall		Acute Care		LTC	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes, have a preference	16.7	132	21.3	109	9.1	22
Facility prefers:						
ADN	27.3	44	22.1	27	46.0	17
BSN	74.5	120	82.0	100	51.4	19
Diploma	17.4	28	14.8	18	24.3	9

One hundred and thirty-two (16%) employers reported having a preference** for a specific type or types of educational preparation when hiring newly licensed RNs (see Table 7). One hundred and twenty, or 15% of total respondents, favored graduates with a BSN, 5% favored graduates with an ADN, and 4% favored graduates with a diploma.

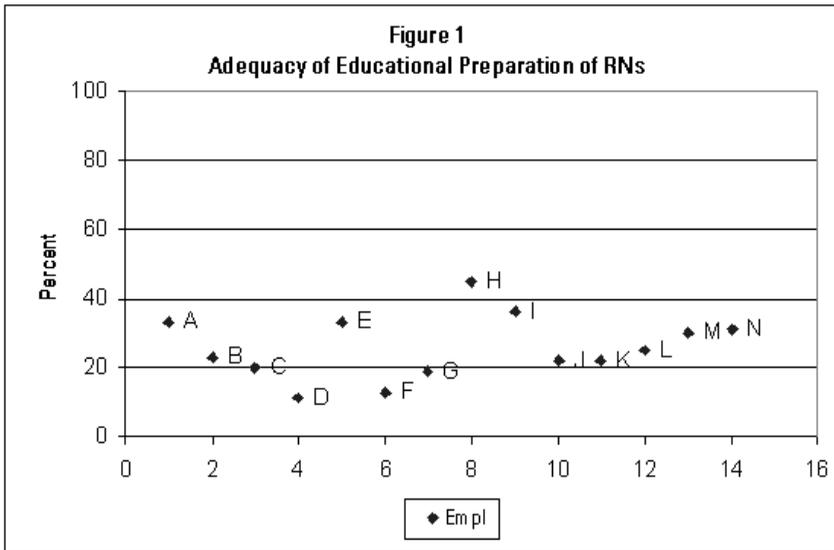
Adequacy of Educational Preparation

Respondents were asked to rate the adequacy of preparation of the newly licensed nurses hired by their facilities. They rated the new RNs on 14 specific practice setting tasks and the LPN/VNs on 10 tasks. They were asked to provide ratings of "Yes, definitely," "Yes, somewhat," or "No".

Ratings from the employers for newly licensed RNs followed a pattern similar to that found in a study of newly licensed nurses (Smith & Crawford, 2002), but were much lower for every variable. The highest employer rating (43%) for new RNs was for "Administer medications by common routes" (see Figure 1). All of the other RN ratings fell below 40% with four of the ratings falling below 20%. The lowest rated activities were "Respond to emergency situations," (11%) "Supervise care provided by others," (13%), "Perform psychomotor skills" (19%) and "Recognize abnormal diagnostic lab findings" (19%).

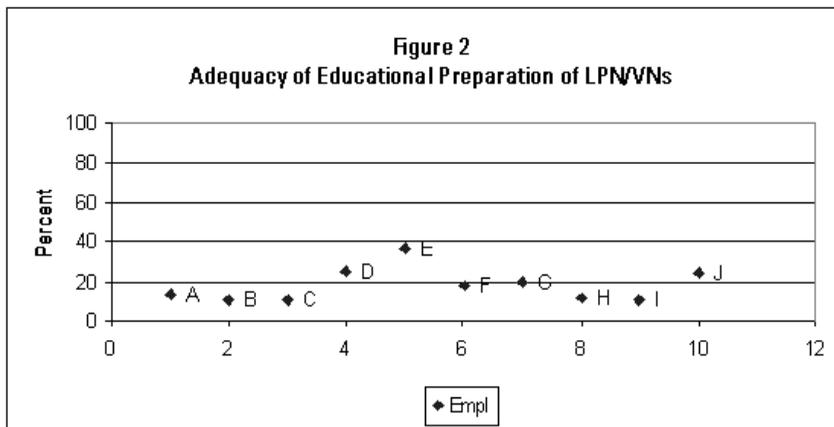
The ratings provided by the employers for newly licensed LPN/VNs were much lower than those given by the new LPN/VNs in a recent study (Smith & Crawford, 2002) (see Figure 2). The highest

**Nurses with specific types of degrees were desired but not required.



Key for Figure 1
Practice Setting Tasks - RN

- A Perform thorough physical assessments
- B Recognize abnormal physical findings
- C Recognize abnormal diagnostic lab findings
- D Respond to emergency situations
- E Create a plan of care for patients
- F Supervise care provided by others
- G Perform psychomotor skills
- H Administer medications by common routes
- I Do the math necessary for med admin
- J Work with machinery used for patient care
- K Assess the effectiveness of treatments
- L Document a legally defensible account of care provided
- M Teach patients
- N Work effectively within a health care team



Key for Figure 2
Practice Setting Tasks - LPN

- A Perform physical assessments
- B Recognize abnormal physical findings
- C Guide care provided by others
- D Perform psychomotor skills (i.e., dressing changes, baths, catheterizations, etc.)
- E Administer medications by common routes
- F Do math necessary for medication administration
- G Work with machinery used for patient care (i.e., bed scales, NG suction, etc.)
- H Document a legally defensible account of care provided
- I Teach patients
- J Work effectively within a health care team

LPN/VN rating was 36% for “Administer medications by common routes,” and six of the nine remaining tasks were rated below 20% or lower.

The employers were asked if the various groups of newly licensed nurses were prepared to provide safe, effective care (see Table 8). “Yes, definitely” ratings were given to ADN graduates by 35% of respondents, to BSN graduates by 40%, to diploma graduates by 45%, and to LPN/VN graduates by 30%.

Many respondents were eloquent in their comments. A number felt that newly licensed nurses were ill-prepared for the realities of the practice setting, taking months to train at great expense to their institutions and increase in workload for their mentors. Example comments:

“I find that nurse graduates today are very task oriented. They struggle with putting all the pieces together. They go through

Table 8. Overall Preparation to Provide Safe, Effective Care*

	Overall		Acute Care		LTC	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
ADN	35	206	34	141	40	55
BSN	40	172	39	135	43	29
Diploma	45	59	50	44	34	14
LPN/VN	30	144	30	89	28	46

*Percent of "Yes, definitely"

Table 9. Preference for Bedside Positions – Experienced RN

	Overall		Acute Care		LTC	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes, have a preference	20.4	158	24.3	121	14.8	35
Facility prefers:						
ADN	26.1	46	20.5	27	45.2	19
BSN	78.2	140	85.8	115	55.8	24
Diploma	11.9	21	8.3	11	23.8	10

Table 10. Preference for Management Positions – Experienced RN

	Overall		Acute Care		LTC	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes, have a preference	55.9	422	69.4	334	30.8	72
Facility prefers:						
ADN	10.2	45	4.7	16	35.0	28
BSN	91.6	403	94.8	326	76.3	61
Diploma	4.1	18	2.6	9	11.3	9

Table 11. Preference for Specialty Positions* – Experienced RN

	Overall		Acute Care		LTC	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes, have a preference	48.6	373	60.1	298	28.1	65
Facility prefers:						
ADN	9.8	37	4.0	12	34.3	24
BSN	89.5	341	93.0	278	74.7	53
Diploma	4.2	16	2.0	6	14.3	10

*Specialty positions such as patient education, care coordination, or discharge planning

a preceptorship here for three months...I am finding that it takes almost one year before they see the whole picture of the patient care process."

"We find that most new graduates are not prepared to take on the responsibilities of a staff nurse without extensive orientation and support (regardless of ed. [sic] Preparation)."

One respondent stated that her institution had stopped hiring new RNs because of the financial strain. Many stated that the educational preparation of the nurse was less important than a good attitude, maturity, and health care experience.

Many felt that new nurses had not been exposed to adequate amounts of clinical experience. Several comments included:

"New graduates do not have the clinical experience with the live individuals to do assessments. Some have excellent book knowledge...."

"The graduates and nursing school seniors that I have dealt with the past 10 years are NOT ready to be on their own. They are so inexperienced and unprepared for the real world, whether it be assessment, getting it all together or inserting IVs. They are inadequately prepared."

Preferences When Hiring or Promoting Experienced Nurses

Respondents were much more likely to express a preference for BSN graduates when hiring experienced nurses for management or RN specialty positions (see Tables 9-11). Fifty-six percent of respondents had a preference when hiring for management positions, with 92% of those preferring BSN graduates (see Table 10). Forty-nine percent had a preference when hiring for specialty positions such as patient educators or care coordinators and 90% of those preferred nurses with baccalaureate degrees (see Table 11). Overall, 37% of the respondents reported preferring hiring experienced nurses holding certification (see Table 12).

Desired “Skill Mix”

Very few (8.3%) employer respondents reported having a desired skill mix of ADN/diploma to BSN prepared nurses (see Table 13). The 23 respondents that reported a desired mix, reported desiring an average of 45% BSN graduates. More of the respondents (38.6%) expressed a desired percent of LPN/VNs (see Table 14). Overall they desired an average of 33% LPN/VNs, although long-term care desired an average of 55.6% LPN/VNs.

Differentiation of RN Practice

Only about a fourth of the survey respondents reported differentiating RN practice by educational preparation and they most frequently (19%) did so with different pay scales (see Table 15).

Table 12. Preference for Experienced RNs With Certification

	Overall		Acute Care		LTC	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes, have a preference	37.0	287	47.0	235	17.5	41

Table 13. Desired Skill Mix of RN Staff

	Overall		Acute Care		LTC	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes, have a desired mix	8.3	65	8.3	34	10.9	22
All RNs are BSN	0.8	6	1.0	5		
Desired % of BSNs (ave)	45.1	23	45.6	20	37.5	2

Table 14. Desired Percent of LPN/VNs

	Overall		Acute Care		LTC	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Yes, have a desired %	38.6	298	43.0	213	29.7	70
Desired % of LPN/VNs	33.3	164	26.9	122	55.6	35

Table 15. Differentiated RN Practice

	Overall		Acute Care		LTC	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
No differentiation	74.8	583	74.2	373	74.9	176
Different job descriptions	7.4	58	6.2	31	10.2	24
Different pay scales	19.4	151	20.1	101	18.3	43
Different performance expectations	7.6	59	6.6	33	9.8	23
Other	2.4	19	3.2	16	1.3	3

Summary

Few employers have a preference for certain types of educational preparation or a desired “skill mix” when hiring new nurses. They are much more likely to have a preference for BSN graduates when hiring experienced nurses into management or specialty positions.

Employers perceive newly licensed RNs and LPN/VNs to be inadequately prepared for basic practice setting tasks. RNs are viewed by employers as especially deficient in recognizing abnormal physical and diagnostic findings, responding to emergencies, supervising care provided by others, and performing psychomotor skills. Newly licensed LPN/VNs were perceived to be inadequately prepared for the majority of listed basic tasks.

Conclusions

A stratified random sample of 1,502 employing facilities was surveyed to discover hiring preferences of employers and their perceptions regarding preparedness of newly licensed nurses to practice. An overall response rate of 56% was obtained.

The majority of the respondents (58% overall, 44% acute care, and 87% long-term care) reported holding the title of director. Respondents reported an average of 13 years (SD 8.6 years) in management and 5.6 years (SD 6.1 years) in their current positions.

Few employers have a preference for certain types of educational preparation when hiring new nurses. They are much more likely to have a preference for BSN graduates when hiring experienced nurses into management or specialty positions. Very few have a desired "skill mix" of ADN/diploma to BSN RNs. They are much more likely to have a desired percentage of LPN/VN positions. Only about a fourth of facilities differentiate RN practice according to

type of educational preparation, and those are most likely to do so only monetarily, and not with different job descriptions or performance expectations.

Health care employers perceive that newly licensed RNs are not fully prepared for basic practice setting tasks. They view them as especially deficient in recognizing abnormal physical and diagnostic findings, responding to emergencies, supervising care provided by others, and performing psychomotor skills. Employers perceive newly licensed LPN/VNs to be inadequately prepared for the majority of listed basic tasks.

REFERENCES

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