ABSTRACT

Objective: to analyze the scientific evidence on the processes of hiring nurses in hospitals.

Method: this is a bibliographic and descriptive study, typified as Integrative Literature Review, held in the MEDLINE, Scopus, CINAHL and LILACS information sources, conducted in the period from August 2019 to May 2020 using the Rayyan application for the selection of studies. Results: we identified a total of 298 articles, of which 4 were selected for the sample. We defined two categories: practices adopted for the hiring of nurses and challenges faced in the hiring process. Moreover, two practices were highlighted: an annual and a weekly integration process, both aimed at introducing the institution’s norms, routines, rights and duties, as well as offering training in psychomotor skills. We have perceived challenges, such as the disorganization of reception/integration processes; the absence of institutional protocols for reception/integration; the deficit in the reception of newly hired nurses on the part of veterans and unpreparedness/fear.

Conclusion: this study contributes to nursing care, teaching, and research by providing a set of scientific evidence on the processes of integrating nurses in hospitals and enabling the improvement this process and patient safety.

Descriptors: Nurses; Personnel Staffing and Scheduling; Hospitals; Education Department; Hospital; Inservice Training; Learning.
categorias: práticas adotadas para a admissão de enfermeiros e desafios enfrentados no processo de admissão de enfermeiros. Destacaram-se duas práticas: a realização de um processo de integração anual e um semanal, ambos com o objetivo de apresentar normas, rotinas, direitos e deveres da instituição e oferecer treinamento de habilidades psicomotoras. Perceberam-se como desafios a desorganização dos processos de admissão/integração; a ausência de protocolos institucionais para a admissão/integração; o déficit no acolhimento dos enfermeiros recém-admitidos pelos veteranos e o despreparo/medo. Conclusão: este estudo contribui para a assistência, ensino e pesquisa em enfermagem por fornecer um conjunto de evidências científicas sobre os processos de integração de enfermeiros em hospitais e propiciar a aperfeiçoamento desse processo e a segurança dos pacientes.

Descritores: Enfermeiras e Enfermeiros; Admissão e Escalonamento de Pessoal; Hospitais; Serviço Hospitalar de Educação; Capacitação em Serviço; Aprendizagem.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: analizar la evidencia científica sobre los procesos de contratación de enfermeros en hospitales. Método: se trata de un estudio bibliográfico, descriptivo, del tipo Revisión Integradora de la Literatura, en las fuentes de información MEDLINE, Scopus, CINAHL y LILACS, realizado en el período de agosto de 2019 a mayo de 2020 mediante la aplicación Rayyan para la selección de estudios. Resultados: se identificaron 298 artículos y se seleccionaron 4 para la muestra. Se definieron dos categorías: las prácticas adoptadas para la contratación de enfermeros y los retos a los que se enfrenta el proceso de contratación de enfermeros. Se señalaron dos prácticas: la realización de un proceso de integración anual y uno semanal, ambos con el objetivo de presentar las normas, rutinas, directrices y deberes de la institución y ofrecer una capacitación sobre las habilidades psicomotoras. Se perciben como retos a la desorganización de los procesos de contratación/integración; la ausencia de protocolos institucionales para la contratación / integración; el déficit en la acogida de los enfermeros recién contratados por parte de los veteranos y la falta de preparación/o el miedo. Conclusión: este estudio contribuye a los cuidados de enfermería, a la docencia y a la investigación, aportando un conjunto de evidencias científicas sobre los procesos de integración de enfermeros en hospitales y permitiendo la mejora de este proceso y la seguridad de los pacientes.

Descriptores: Enfermeras y Enfermeros; Admisión y Programación de Personal; Hospitales; Servicio de Educación en Hospital; Capacitación en Servicio; Aprendizaje.
The hospital generally represents a highly complex institution, with numerous technologies, which requires constant attention and excellence in the work of professionals and managers, and the ability to provide best practices for hiring, skills development and talent retention policies.¹-²

Although a positive work environment facilitates the inclusion and permanence of new nursing professionals in the hospital and significantly influences their production and satisfaction, negative experiences have been reported regarding the adaptation of newly hired nurses.³

Newly hired nurses, who aspire to obtain a support system offered by the hospital institution after being hired, are faced with the reality of the work, often feeling isolated and powerlessness in the face of their responsibilities, which leads to a loss of confidence and a feeling of inadequacy.⁴

The literature investigates this setting and is based on theoretical frameworks such as the reality shock theory,⁵ which describes the difficulties and stressors experienced by new nurses during the first year of professional practice,⁶-⁹ as well as the transition theory, based on criteria that address the progression of new nursing professionals, divided into three phases: doing - first three to four months of work; being - four to five months of work; and knowing - from 8 to 12 months of work.⁵

The background knowledge provided by these theories reveals that many nurses do not have enough confidence to experience the practice, placing them in a tenuous position in the first year of work, identified as the most stressful and challenging period of their career.⁶

Newly trained nurses who enter the hospital find situations that lead them to perceive that theoretical knowledge is not enough to perform the activities inherent to their profession, but that they need a set of skills and attitudes developed through trainings, orientations and evaluations, through their qualification weaknesses and unpreparedness often generated by the absence of an
integration program offered by the institution. This is characterized as an educational mechanism, offered from the first months to the first year of work of nurses.\textsuperscript{4,10}

In the scientific literature, the exploration of the processes of hiring nurses in the hospital environment, the existing training programs and their peculiarities in face of the numerous needs presented by this professional are configured as an important gap. The description of integration programs and their functionality, offered to new nursing workers, is also incipient.\textsuperscript{2-4,7-9}

Knowing that the success and quality of nurse integration programs are fundamental criteria for work excellence and employee retention in hospitals, as well as an efficient initiative by employers to develop skills and keep valuable human resources in their companies, there is a need to deepen the scientific literature on this topic in order to understand how these programs are made possible and to propose new possibilities in this context\textsuperscript{4,11}. Thus, the following question emerges: how are the integration/reception programs for newly hired nurses in hospital institutions configured for the development of competencies? The importance of this study is justified in view of the scarcity in scientific exploration of best practices and its fundamentality in view of the excellence of management and care provided by nurses.\textsuperscript{8-9}

**OBJECTIVE**

We intend to analyze the scientific evidence on the processes of hiring nurses in hospitals.

**METHOD**

**Study type**

This is a bibliographic and descriptive study, typified as Integrative Literature Review (ILR), with a qualitative approach, configured by a research method used in Evidence-Based Practice (EBP), which allows the incorporation of evidence in practice. It is known that EBP is a process of discovering, evaluating and applying scientific evidence for the treatment and management of health.\textsuperscript{12}

**Theoretical framework**

We adopted two theoretical-methodological frameworks to structure the present research, in advance, the reality shock\textsuperscript{5} and transition\textsuperscript{5} theories, to explain aspects related to the hiring of newly trained nurses in a hospital environment and to support the methodological path of this integrative review, the Ganong's framework, covering the following steps: selection of the review
question; definition of sampling; definition of the characteristics of primary research; analysis of findings and interpretation of results; and reproduction of the review.¹²

**Process of searching for studies**

Searches were conducted from August 2019 to May 2020, in the PubMed®, Scopus, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) and Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences (LILACS) databases, using the Patient-Intervention-Comparison-Outcomes (PICO) strategy to describe the constituent elements of the following guiding question: “What evidence is available in the literature on the integration/reception programs for newly hired nurses in hospital institutions for the development of competencies?”. The “P” refers to nursing professionals, the “I” refers to the hospital integration/reception process and the “O” refers to the development of competencies, highlighting that the acronym “C” did not apply.


In CINAHL, we identified the controlled descriptors, identified in “Titles/subject” and, in English, “Nursing”, “Novice Nurses”, “Education, Clinical”, “Program Development”, “Hospitals” and “Professional Competence”, elaborating the following strategy: (“Novice Nurses”) AND (“Education, Clinical” OR “Education, Competency-Based”) AND (“Hospitals”).

In LILACS, we identified the controlled descriptors in Descritores em Saúde (DeCS, as per its Portuguese acronym), configuring themselves in “Enfermeiras e Enfermeiros”, “Capacitação em Serviço”, “Hospitais”, “Competência Profissional” and their equivalents, in Spanish and English, with the following strategy: “Enfermeiras e Enfermeiros” AND “Capacitação em Serviço” AND “Hospitales” AND “Competencia Profesional”; “Enfermeros y Enfermeras” AND “Capacitación y Servicio” AND “Hospitales” AND “Competencia Profesional” AND “Nursing” AND “Inservice Training” AND “Hospitals” AND “Professional Competence”.
We included primary studies that prioritized the description of programs for the integration of newly hired nursing professionals in hospital institutions, published between 2009 and May 2020, a time frame justified by the fact that the theme on the development of clinical competencies in nursing has been emphasized in the literature since 2009, in Portuguese, English and Spanish, in scientific journals and available electronically. Moreover, we covered experience reports in order to ensure understanding of the description of the deployments and the development of such programs.

On the other hand, we excluded IRLs, editorials, reviews, case studies, theoretical reflections, dissertations, theses, and monographs, abstracts published in the proceedings of events and studies that addressed the integration of other professional categories.

Selection of studies

Once the search for the studies was performed, three selection phases were completed. The first, carried out by two independent researchers, addressing the screening of articles by evaluating titles and abstracts, through a free web-based review program, single version, called Rayyan Qatar Computing Research Institute (Rayyan QCRI), available at the link https://rayyan.qcri.org/. Rayyan QCRI helps IRL authors to undertake their work quickly, easily and pleasantly and allows the export of studies from a database determined for the program and the exhibition of titles and abstracts with the blindness of the auxiliary researcher, which ensures reliability in the selection of information, accuracy and methodological precision.

In the second selection phase, we analyzed if the studies caused divergences between the researchers and delivered four publications to a third party, responsible for making the decision of inclusion or exclusion from the study. In the last phase, we performed the full reading to define the final sample of this research. It is clarified, since the theme has few published studies, that the analysis of the references of the included articles was accomplished, but without the addition of new manuscripts.

Analysis of findings

The instrument was used to organize the data, addressing the following items: authors; evidence level; source country; language; publication year; objectives; study type; result; and conclusion.

The evidence level of the studies was classified, following the proposal of Melnyk and Fineout-Overhol, among the seven possible. It is defined that the first and highest level considers the
evidence from systematic reviews or the meta-analysis of all relevant randomized clinical trials; the second level considers the evidence derived from at least one well-designed randomized controlled clinical trial; the third encompasses the evidence from clinical trials without randomization; the fourth evidence level covers cohort and case-control studies; the fifth, evidence from the systematic review of descriptive and qualitative studies; the sixth evidence level covers data from a single qualitative descriptive study; and, finally, the seventh considers the researchers’ opinions.

The findings were analyzed using the assumptions of Thematic Analysis\textsuperscript{16}, fulfilling three stages: the pre-analysis, configured by the fluctuating reading of the evidence and organization of the converging information, denominated as record units; then, the material exploration with the detailed grouping of the identified record units; and data treatment, determining the categories.

In line with the ethical and legal aspects of Resolution n° 466/2012, the research was not submitted to the Research Ethics Committee because it is a literature review and does not involve human beings.

The study selection was organized according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses recommendations,\textsuperscript{17} as shown in Figure 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDENTIFICATION</th>
<th>Records identified through database searches (n=298)</th>
<th>Records identified through searches performed in other data sources (n=00)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Records after eliminating duplicate studies (n=261)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Studies selected for full reading (n=261)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Excluded studies (n=223)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Complete studies evaluated for eligibility (n=38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Excluded complete studies (n=34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Studies included in qualitative synthesis (n=04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Studies included in quantitative synthesis (n=0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We considered four primary studies eligible for the final sample of this IRL, shown in Figure 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors, year, language and source</th>
<th>Study type and objective</th>
<th>Results/conclusion/evidence level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moreira, Sampaio, Silva, Chevitarese.11 2016. Portuguese. Brazil</td>
<td>To describe the difficulties and challenges faced by nurses when they were hired in hospital units. unpreparedness; the fear; and the lack of qualification to offer care to the patient, due to the short time of supervised internship at the university. Descriptive study with a qualitative approach.</td>
<td>The difficulties and challenges perceived by nurses were: the lack of qualification to offer care to the patient, due to the short time of supervised internship at the university; the unpreparedness; the fear; and the lack of qualification to offer care to the patient. It was concluded that, when nurses enter an institution, they are faced with situations that lead them to perceive that knowledge alone is not enough, requiring a period of training. Evidence level VI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maguire.18 2013. English. Australia</td>
<td>To describe the structure and content of a hospital hiring program for nurses consisted of a set of classes/expository presentations, carried out by professionals responsible for several health care areas of the institution, with an initial duration of four days of training and reception and follow-up of the nurse for one year. Exploratory study with a qualitative approach.</td>
<td>It was identified that the hospital hiring program for nurses consisted of a set of classes/expository presentations, carried out by professionals responsible for several health care areas of the institution, with an initial duration of four days of training and reception and follow-up of the nurse for one year. It was concluded that a reception and training program is essential for the excellence of care. Evidence level VI.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In view of the findings, we raised two categories: (A) practices adopted for the hiring of nurses and (B) challenges faced in the hiring process. The following practices stood out in the first category:

(1) annual nurse integration program characterized by the application of a program of 20 learning sessions, each lasting 8 hours, held on two Fridays per month, for 12 months, covering three stages: the first, called “knowing”, involves the application of theoretical classes on specific themes for the type of care proposed; the second, called “doing”, covers practical skills training; and the third stage, “being”, involves the evaluation of behavior;

(2) weekly nurse integration programs configured as follows: workers remain from 7:30 am to 5 pm with those responsible for various sectors. On the first day (Monday), newly hired employees take part in institutional integration, which covers workers hired from all areas of the institution, receiving general guidance. On the second day (Tuesday), nurses offer specific theoretical-practical...
training. On the third day (Wednesday), in the laboratory and in the classroom, clinical themes in Nursing are addressed.

On the fourth day (Thursday), nurses undergo practical training in the hospital sectors and watch a motivational video and exhibitions by those responsible for services in different areas of the institution. On the fifth and last day (Friday), the new hires undergo practical training in the sectors.

Another form of weekly integration of nurses\textsuperscript{20} is the application of a socialization program: on the first day, general rules on the operation of the hospital are introduced; on the second day, the professionals take part in the socialization of nursing, when the department’s rules and routines are introduced. From the third day, the new professionals are followed-up in the inpatient clinical units, always supervised by the nurses of Continuing Education, for a week, which can be extended for as long as necessary, depending on the development.

The second category, called “challenges faced in the hiring process”, was characterized by the following difficulties: (1) disorganization of the integration program and absence of institutional protocols\textsuperscript{11,18-20}; (2) deficit in the reception of newly hired nursing professionals on the part of veteran professionals\textsuperscript{11,18-20}; (3) unpreparedness and fear of newly hired nurses.\textsuperscript{11,18-20}

**DISCUSSION**

The scientific production about the integration process of newly hired nurses in hospital institutions from 2009 to 2019 is dated, focusing on the last five years, which demonstrates the recent interest in scientific exploration on the theme,\textsuperscript{21} configured by an incipient sample and low evidence level.

It is justified that, although the promotion of programs for the integration and reception of newly hired nurses in the hospital environment is a fundamental strategy for maintaining the excellence of the processes and nursing care provided, health institutions have a reduced dimension of professionals focused on education, a high rate of employee turnover and difficulty in retaining talent and financial shortfalls, factors that hinder the development of reception and training programs for nursing.\textsuperscript{11,18,20}

The existing challenges regarding the establishment of programs for the integration of newly hired nurses also culminate in the scarcity of scientific research carried out in this area. It is estimated that this setting, associated with the absence of well-designed experimental research, which aims to identify the effectiveness of hospital integration programs aimed at newly hired nurses, confirms the importance of scientific deepening in this theme.\textsuperscript{18}
It is suggested that the preparation of methodologically well-done studies, which address the hospital integration programs of newly hired nurses, may favor the development of protocols, based on evidence, that establish the best practices in this sense, provoke the retention of talents by longer in hospitals and increase patient safety.\textsuperscript{18}

The first category identified in this study addressed the practices adopted regarding the integration process, dividing them into an annual program and weekly integration programs. Annual integration programs are developed by the majority of studies present in the sample,\textsuperscript{11,18,19} considering these to be the most comprehensive training/reception programs due, firstly, to their extended time for follow-up and structured evaluation of nurses and to the possibility of exploring many aspects relevant to the quality and safety of patient care provided.\textsuperscript{18}

An Australian descriptive study analyzed an annual integration program, aimed at nurses recently hired in a hospital, and concluded that closer and prolonged reception and training of the nursing professional, are capable of developing clinical competencies, essential for the excellence of their practice, besides the fact that providing a structured and progressive learning path, with accessible resources, supports the demands existing in clinical practice nowadays.\textsuperscript{18}

These findings are in line with an American, descriptive and qualitative research that addressed the perspective of newly hired nurses regarding the integration and training experienced by them in a hospital. This study concluded that there is a feeling of important insecurity and fear perceived by these professionals, when they finish the undergraduate nursing course, which can constitute a barrier to the quality of their performance, in addition that a reception and training program is capable of minimize this impact, especially when maintained over a one-year period.\textsuperscript{19}

In turn, the integration programs that include the weekly modality focus on the introduction of general guidelines on the hospital institution and on the dynamics of teamwork and coexistence, attributing the responsibility for their technical training to the sectors of origin of each nurse.\textsuperscript{20}

A qualitative national study addressed the description of a weekly training and reception program for newly hired nurses, structured by expository classes, with traditional didactics. In the participants’ perception, this program, outlined by lectures, only had a positive effect on the development of their cognitive, psychomotor and affective skills for nursing when a support offered by veteran nurse professionals was established, who took over the lectures sequentially and the follow-up of each new nurse, even in the face of existing difficulties to base them on their practice.\textsuperscript{20}

Despite the fact that both programs share the intention of sensitizing professionals, especially regarding the institution’s norms, routines, rights and duties and, subsequently, training the individual’s psychomotor skills, through traditional teaching mechanisms\textsuperscript{11,18-20}, there is a need to
rethink the didactic strategies adopted in order to articulate knowledge and practices, as well as to expand the technical-scientific knowledge in a reflective way, in an attempt to develop and retain talents in nursing.³

Thus, we propose the constant search for investment and improvement of the integration/reception programs for newly hired nursing professionals and the investment in the improvement of more innovative and meaningful educational actions, which implement the articulation between theory and practice, in a participatory way, with a view to contributing to the quality of care and to the physical and mental health of these workers, who will carry out their activities with more security and tranquility.²²

Therefore, it is of great relevance for hospitals that there is investment in continuing education services and in well-designed integration programs that align the conduct of new workers to the institution, motivating them for professional growth and appreciation, through new educational technologies, capable of breaking the barrier of merely traditional teaching, with emphasis, for example, on teaching and learning strategies, such as clinical simulation, which has been positively evaluated as an alternative to improve hospital training processes.²³

We listed the main challenges faced by the new nurses in the integration process in the hospital, such as the disorganization of the integration program and the absence of institutional protocols, the deficit in the reception of newly hired nurses by veteran nursing professionals and their unpreparedness and fear.

The absence and the uncertainty of the structure of a program for welcoming, integrating, receiving, training and evaluating new workers are configured as worrying factors for the quality of the processes performed by a hospital. We highlight that this condition, added to the absence of care protocols, can harm the care offered by Nursing to patients and hinder the management and organization of processes.²⁰

In most hospitals, the integration processes of newly hired nurses are not well-structured yet, mainly due to the insufficiency of protocols and the difficulties of leadership and management in Nursing to conduct and evaluate them in a practical and efficient way, being this is an important weakness that should generate debates, reflections and changes regarding the development of nurses.²⁰

It is advised that the welcoming, integration, reception, training and evaluation program of newly hired nursing professionals must configure a process carried out in a systematic way with the aim of promoting the adaptation of these professionals to the institution and developing skills and competencies, thus favoring the propagation of norms, routines, procedures and the follow-up of health care guidelines for the provision of quality care.²
In this study, we have recognized the deficit identified in the reception on the part of veteran nurses in relation to newly hired nursing professionals in the hospital setting as a challenge. Newly hired nurses may encounter a barrier regarding the approach of veteran nurses and need to perform, without follow-up, their health care activities, which exacerbates the fear and the anxiety of these professionals.20

It is justified that most veteran nurses working in hospital settings did not go through well-defined and structured welcoming and reception programs; therefore, this lack of standard and institutional alignment can trigger an important deficit in the reception of new co-workers, when reflecting the absence of reception that was experienced.2

We note that the absence of a positive reception for newly hired nurses triggers dissatisfaction, demotivation, insecurity and anxiety, increasing the turnover of these professionals in hospital institutions and undermining the quality of clinical care offered.2

The newly hired nurses’ unpreparedness and fear also stood out as challenges. In a descriptive study, conducted with Nursing professionals who were recently hired in hospital units, coming from a Graduate Course in Nursing, in Rio de Janeiro, it was pointed out that the existence of a continuing education and integration program for these professionals, well-structured and associated with protocols that can guide the clinical conduct and orientations of the most experienced professionals, reduces fear and insecurity.11

It is evaluated that the professional training of nurses must ensure minimum learning experiences so that they can safely care for all types of patients; however, even if training is improved, fear and insecurity in the face of novelty are inherent to people in general, which, in itself, justifies the importance of investing and developing programs for the follow-up and development of newly hired nurses, welcoming them and improving their competencies.24

As for the main limitations to carry out this study, we should highlight the incipience of national and international scientific research on the theme and the low evidence level identified in the selected manuscripts, which demonstrate the need for further investigation of the relevant literature and the development of new studies, especially experimental, with the intention of comparing the effects of different integration experiences for newly hired nurses.

Based on the findings of this IRL, we have added scientific evidence capable of substantiating and clarifying the existing setting with respect to the programs for the integration of newly hired nurses in hospital environments, in order to establish protocols and standards of best practices in view of this need, aiming at the development of competencies in Nursing and the establishment of patient safety.
CONCLUSION

We have highlighted two main practices in the process of integrating newly hired nurses in hospital institutions: an annual integration program and a weekly integration program, which converge to raise awareness of the institution’s norms, routines, rights and duties, followed by a psychomotor skills training, based, in general, on traditional teaching and learning strategies.

We have identified challenges in this process, such as the disorganization of the integration program and the absence of institutional protocols, the deficit in the reception of newly hired nurses on the part of veterans, unpreparedness and fear.

This study contributes to research, care, teaching and the advancement of knowledge in Nursing by providing a synthesis of the scientific evidence on the programs existing in hospital institutions for the integration of newly hired nurses, capable of providing the improvement of this process and positively impact patient safety.

CONTRIBUTIONS

We inform that all authors contributed to the conception of the article, collection, analysis and discussion of data, as well as in the writing and the critical review of the content with intellectual contribution and in the approval of the final version of the study.

CONFLICTING INTERESTS

Nothing to declare.

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