# Reasons why novice nurses leave the nursing profession: a qualitative approach

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#### BACKGROUND

Professional turnover among novice nurses is a current issue. The reasons for professional turnover vary. Considering the worldwide nursing shortages, it is imperative to understand why novice nurses *"Create a bit of acceptance in the* workplace, I would say. Well, so that nurses and nursing assistants accept each other's disabilities, so to say. Instead of having to carry on."



This study aimed to unravel former

are leaving the nursing profession. This study therefore explores novice nurses' motives for leaving.

"And that you realise that you've made mistakes, because you didn't have time to think, because you have to act very quickly... because there's no time."

## RESULTS

Six main themes emerged from the analysis.

- 1. Lack of challenge; no support in, or discouragement from, abstract thinking.
- 2. Lack of passion; no feeling of passion for patient care.
- **3**. Lack of perceived competence;

# METHODS

A phenomenological qualitative study using semi-structured interviews was done with 17 Dutch former novice nurses who had decided to leave the nursing profession within two years after graduation. Data was collected and analysed in an iterative process using thematic analysis.

novice nurses' experiences and the circumstances that contributed to them leaving the nursing profession or career.



Novice nurses experienced stress and anxiety, due to the combination of personal characteristics, like uncertainty and performance anxiety, and (experienced) increased responsibilities and over-demanding work requirements. Sometimes resulting in an increase in

- feeling not "up to the challenge".
- 4. Lack of job satisfaction due to heavy workload; due to increased work pressure and staff shortages.
- 5. Lack of work capacity due to non-work-related health conditions; physical or mental health problems combined with the heavy workload and the lack of colleague support.
- 6. Lack of feeling of belonging; suffering from a negative attitude of colleagues to one another.

Figure: Interaction of themes in novice nurse turnover

paperwork, overtime work and shift working. They lacked time for patient care and time for colleague consultation, which made them feel that they were not able to provide They often experienced

(pre-existing) chronic diseases (especially musculoskeletal problems) that required modifications or adjustments to the job or the work environment, experienced lack of understanding and acceptance from their colleagues. This resulted in stress, anxiety or burn-out.

### CONCLUSION

The reasons for professional turnover among novice nurses are diverse and involve multiple factors. To prevent novice nurse turnover, various measures could be taken, such as capacity building, supervisor support and the development of a tailored personal development plan.

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Support from colleagues and supervisors is important in making novice nurses feel safe and reassured. Such measures require thoughtful implementation and evaluation.

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