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

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; 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.

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