

INPLASY

Effects of transition programs on retention and turnover of newly graduated nurses: An umbrella review

INPLASY202620031

doi: 10.37766/inplasy2026.2.0031

Received: 9 February 2026

Published: 9 February 2026

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Support - This systematic review receives no specific grant from any funding agency, commercial or not-for-profit sectors. The work is conducted as part of a Master's degree at UMIT TIROL – Private University for Health Sciences and Health Technology.

Review Stage at time of this submission - Preliminary searches.

Conflicts of interest - The author Julia Kerle declares no financial or personal conflicts of interest related to this review project. The work is conducted as part of a Master's thesis at UMIT TIROL – Private University for Health Sciences and Health Technology.

INPLASY registration number: INPLASY202620031

Amendments - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 9 February 2026 and was last updated on 9 February 2026.

INTRODUCTION

Review question / Objective The objective is to synthesize evidence from systematic reviews and meta-analyses on the effects of transition programs on retention and turnover among newly graduated nurses, focusing on key program components (e.g., mentoring, onboarding, duration) and success factors. Review question: What are the effects of transition programs on the retention and turnover of newly graduated nurses?

Condition being studied High early turnover among newly graduated nurses. Newly graduated nurses experience significant "transition shock" during their first year of practice, characterized by stress, anxiety, and a gap between academic preparation and clinical reality.

This leads to turnover rates of 20-25% within 6-12 months, exacerbating nursing shortages, increasing costs, and compromising care quality in hospitals and long-term care facilities.

METHODS

Search strategy Databases: MEDLINE (via PubMed), CINAHL Ultimate (EBSCOhost), Epistemonikos, Psychological and Behavioural Sciences Collection

Search terms (PIO framework):

- P (Population): "new graduate nurse*", "newly graduated nurse*", "novice nurse*", "newly qualified nurse*" OR MeSH: "Nurses"
- I (Intervention): "transition program*", "residency program*", "orientation program*", "onboarding"

program*", "mentoring program*" OR MeSH: "Education, Nursing, Graduate"

- O (Outcome): "retention", "turnover", "attrition", "staff retention", "employee retention", "nurse retention" OR MeSH: "Personnel Turnover"

Operators: (P AND I AND O) with OR for synonyms within components. Citation tracking (forward/backward) from key publications. Search limited to systematic reviews/meta-analyses, 2016-2026, English/German.

Validation: Search string peer-reviewed using PRESS checklist by second independent reviewer.

Participant or population Newly graduated registered nurses (≤ 1 year professional experience)

Registered nurses who have completed their initial nursing education (Bachelor or Diploma) and are within their first year of clinical practice post-graduation. Excludes nurses with specialized training (ICU, anesthesia), nursing assistants, midwives, or nurses switching specialties.

Intervention Transition Programs (structured onboarding, mentoring, residency programs)

Formal programs supporting newly graduated nurses during their first year of practice, including combinations of:

- Structured onboarding and orientation
- Dedicated mentoring/preceptorship (trained preceptors)
- Peer support networks
- Formal education sessions (skill development, stress management).

Comparator No comparator.

Study designs to be included Systematic reviews and meta-analyses.

Eligibility criteria Inclusion: Studies published in English or German between 2016–2026, conducted in hospitals or inpatient long-term care facilities, that explicitly evaluate the impact of transition programs on retention and/or turnover outcomes.

Exclusion: Studies in other languages or published before 2016; outpatient/ambulatory care or home care settings; studies addressing transition challenges without evaluating structured transition programs.

Information sources Electronic databases: MEDLINE (via PubMed), CINAHL Ultimate (via

EBSCOhost), Epistemonikos, Psychological and Behavioural Sciences Collection (ProQuest).

Additional sources: Forward and backward citation tracking from key publications and included systematic reviews. No contact with study authors, trial registers, or grey literature searches planned, as this umbrella review focuses exclusively on peer-reviewed systematic reviews and meta-analyses.

Main outcome(s)

Primary outcomes:

- Employee retention rates (e.g., 6-, 12-, 24-month retention)
- Turnover/attrition rates (voluntary and involuntary) within first 12 months post-graduation

Secondary outcomes:

- Program components associated with retention success
- Optimal program duration
- Job satisfaction, professional confidence, and teamwork integration as retention predictors.

Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis

Methodological quality of included systematic reviews will be independently assessed by two reviewers using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal Tool.

Strategy of data synthesis Narrative synthesis with tabular summaries following JBI umbrella review methodology.

Data extraction: JBI "Data Extraction Form for Systematic Reviews" capturing study characteristics, retention/turnover findings, program components, and quality ratings from included systematic reviews. All steps performed independently by two reviewers with consensus discussion.

Subgroup analysis Not planned for primary synthesis.

Sensitivity analysis Not applicable.

Language restriction Yes, English and German only.

Country(ies) involved Austria.

Keywords new graduate nurse; transition program; nurse retention; nurse turnover; umbrella review.

Dissemination plans Master's thesis submission at UMIT TIROL – Private University for Health

Sciences and Health Technology (2026). Planned peer-reviewed publication in nursing science journals.

Contributions of each author

Author 1 - Julia Kerle - Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, formal analysis, writing (original draft + revisions), project administration.

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