

INPLASY

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

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Support - No specific funding was received from funding agencies, commercial or non-profit organizations for this systematic review.

Review Stage at time of this submission - Preliminary searches.

Conflicts of interest - The authors declare 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 26 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 The condition being studied is low retention and 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 reduced retention, turnover rates of 20–25% within 6–12 months, exacerbating nursing shortages, increasing costs and compromising quality of care 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): newly graduated nurse; new graduate nurse; newly qualified nurse; new registered nurse; newly registered nurse; novice

nurse; early career nurse; newly licensed nurse; "nurses"[MeSH];

- I (Intervention): transition program*; transitional program*; transition to practice; transition into practice; transitional support; transition support; transition to nursing practice; ttp program*; residenc*; residency program*; orientation program*; onboarding program*; mentoring program*

- O (Outcome): retention; retention rate; intention to stay; turnover; turnover rate; dropout; dropout rate

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 a 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; transition programs conducted in 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 and program duration associated with retention success
- 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 a nursing science journal.

Contributions of each author

Author 1 - Julia Kerle

Lead author and corresponding author.

Contributes significantly to the conception and design, data collection or analysis and interpretation of the data.

Is involved in the drafting of the manuscript or its critical revision with respect to important intellectual content.

Approves the final version for publication. Each author contributes sufficiently to the work to take public responsibility for the relevant parts of the content.

Agrees to be accountable for all aspects of the work and ensures that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and clarified.

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Author 2 - Kevin Köstner

Independent second reviewer. Contributes significantly to the conception and design, data collection or analysis and interpretation of the data.

Is involved in the critical revision of the manuscript.

Approves the final version for publication. Each author contributes sufficiently to the work to take public responsibility for the relevant parts of the content.

Agrees to be accountable for all aspects of the work and ensures that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and clarified.

Author 3 - Claudia Leoni-Scheiber

Supervises the Master's thesis.

Contributes significantly to the conception and design. Oversees data collection and analysis process.

Is involved in the drafting of the manuscript or its critical revision with respect to important intellectual content.

Approves the final version for publication. Each author contributes sufficiently to the work to take public responsibility for the relevant parts of the content.

Agrees to be accountable for all aspects of the work and ensures that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and clarified.