



2022 ANNA NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

The Effect of Peer-to-Peer Education about the Significance of Specialty Certification, on Empowering Dialysis Nurses

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Problem: Hundreds of registered nurses (RNs), working in dialysis for many years have not attained specialty certification. Certification empowers professional practice, improves nurse retention, and patient outcomes. Certification is foundational to supporting value-based care, moving patients towards home therapy and transplantation wait listing by 2025.

Objective: The purpose was to study the effect of a peer-to-peer education session about the significance and benefits of specialty certification on dialysis RNs empowerment in professional practice and enrollment in certification preparation courses.

Method/ Approach: The literature reveals specialty certification demonstrates knowledge and expertise in an area of nursing resulting in significant benefits to the RN, patient, public, and hiring organizations. Using Benner's novice to expert model, the Knowledge to Action framework, and Spreitzer's psychological empowerment survey a one group pre-and post-intervention study was carried out. Participants psychological empowerment was measured using a paired t-test. Pre-certification course enrollments prior to and during the study duration was measured.

Results: Results of the study showed a 25% increase in course enrollments, but no statistical significance in psychological empowerment (n=32). 62.5% of participants were managers. 62.5% of participants had more than ten years working in dialysis.

Conclusions and Application for Nursing Practice: No previous research exists on empowering dialysis RNs to attain certification. The project addressed a gap to empower RNs professional growth, provide knowledge for value-based care models, and align with professional models of practice by becoming specialty certified. Providing education about certification could increase the number of RNs in professional development courses and enhance knowledge of treatment support and care coordination strategies. Future study is needed about specialty certification impacts on patient outcomes, empowerment, workplace environment, and staff retention.

Abstract selected for presentation at 2022 ANNA National Symposium.