

مكتبة جامعة القدس

*Transition from Licensed Practical to Registered Nurse:  
Professional Growth and Development*

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Nursing Administration**

**Al-Quds University**

**September, 2002**

# ENDORSEMENT

*Nursing Administration  
Deanship of Graduate Studies*

*Transition from Licensed Practical to Registered Nurse:  
Professional Growth and Development*

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*Declaration*

No portion of this work referred in this thesis has been submitted to an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or institute of learning.

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2002



## ***Abstract***

This study aims at investigating the perceptions of nurses who completed an transitional program from LPN to RN on whether the transitional program helped them to achieve profession growth and development. Additionally, the perception of the graduates' supervisors was investigated.

In addition, the study aims at examining whether LPNs working in hospitals are really allowed by their supervisors to join a transitional program or not.

Moreover, the graduates' performances after graduation were investigated from the supervisors' perspectives. The aim was to find out if the transitional program has really developed the graduates' skills. Another aim was to discover whether the graduates obtained their professional achievement after graduation or not. These rights included promotion, job status and salaries among others. Further, one of the aims was to indicate which factors were more influential in motivating the LPNs nurses to join transitional programs.

This study involved a sample of 48 out of the 53 graduates who they were selected to join the transitional program at Bethlehem University. The sample also included 45 of their supervisors at work place. Two questionnaires were used in the study. The first was filled by the graduates themselves while the other was concerning the supervisors

Results showed that certain achievement were obtained as a result of joining the program, despite the fact that in some areas improvement were lower than expected. transitional programs from LPN to RN for instance achieved certain gains in terms of promotion and improving job conditions. About half of the graduates held new higher positions, mainly in middle management positions. However, in relation to salaries the gains obtain were lower than expected since only 27.1% of the graduates got better salaries after graduation.

In contrast, gains in social status and job status were higher than these achieved in salaries and promotion. For instance, 66.8% of the graduates believed that they achieved improvement in job status. Their managers assigned them more difficult tasks and had more confidence in their capacities. Further 56.2% of the graduates believed that also their social status was positively affected by joining the transitional program. Graduates believe that the relationship with their colleagues was improved after graduation.

Further, the results indicated that joining a transitional program motivates graduates to pursue their higher education. Some of the graduates continued their higher education and got Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degrees, others got a post diploma certificate and the third group got master degrees in nursing.

The transitional program also proved to develop the graduates' leadership skills, nursing skills, and communication skills. However, in relation to the effect of the program on developing these graduates' skills, there was a discrepancy between the graduates' opinions and the opinions of their supervisors.

One fourth of the supervisors, for example, believed that the transitional program had little or no effect on developing the graduates' leadership skills, delegation, and leading a team skills. In contrast 8.3% to 16.7% of the graduates had a similar opinion. On the other hand, in terms of nursing skills, the results showed that the transitional program results more development and profession growth. Indeed an acceptable percentage of both supervisors and graduates indicated that nursing skills were positively affected. These skills included documentation, application and comprehending the nursing process. However, in terms of patient education, communication skills and professional behaviors, the results revealed the development was below expectations. 44.4% of the supervisors believe that the upgrading program failed to develop the graduates' skills in terms of patient education. 17.8% of the supervisors indicated that the graduates' communication skills were still undeveloped and 22% of the supervisors stated that the graduates' professional behaviors were either little developed or completely undeveloped.

Concerning the most influential factors that motivate LPNs to join the transitional program, the results showed that age, acknowledgement, the fear to be left behind, securing a better future and the desire to pursue higher education were among the most prominent motivators. For example, the younger the LPN, the more enthusiastic he or she is to join the transitional program. On the other hand, some of the deterrents that prohibited the LPNs from joining the transitional program were financial and working difficulties.

Transitional programs proved to be useful. However, there is still a need to develop the program in such a way to achieve gains to a greater number of graduates. In other words, we are still in need for more transitional programs, but future programs should include more clinical practice and should concentrate on the skills that previous programs had to some degree over looked mainly patient education, leadership skills,



nursing skills and communication skills. Further, above all, in tuition fees of future transitional programs should be reduced a little bit so more LPNs could join these programs. Furthermore there should be more coordination between the LPNs and their supervisor in organizing the working hours so that there would be no contradiction between the off-duties and the study hours.

## *Acknowledgement*

I would like to express my gratitude to all who have contributed to the success of this study. First, acknowledgement be to Dr. Varsen Aghabekian and Asma Imam for supervising this study, for their cooperation and their advise.

Thanks to the administration of Makassed Hospital; especially the department of nursing and continuing education committee for their cooperation in terms of opening opportunities for study.

Appreciation to my colleagues in the Surgical Department in Makassed Hospital; mainly to Mr. Fathi Al-Frough, the head nurse of the Department for his cooperation.

Thanks to MR. Jamal Awaad who processed and analyzed statistical data on SPSS and great thanks for the typist who typed this thesis.

Thanks to all subjects who participated in the study: both the RN program participants and their supervisors who cooperated in terms of providing all the required information.

Thanks to all those working in the Nursing Faculty in Bethlehem university; especially Mrs. Etaf Makboul, the Dean of the college and Mrs. Ameena Uweidat. Thanks also to those who are working in the library and the Internet Department in Bethlehem university for their support and cooperation.

Great thanks and appreciation to my parents and my wife who always stood beside me.

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## *List of Abbreviations*

BSN	Bachelor of Science in Nursing
BU	Bethlehem University
EN	Enrolled Nurse
HCA	Health Care Assistant
LPN	Licensed Practical Nurse
No	Number
PRC	Planning Research Center
RN	Registered Nurse
RGN	Registered General Nurse
SRN	State Registered Nurse
UKCC	United Kingdom Certificate Council

## *Chapter 1*

### **Introduction:**

Looking at the reality of the nursing profession in Palestine many years ago, and comparing it with the present; one can realize the level of development, which took place in recent years to meet the health needs of Palestinian society and to accompany the advanced technology (Aghabekian, 1990). In the era of the British mandate nursing used to be taught in hospitals by doctors and foreign nursing directors. Nurses graduated after 3 years as registered nurses (R.N.) a second category of nurses received in service nursing education known as "On the Job training" and were recognized by hospital management as practical nurses (LPNs), or with less training as aid nurses.

According to the Palestinian Planning and Research Center (PRC) (1993) in Jerusalem there are twenty nursing schools in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Twelve of these schools that graduate practical nurses. Graduates obtain a diploma; a Bachelor degree is granted to graduates only by two of these schools; and two of these schools a ward there graduates a diploma in midwifery.

In the year 1951, the first school of nursing; named Augusta Victoria, was established. This school has established a three year nursing training program and graduated state registered nurses (SRN). Following this step, several other nursing schools were established to meet the needs of the Palestinian community. In 1956, the Baptist school of Health Sciences was opened in Gaza city. This school granted its graduates a three-year diploma certificate.

After 1956, several nursing schools were established in the West Bank to qualify nurses as practical nurses. St. Johns Hospital in Jerusalem started its eighteen month nursing program in 1960. During the following fifteen years, other four nursing schools which offered practical nursing programs were established in different locations. These included: Saint Lukes School of Nursing in Nablus in 1965/1966. The Caritas School of Nursing in Bethlehem in 1969, Al-Makassed Islamic Charitable Hospital School of Nursing in Jerusalem in 1971, and in 1975 AL-Hilal School of Nursing in Nablus.



Since the middle of 1970s, the nursing education has developed, new nursing institutions were established to qualify their graduates either with a three-year diploma or a Bachelor degree. Two schools (Ibin-Sina in Ramallah in 1971 and the Qualified School of Nursing in Gaza) offered their graduates a three-year diploma. The Arab College of Medical Profession was established in 1979 and the Nursing Faculty at Bethlehem University established in 1976 offers their students a Bachelor degree in nursing.

Moreover, Nursing colleges started implementing transitional programs to upgrade the LPNs to become RNs; and also from RNs to BSNs. The first transitional program from LPN to RN was developed by Bethlehem University in 1996. These graduates were qualified to pursue their higher education to get a Bachelor degree in nursing. Another transitional program was implemented in 1985 by the Arab College of Medical Profession to upgrade RNs to be SNs and later in 1996 to upgrade LPNs to become BSNs. ( Aghabekian, Imam and Safadi, 1994). Nowadays, Bethlehem and Al-Quds universities offer graduates a higher diploma in various branches of nursing. Besides Al-Quds university offer graduates a master's degree in various branches of nursing like administration, public health and mental health.

We live in an era of rapid changes; which is profound. There are different opinions about the forces that have brought us to this point nowadays. Consequently, literature presents four forces that affect the nursing profession.

1. The market driven economic force, the nurse educators will work in a market driven, highly competitive system of higher education, preparing the next generation of nurses.
2. The technological force, the nurse educator will work in a world of high technology to prepare nurses to work in such a technologically advanced health care environment. This means that nurse educators will be challenged to structure learning experiences in an environment of rapidly changing technology.
3. The demographic force, the nurse educators will interact with all increasingly diverse student bodies with diverse learning styles and goals preparing nurses to provide care that is acceptable to an increasingly diverse population.
4. Knowledge revolution is the fourth force which means that the nurse educators spend an increasing amount of time to achieve scientific developments and their evaluation and must develop nurses who are committed to remaining intellectually