Structured clinical approach to recruitment in an emergency department setting.

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Introduction:

Recruiting nursing staff with appropriate skills, expertise and attributes has been a challenge for the Logan Hospital (LH) Emergency Department (ED) in the face of LH ED new expansion, coinciding with the opening of two neighbouring tertiary hospitals. It was identified that there was a need to recruit a large number of Enrolled Nurses (EN), Registered Nurses (RN) and Clinical Nurses (CN), with consideration for skill mix, capacity to develop staff and their influence in the ED team.

Background:

LH ED was utilising a traditional panel interview method for nursing recruitment. A review of emerging evidence-based recruitment strategies was undertaken with the criteria that included recruitment of staff that demonstrated the right skills, behaviours and attributes supporting a seamless transition into the emergency department team.

Recruitment strategies examined were the Intensive Care Clinical Nurse interview process at Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane, Multiple Mini Interviews, and research completed by Griffith University across four sites studying the efficacy of Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE).

This informed the development and implementation of LH ED's structured clinical recruitment process used to interview a large number of nurses using skill sets, scenarios and simulation.

Methodology:

This interview process was conducted in a phased method, commencing with a scenario approach leading to simulation for future interviews. The interviewers received training in the structured clinical approach to ensure a standardised interaction with applicants. The applicants received information one week prior to their interview.

Phase 1 was conducted over a period of five days using scenario and skill set stations, and consisted of EN, RN and CN groups (N=102) There were four stations with one interviewer per station, addressing appropriate clinical scenarios for each nursing group. The RN and CN group interviews incorporated a quality and leadership station.

This study was evaluated using 2 main methods:

1. Applicant and interview panel member post interview evaluation, peer review and applicant performance progress
2. Nursing staff retention rates at the six-month period of the successful applicants.

Results:

Applicant Evaluation

- The response rate of applicants (at interview) was n=59 (58%), n=8 (13 %) of these were incomplete and so not included in the analysis.
- All applicants completed the 3-month probation period successfully
- Nil performance management issues

- Preliminary peer review results indicate excellent team fit

Interview Evaluation
- There were n = 48 (47%) EN, RN and CN appointed in phase 1; 1 withdrew prior to starting (n= 47).
- Retention rates at 6 months n= 43 (91%)
- Some preliminary results from themed analysis include; process was new to many, clear expectations were stipulated prior to interview, and scenarios provided a less stressful and realistic recruitment process.
- Based on the success of the scenario-based interviews, the next phase of implementing simulation interviews has commenced. To date LH ED has conducted 9 simulation interviews using the same evaluation method.

Conclusion:
This process has been adopted in the LH ED and has been adapted to other areas such as emergency registrar and graduate nurse recruitment with the intention of use for future recruitment processes. On the evidence analysed thus far, it appears that the aim of recruiting staff with the right skills, attributes and the ability to contribute positively to the ED team has been achieved.