

The Effectiveness of Continued Education Units on the Confidence and Competency of Nurses

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Background

After completing the required degree education, it is easy for nursing skills to deteriorate if they are not regularly performed in practice. As required by the Texas Board of Nursing, nurses must complete 20 hours of Continued Education Units (CEUs) in order to renew their state license every 2 years.⁶ The goal of these courses is to facilitate lifelong learning, improve nursing performance, and ensure that nurses are keeping up to date with standards of practices. It is largely up to the nurse themselves to seek out the ever-changing developments that occur in the healthcare world. Participation in skills-based CEU Courses has been a beneficial way to promote nursing confidence by keeping nurses current with skills and providing insight into new practices.

PICOT Question

Does nursing performance and confidence improve after taking skills-based CEUs when compared to nurses who haven't taken them for 2 years?

P: Registered Nurses

I: Participation in skills-based CEUs

C: RNs not taking skills-based CEUs

O: Increased confidence & performance

T: Two years

Literature Search Criteria

Databases: Ovid, EBSCO, PubMed

Key Terms: Continued Nursing Education, Nurse Confidence, Nurse Skills

Article Selection Criteria: Published in English, between 2017 and 2023, Nurse peer-reviewed, relevant to nursing confidence and performance.



Synthesis of Findings

- Participation in skills-based continuing education units has shown to increase nurses' self-confidence in providing for patients with conditions not frequently encountered or previously seen in practice.^{1 3 5 7}
- Nurses who do not perform certain skills, in relation to patient care, over an extended period of time are more likely to have decreased competency in skills performance when outcomes are measured. Refresher skill courses guided by certified instructors can show great improvement in performance ability even in basic life support skills in nursing students.^{1 2 3 4}
- CEUs focused in the development and improvement of nursing skills are vital to promoting higher quality patient outcomes. Gaps in care knowledge should be filled in curricula of future training programs targeting nurses with diverse demographic backgrounds.^{1 3 5 7}
- Lack of skills-based CEU courses leads to a lower sense of confidence in healthcare professionals and decrease in reported ability to educate and properly treat vulnerable patients. When concerning suicide in younger populations, practitioners who had not received mental health trainings in 5 years reported that they did not feel they were adequately able to identify warning signs or prevent suicide.^{2 4 7}
- Assessment of nurses before and after partaking in CEU skills courses showed significant increases in confidence of the nurses' own capabilities. After receiving refresher courses in ultrasound applications, practitioners reported that their confidence after the trainings had significantly increased.^{1 3 4 5}

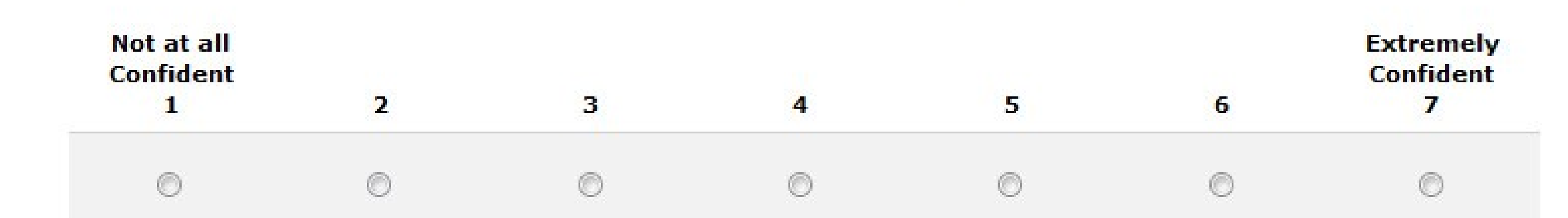
Decision to Change

Nursing care is founded on the education nurses receive and their ability to put those learned concepts into practice. Throughout our clinical practice, we have seen how nurses lose confidence or ability to perform skills they have not seen in long periods of time. Nurses and nurse practitioners should be committed to partaking in skill-based refresher courses in order to stay updated on current health care practices and guidelines to better ensure the safety and care of their patients. This will 1) increase the confidence of nurses in terms of ability to provide quality care, especially for vulnerable populations^{2 3 4 7}, 2) increase performance of skills performed by nurses^{1 4 5} and 3) increase the preparedness and knowledge of nurses for educating patients regarding their care and safety.^{1 2}

Evaluation

After taking CEU skills-based courses, nurses will report an improvement in their confidence for skill performance and ability to care for vulnerable populations. Questionnaires or post-learning-module tests are used to evaluate levels of confidence, using parameters and selection choices such as "not confident at all", "somewhat confident", "confident", or a Likert scale. Based on these scores, the confidence for skill performance can be measured after nurses have been through CEU skills-based courses or learning modules relative to their specialized field.

Overall, how confident are you that you completed the task successfully?



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