



TITLE Self-Perceived Leadership Behaviors of Clinical Ladder Nurses

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this study was to identify the self-perceived leadership behaviors of registered nurses enrolled in a clinical ladder career pathway.

METHODOLOGY

The study setting was a large, tertiary care medical center located in the Northeastern United States with 804 beds, 1,674 staff registered nurses, and the clinical ladder program includes 6.3 percent of the staff registered nurses. Seventy-one clinical ladder nurses participated in the study (response rate = 71%), completing the Leadership Practices Inventory and providing demographic data. The typical respondents were female (96%), 42 years old, Caucasian (58%), married (70%), had earned a college or graduate degree (97%), were employed fulltime (85%), with 17 years as a RN, 8.6 years with their current unit, 13 years with their current organization, and served as a charge nurse (97%).

KEY FINDINGS

The most frequently engaged in leadership practice was Enable, followed by Model and Encourage, and then Challenge and Inspire. Experience (measured by age, years as a RN, years with current unit and years with current organization) were all negatively correlated with the use of each of the five leadership practices. None of the leadership practices were significantly correlated with Levels 1, 2, and 3 of the clinical ladder nurse program.

The author suggests that “there is a need to evaluate if nurses are lacking leadership behaviors due to academic training or to determine if there are other variables or obstacles that may interfere with their ability to lead patient care to better outcomes (p. 57)... Organizations may wish to utilize the findings from this study by providing leadership program development to improve the leadership behaviors and decision making strategies of frontline caregivers (p. 58)... Leadership development must be incorporated into nursing education at the academic and clinical level (p. 59)...Nurses

with many years of experience may not have been exposed to leadership training in the academic setting.” (p. 59).