

Leveraging NDNQI Benchmarks to Achieve National Certification



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Background Data

In 2008, the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators (NDNQI) shows a mean of less than 10% of eligible registered nurses (RNs) in teaching facilities has national certification. At MacNeal Hospital, a 400-bed teaching hospital in southwestern suburbs of Chicago, the percentage of eligible RNs with certification on 42South was just below the 2008 national mean. 42South, a 24-bed medical/surgical unit has 26 RNs of whom 16 are eligible for certification. Recognizing that certification may greatly influence the effectiveness of nursing care, increasing the number of RNs on 42South with national certification validates the unit's commitment to quality care and is in line with the organization's mission to provide outstanding health care. The RNs on 42South play a major role in the hospital's distinction as a Joint Commission certified primary stroke center because of their exceptional efforts to foster better outcomes for stroke patients. Achieving national certification will enhance the competence of the RNs on 42South and advance their professional growth and development.

Certification and Its Value

Certification is an authentication of achieving a level of knowledge and skill beyond the minimum requirements for licensure and registration (Gaberson et al, 2003).

certification is "perceived as influencing accountability, accomplishment, growth, and specialized knowledge, as well as a level of recognition among employers, peers, and consumers" (American Board of Nursing Specialties, 2006).

ertification in nursing by a nationally recognized certifying/credentialing organization correlates with nurses' job satisfaction, sense of empowerment, and sense of collaboration with other healthcare team members (Wade, 2009).

process for acknowledging and encouraging personal and professional growth, certification generates both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.

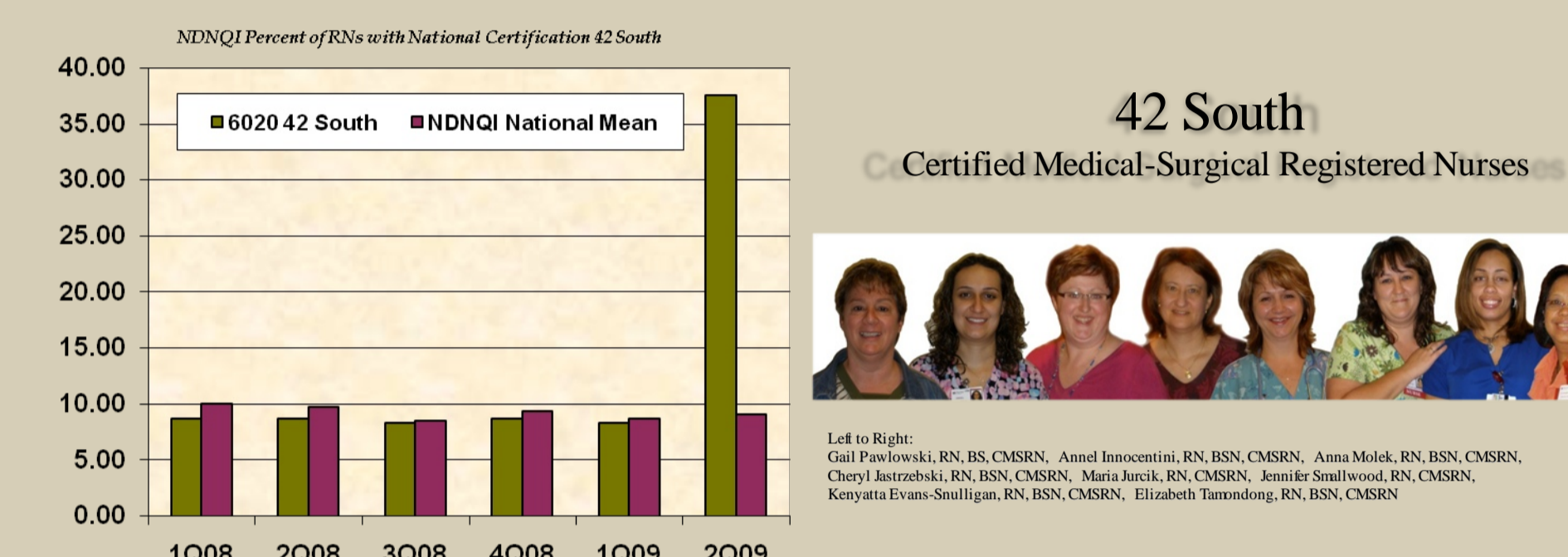
Theoretical Framework

Understanding the motivations by RNs to seek national certification requires knowledge regarding how one approaches goals, tasks, and challenges. Acknowledging that individuals have the power to shape their own destiny demonstrated by self-efficacy is important. Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as one's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations. According to Bandura (1997) unless individuals believe that they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act. Four factors influence self-efficacy: experience, modeling, social persuasions, and physiological factors. Guided by Bandura's self-efficacy theory, the focus is to understand the RNs' sense of self-efficacy in how they execute the courses of actions to seek national certification. The role of the nurse manager is to support the efforts of RNs to obtain certification by empowering the RNs to determine their sense of self-efficacy. RNs with high self-efficacy will be more likely to take on the challenges to seek certification and exert more effort to succeed. Those with low self-efficacy will tend to avoid the pressure of taking the certification and believe that the certification is harder to attain. RNs with high self-efficacy should be strongly encouraged while RNs with low self-efficacy should be nurtured and supported by providing incentives and removing the perceived barriers to certification.

Strategies

- Increase awareness concerning national certification
 - Discuss intrinsic and extrinsic values of certification at monthly staff meetings
 - Hang certification posters in the clinical areas
 - Publicize national certification in hospital newsletter
- Solicit administrative support to provide incentives
 - Reimbursement for examination fees
 - Advancement on the nursing clinical ladder
 - Recognition at the annual and quarterly nurses' meetings
 - Become a test-site for certification exam
 - Provide mentors on test-taking techniques
 - Organize review groups and provide study materials

The Result



In May 2009, six additional RNs on 42South achieved certification in Medical-Surgical Nursing administered by the Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses. The certified RNs serve as inspiration to the other nurses. In October 2009, five additional RNs on 42South took the certification exam in Medical-Surgical Nursing. The second quarter 2009 NDNQI data demonstrated an increase in national certification on 42South from 8 percent to 38 percent. The result was significantly above the national mean.

Conclusion

Decisions to seek national certification by RNs are influenced by the degree of one's self-efficacy. The intrinsic and extrinsic rewards of national certification provide the motivation needed to invigorate the self-efficacy of RNs. To promote and increase the number of nurses with national certification, the barriers to obtain national certification must be removed and incentives must be provided. Achieving national certification in nursing contributes to the advancement of the nursing profession. Acquiring national certification must become part of every nurse's personal aspiration and professional obligation.

References

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