

“I was winging it every day”

What is gained by undertaking the District Nurse Specialist Practitioner Qualification?

Sue Hill, Senior Nurse, Health Education England

Introduction

- The number of District Nurses has decreased by 22% overall since 2013 and by as much as 50% in some areas
- The Nursing and Midwifery Council recordable District Nurse Specialist Practitioner qualification (DNSPQ) must be obtained to become a District Nurse
- One potential reason for the decline in district nursing numbers is a lack of recognition of the value of the DNSPQ
- There is a lack of published research evaluating the value of the DNSPQ

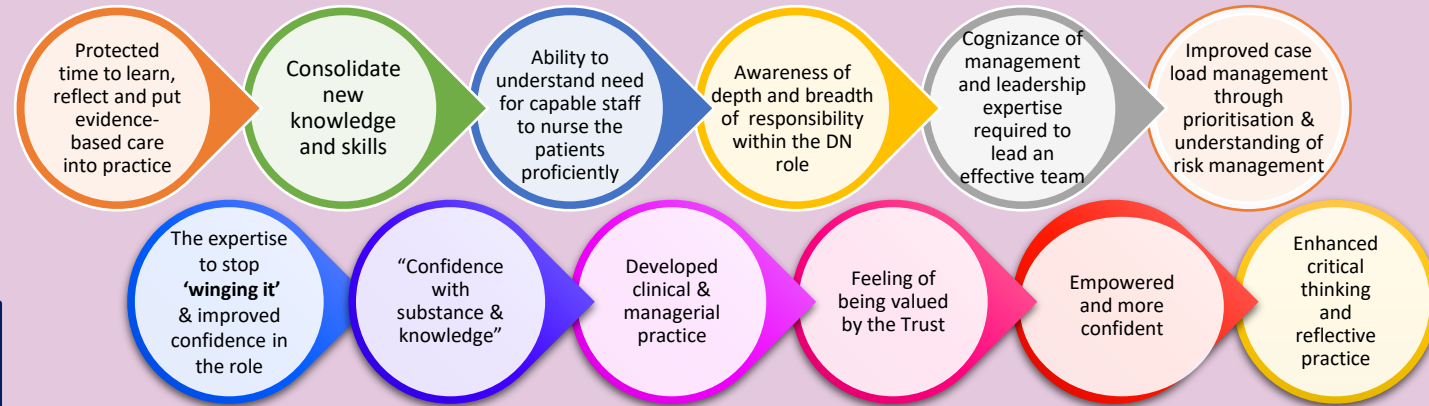
Aims of the research

- To discover why nurses embark on the DNSPQ
- To explore what has been gained by undertaking the DNSPQ from an individual’s perspective
- To recognise how knowledge and understanding of the District Nurse role changed as a result of completing the course

Methodology

- The study included 26 nurses who were about to undertake the course, or had completed the DNSPQ
- The study was undertaken with learners from Sheffield Hallam University and University of Surrey
- Using focus groups of 3-4 nurses, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data
- Thematic analysis was used to define themes prior to presenting the findings

The District Nurse Specialist Practitioner Qualification provided a range of skills and competencies



A word cloud containing the following terms: reflective, reflective practitioner, critical thinker, leadership, aware, explore, motivated, focus, student, lifechanger, theory into practice, valued, experienced, invaluable, in depth, confident, common goal, and theory into practice.

Conclusion

- All interviewed described how the DNSPQ improved their practice considerably by developing their skills and knowledge
- Confidence and the ability to think critically were cited as the key outcomes enabling them to go on to successfully perform this multifaceted, complex and diverse nursing role.

Next steps

- Further research about the DNSPQ is required including a qualitative, comparative study of how nurses who hold and do not hold the qualification feel about managing teams
- An assessment of the impact of team-leaders holding the DNSPQ on the numbers of visits, length of stay of patients on the caseload and cost effectiveness would provide additional evidence of the value of the qualification.