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## "The Effect of Full-Time Nurse Practitioners on Nursing Burnout in the ICU Setting"

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**2022/23 Honors Capstone Research Summer Program Proposal:**  
**“The Effect of Full-Time Nurse Practitioners on Nursing Burnout in the ICU Setting”**  
**Research Advisor/Mentor: Dr. Tracy Lakin, DNP, CRNP**  
**Student Researcher: Hailey Palacios**  
**The University of Alabama in Huntsville College of Nursing**  
**Cumulative GPA: [REDACTED]**

Nursing is a high-stress, high-demanding, and highly-intensive job in many different healthcare settings. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, nurse burnout rates have grown tremendously across the United States, and nurses have been leaving the field in droves. When comparing all specialties of nursing, critical care nurses who work in intensive care units (ICUs) or emergency departments (EDs) experience the highest burnout rates of any other specialty each year. ICU nurses have reported that their feelings and symptoms of burnout have stemmed from the high-stress environments they work in, and the critical patients they care for. The aim of my study is to determine if the presence of full-time nurse practitioners in ICUs decreases nurse burnout. Factors that contribute to burnout rates must be identified and reduced so that nurses are able to work in a healthy, sustainable environment and, therefore, help hospitals build and maintain nurse staffing in critical areas. In conjunction with this study, Dr. Lakin will be performing a study on the effects of COVID-19 on open visitation policies in the ICU setting.

PICO question #1: Does the presence of a full-time nurse practitioner decrease nursing burnout in ICUs?

PICO question #2: Did COVID-19 alter ICU providers' opinions on open visitation policies?

Thus far, I have conducted a literature review to identify the leading contributing factors nurses report that lead to burnout. My plan for collecting data is to create a survey alongside my advisor and mentor, Dr. Tracy Lakin, DNP, CRNP, that asks open-ended questions to gather ICU nurses' opinions on how they feel nurse practitioners are impacting their jobs in the ICU, and if they reduce any of the contributing factors that lead to burnout. We will also survey bedside providers in ICUs to determine if their opinions changed on open visitation policies following the COVID-19 pandemic. I am going to use two nurse burnout surveys already deemed reliable and valid to formulate my survey, to ensure the data I collect is applicable and accurate. I want to compare the collected data between several ICUs, some that have full-time nurse practitioner presence and some that do not, so I can identify potential differences among them. In addition to the development of the survey, Dr. Lakin and I plan to apply for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, administer the survey to ICU nurses that work within the Huntsville Hospital Health System and Crestwood Medical Center Health System in our selected ICUs, analyze our data, conduct a final literature review with our results applied, and submit a completed document for publication to a journal for nurse practitioners. My most recent timeline is as follows:

complete CITI training modules by November 2022, have a developed survey by January 1, 2023, and submit our IRB form by January 31, 2023. Once our IRB is approved, we will administer our survey in April 2023. Over the allotted 10-12 weeks of the honors summer program between May and August of 2023, Dr. Lakin and I will come together to review and compile our data, which we will then place into a manuscript and submit to be published to a peer-reviewed journal. I will also create a poster through UAH and present it at poster presentation events, as well as present my research at any conferences that may arise. I project the completion of my Honors Capstone Research to be during the Fall 2023 semester.

The results of this study have the potential to be very important in the field of nursing. By identifying ways in which burnout rates can be reduced and then implementing changes based on our results, we may see a much-needed reduction in nurses leaving their field and an influx of new nurses who are excited to start and stay in their ICU positions. As a nursing student who aspires to be a critical care nurse in a cardiovascular ICU, I am excited to work on this project in hopes to help improve the very field I dream of working in. Thank you for reading my proposal and for your consideration of my project for the Honors Capstone Research Summer Program.