Background of the problem

Final year nursing students are required to complete a 12-week Pre-Registration Consolidated Placement (PRCP) in SGH wards before graduating as Registered Nurses. Preceptors are important at this stage to provide guidance, assess and evaluate the performance of the students. Currently, each PRCP student is assigned to a preceptor (Registered Nurse with at least 3 years’ experience) who will evaluate the student’s performance using the following evaluation tools from the respective academic institutions (Fig. 1a & 1b).

Pre-intervention challenges faced:
1. Evaluation tools from different academic institutions affect preceptors’ ability to evaluate their students (Fig. 1a and 1b);
2. Lack of progressive evaluation tools to help preceptors and students recognize early interventions related to the students’ weak learning or coping abilities resulting in repeat PRCP placement;
3. Preceptors lack confidence in identifying students who require close supervision using the current evaluation tools;
4. Insufficient time for preceptors to implement early measures to support students in closing their performance gap to prevent repeat PRCP placement;
5. Underperforming PRCP students identified during PRCP period have difficulty in passing the probation as graduate nurse resulting in extended probation.

Mission Statement

To increase SGH preceptors’ level of confidence in identifying final year nursing students who require close supervision at the early stage of the PRCP from 36% to 70% within 4 months.

Analysis of problem

The Five-Why Diagram was used to understand why preceptors have difficulty in identifying the underperforming PRCP students earlier.

Main Root Causes (RC) Identified

| RC1. | The current assessment tools from the respective academic institutions lack progressive evaluation of students’ performance at the early stage of the placement; |
| RC2. | Existing preceptors have limited opportunity to precept as there are only 2 intakes of PRCP students per year; |
| RC3. | First time preceptors do not have any prior experience in using the current assessment tools to evaluate their students progressively; |
| RC4. | & RC5. | Currently the lack of contact time between preceptors and students has been managed by providing an alternate preceptor to ensure continuity in supervision. |

Interventions

The survey consists of 7 questions focusing on preceptors’ level of confidence to precept students and identify 1) PRCP students requiring close supervision using the current evaluation tools 2) challenges faced by preceptors 3) suggestions for early measures to support PRCP students.

Intervention – Survey Process

Results

1. Figure 4 shows an increase in the preceptors’ confidence level and ability using the PET (Qns. 2 & 4).
2. 75% indicated increase level of confidence in identifying students who require close supervision using PET (Qns. 4).
3. The p-value is statistically significant (p=0.05) which means that PET is effective in assisting preceptors to identify PRCP students who require close supervision early. (Qns. 2, 4 & 5).

Sustainability Plans

Briefing sessions are planned for various groups of stakeholders on the use of PET prior to the commencement of PRCP students’ placement. The workflow is shown in Figure 6. The PET can also be implemented in different institutions with variations of consolidated placement and learning outcomes.