



Registered nurses' perceptions of graduate entry nursing students undertaking clinical experience: A scoping review[☆]

Eleanor Griffin^{*}, Rhona Winnington, Rachel Macdiarmid

Auckland University of Technology, 90 Akoranga Drive, Northcote, Auckland, New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

Aim: To explore registered nurses' perceptions of graduate entry nursing students undertaking clinical experience.

Background: Graduate entry nursing programmes offer an alternative and accelerated route to nursing registration for people who have an undergraduate degree. Graduate entry nursing programmes are well-established in the United States and the United Kingdom but have been more recently introduced to Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. As part of the completion of these programmes, graduate entry nursing students undertake clinical placements during which they are precepted by registered nurses. Due to the relative newness of graduate entry nursing programmes, how registered nurses perceive graduate entry nursing students undertaking clinical placement and how this impacts upon the preceptorship relationship is not yet well understood.

Methods: A scoping review method was selected for this research. Nine databases were searched; Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC), Joanna Briggs Institution, Cochrane, Google Scholar, Cumulative of Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Scopus, PubMed, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global and PyschInfo.

Results: Using a narrative synthesis approach, four categories emerged from the eight selected articles; 'negative perception of prior academic experience', 'scepticism and suspicion', 'evolving perceptions' and 'positive perception of prior experience'.

This scoping review found that registered nurses' perceptions of graduate entry nursing students are varied, with academic backgrounds of graduate entry nursing students perceived both positively and negatively. Furthermore, this review also found that whilst some registered nurses may change their perceptions of individual graduate entry nursing students they have precepted, they remain sceptical of graduate entry nursing programmes in general.

Conclusions: The results of this review outline the variation in how registered nurses perceive graduate entry nursing students and the potential impacts upon the student experience of preceptorship. This scoping review highlights the significant gaps in the qualitative literature.

1. Introduction

Graduate entry nursing programmes (GEN) offer an alternative and accelerated route to nursing registration for people who hold an undergraduate degree. During these programmes, GEN students are precepted by registered nurses (RNs) during clinical placements. How RNs perceive GEN students undertaking clinical placement and the potential impact of these perceptions upon the preceptorship relationship is not yet well understood. The aim of this study was to explore registered

nurses' perceptions of graduate entry nursing students undertaking clinical experience.

2. Background

Graduate entry nursing programmes offer alternative and "accelerated pathways" (Winnington et al., 2023, p. 2) to gaining nursing registration for students with undergraduate degrees in any discipline (Macdiarmid et al., 2021a; Winnington et al., 2023). These GEN

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^{*} Corresponding author.

E-mail address: mnr2947@autuni.ac.nz (E. Griffin).

programmes are well-established in the United States and the United Kingdom but have been more recently introduced to Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand (Macdiarmid et al., 2021a; Winnington et al., 2023). Typically, GEN programmes span two years, such as the programmes offered at universities in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom (Macdiarmid et al., 2021a).

Graduate entry nursing students are people who hold a range of undergraduate degrees and are enrolled in a post-graduate nursing qualification (Macdiarmid et al., 2021a). The prior degree experience of GEN students, as well as their motivations to return to study, have been highlighted as benefits of GEN students when they enter the profession and begin as registered nurses (Macdiarmid et al., 2021a; Neil, 2012; Shatto et al., 2016). These benefits include both academic ability as suggested by the previous completion of an undergraduate degree as well as previous life experiences which could aid in adapting to the nursing role (Stacey et al., 2014). Much of the current literature on GEN programmes focuses on GEN students, including characteristics of students enrolled in GEN programmes, gender of GEN students, motivations of students enrolling in GEN degrees and GEN students' perceptions of the GEN programme (Bloomfield and Jones, 2013; Downey and Asselin, 2015; Hoffart et al., 2019; Macdiarmid et al., 2021a; Winnington et al., 2023). Another focus of current literature is on the teaching and learning strategies used in GEN programmes (Bloomfield et al., 2013; Macdiarmid et al., 2021b; Stacey et al., 2014).

As with any pre-registration nursing pathway, GEN students must complete clinical placement hours (Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2023; Nursing and Midwifery Board, 2023; Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2023). During these clinical placement hours, nursing students are precepted by RNs. Clinical teaching, or acting as a clinical preceptor or mentor, is typically included as a competency requirement for nursing registration within their scope of practice (Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2012; Nursing and Midwifery Board, 2016; Midwifery and Nursing Council, 2014). In general, RNs may perceive their role as a preceptor, both to student nurses and newly graduated nurses, as an unwelcome additional burden on top of their clinical duties, especially in the context of heavy patient loads when they must balance time spent teaching students alongside time spent caring for patients (Chan et al., 2019; O'Brien et al., 2014). Precepting GEN students may challenge RNs as different student characteristics, such as prior degree and life experience, represent a potential challenge for preceptors (Oermann et al., 2017). Despite the existence of GEN programmes for over forty years in some countries, and the potential perceived advantages of these students, for both nursing faculty at the university and RNs acting as preceptors in the clinical environment, teaching GEN students during this "condensed" (Macdiarmid et al., 2021a, p.1) programme remains a new challenge (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2013).

The concept of resistance to change in the nursing profession can also be seen in relation to the precepting of GEN students. Resistance to change results from feeling threatened by and fearful of change and how this change could impact upon their role (DuBose and Mayo, 2020; Stonehouse, 2012; Vos and Rupert, 2018). An example of resistance to change in nursing, particularly relevant to this research, is anti-intellectualism. Anti-intellectualism refers to attitudes of resistance towards the increased influence of higher education in the process of nursing registration (Racine and Vandenberg, 2021). In the United Kingdom, the historical move away from nursing registration through a traditional hospital-based apprenticeship model towards university-based programmes was blamed by those outside and within the nursing profession for lower standards of care, with university trained nurses criticised for being 'too posh to wash' despite there being no evidence to support these claims (Chapman and Martin, 2013).

The aim of this study was to explore registered nurses' perceptions of graduate entry nursing students undertaking clinical experience.

3. Methods

Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) was used to conduct this scoping review to 'map' current qualitative research around GEN programmes and identify existing research about RN perceptions of GEN students. This approach provided the opportunity to explore a data set encompassing the opinions, feelings and thoughts of the RNs.

Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) five step framework was used; identifying the research question, identifying relevant studies, study selection, charting the data and summarizing and reporting the results (Peters et al., 2020).

3.1. Search strategy

The search strategy (Supplementary Material Table 1) was initially tested in Cumulative of Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL). Next the university librarian was approached to help with search terms (Supplementary Material Table 1). The search strategy was further tested in one database (CINAHL) to identify additional relevant keywords. One researcher (EG) conducted the search of keywords in all the included databases in February 2023.

To identify relevant studies nine databases were comprehensively searched (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005; Peters et al., 2020). These databases included the Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC), Joanna Briggs Institution, Cochrane, Google Scholar, Cumulative of Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Scopus, PubMed, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global and PyschInfo. As identified on the below Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) (Supplementary Material Fig. 1), these searches returned 228 results. No results were found in the searches conducted using ERIC, Joanna Briggs Institution and Cochrane databases. Four hand searched articles were also returned, as demonstrated on the PRISMA.

3.2. Inclusion criteria

Studies were included that were published in English. Population of interest: studies considered were those that included GEN students. Included within GEN students were 'pre-registration graduate entry nursing students', 'pre-registration accelerated second degree nursing students', 'pre-registration second degree nursing students' and 'pre-registration accelerated nursing students'. Context: Studies were included that were conducted in countries with GEN programmes and similar health care systems; Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada. Concept: Studies were considered if they included clinical placement experience, inclusive of registered nurses' perceptions. Publication types: Peer-reviewed journal publications including literature reviews, mixed method studies, and qualitative studies. Grey literature was also included.

3.3. Exclusion criteria

Publications were excluded if they were published greater than 10 years ago, conducted in a country with a dissimilar health care system and did not clearly identify the outcomes as related to GEN students. Quantitative studies were not included as this was a qualitative scoping review.

3.4. Search outcome and study selection

Following the removal of duplicates from the 232 results returned by the database and hand searches, exclusion and inclusion criteria were then applied to the remaining 222 results (see Supplementary Material Fig. 1 PRISMA) (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005). After the application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the titles and abstracts of the remaining 127 results were screened for eligibility (EG). Following this

screening, the full texts of the remaining 16 articles were then screened for eligibility (EG). This resulted in the exclusion of eight articles (see Supplementary Material Fig. 1). Eight articles were then included for review. These were screened independently against the inclusion and exclusion criteria (EG and RM). After independently reviewing each publication, the reviewers discussed any disagreements to reach a consensus. A third reviewer was not utilised. The reference lists of the included articles were reviewed to locate any further relevant articles. Data was extracted and organised by 1) study characteristics, research design, research aims and 2) study findings.

3.5. Data analysis

Each of the included articles was read multiple times and initial ideas were noted (EG). Similar ideas were grouped into four categories (EG) and discussed with RM. After reviewing the categories, codes were generated for two of the four categories (EG & RM).

4. Results

4.1. Characteristics of included studies

Eight articles are included in this scoping review: a mixed methods study (Sedgwick et al., 2014), a qualitative meta-synthesis study (Jarden et al., 2021), a qualitative interview with an interpretive descriptive design (Pere et al., 2022), two longitudinal case studies (Stacey et al., 2015, 2016) and three opinion pieces (Aubeeluck et al., 2016; Bowie and Camacho, 2013; Stacey and Holland, 2017). The characteristics and main findings of each study are summarised in Supplementary Material Table 2. Four of the eight articles are from the United Kingdom (Aubeeluck et al., 2016; Stacey et al., 2015; Stacey et al., 2016; Stacey and Holland, 2017). Two studies are from Canada (Pere et al., 2022; Sedgwick et al., 2014) and the remaining two studies are from the United States (Bowie and Camacho, 2013) and Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia (Jarden et al., 2021).

Four articles included GEN students and RNs working as preceptors to GEN students (Sedgwick et al., 2014; Stacey et al., 2015; Stacey et al., 2016; Stacey and Holland, 2017), two included GEN students only (Aubeeluck et al., 2016; Jarden et al., 2021), one focused on RNs working as preceptors to GEN students (Pere et al., 2022) and one focused on GEN students, RNs working as preceptors and university faculty teaching GEN students (Bowie and Camacho, 2013).

4.2. Narrative synthesis of qualitative data

Four key categories emerged from this scoping review: 'negative perception of prior academic experience', 'scepticism and suspicion', 'evolving perceptions' and 'positive perception of prior experience' (Supplementary Material Fig. 2).

4.2.1. Negative perception of prior academic experience

RNs perceived GEN students prior academic experience as negative (Jarden et al., 2021; Stacey and Holland, 2017; Aubeeluck et al., 2016; Stacey et al., 2016; Stacey et al., 2015; Sedgwick et al., 2014), with the criticism being largely focused on prior academic achievement rather than life experience.

4.2.1.1. Anti-intellectualism. RNs may perceive GEN students' academic backgrounds negatively due to beliefs that intellectualism lowers standards of care (Aubeeluck et al., 2016). Some RNs and healthcare professionals do not believe that higher education is necessary for the nursing role, believing that "attempts to attract educated people into nursing are a contributing factor to decreased standards of care" (Aubeeluck et al., 2016, p. 104). Two of the studies identified that RNs associated GEN students with the anti-intellectualist concepts of "too

posh to wash" and "too clever to care" (Aubeeluck et al., 2016, p. 104; Jarden et al., 2021, p. 7).

Such anti-intellectualistic attitudes have the potential to create resistance towards GEN students as promoting "the value of their [GEN] prior experience in education" (Stacey and Holland, 2017, p. 1) there may be resistance from the existing, traditional nursing professionals. This "internal resistance" (Stacey and Holland, 2017, p. 1) to GEN students arises from historic anti-intellectualistic attitudes following the move of nursing education becoming a graduate profession.

GEN students may moderate their behaviour due to anti-intellectualistic attitudes held by some of the established nursing profession to avoid "discussion of their prior education and refrained from sharing knowledge in order to ensure that they were not perceived as a threat by established staff" (Stacey et al., 2016, p. 187). For example an RN in Stacey et al.'s (2016) study, criticised a GEN student for asking "reflective" questions, commenting that "I know we all need to be reflective at times but sometimes you have to get on with the job and think afterwards" (p. 187). The RN also commented that she told the student "You know how to do it, just do it and we will discuss the why's afterwards" (Stacey et al., 2016, p. 187) suggesting that the RN perceived the student's reflective questions as "inappropriate" (Stacey et al., 2016, p. 187) because the student was asking during a task rather than after a task had been completed.

4.2.1.2. Overconfidence. Some GEN students were negatively perceived as overconfident by RNs due to their prior academic experience and "past success in another field" (Sedgwick et al., 2014, p. 425), resulting in "tensions between the student, preceptor, and unit staff" (Sedgwick et al., 2014, p. 425). Stacey et al.'s (2015) study found GEN students were "aware of the potential to be judged as over-confident" (p. 2090). Such perceptions held by RNs resulted in "defensiveness" (Stacey et al., 2015, p. 2090) and a belief that "students would view themselves as superior" (p. 2090).

4.2.2. Scepticism and suspicion

Registered Nurses felt sceptical towards GEN programmes and students, particularly around the effectiveness of the fast-tracked education pathway (Bowie and Camacho, 2013). This is highlighted with one RN saying "I don't think it is possible to become a competent nurse in a fast track program such as yours" (Bowie and Camacho, 2013, p. 398). Such scepticism can result in a lack of acceptance amongst RNs of GEN programmes and students (Bowie and Camacho, 2013). Similarly, Stacey et al., 2016 reported that when RNs discussed the GEN programme in general, they expressed "scepticism and suspicion" (Stacey et al., 2016, p. 188) although they spoke highly of individual GEN students they had precepted. Despite such positive experiences, RNs remain concerned about the amount of the learning during the accelerated programme (Stacey et al., 2015).

Scepticism of the RNs about the ability of GEN students to achieve clinical competency requirements was associated with "resistance directed towards student participants" (Stacey et al., 2015, p. 2089). The discipline of individual GEN students' prior education also caused RNs to doubt the efficacy of the GEN programme. For example, one of the RNs commented in Stacey et al. (2015)'s study, "if they come in with an art degree or, you know, a drama degree or whatever I think, how they going to fit all that in when ours have to do three years?" (p. 2089).

4.2.3. Theme 3: evolving perceptions

Preceptors were often sceptical of GEN students, holding preconceived perceptions of their ability, which changed after mentoring them.

4.2.3.1. Preconceived perceptions. Before mentoring GEN students, RNs may hold preconceived perceptions of GEN students, with RNs holding assumptions about both the GEN programme and the type of student they will be precepting (Pere et al., 2022). Specifically, RNs appeared to

hold high expectations of GEN students due to GEN students fear of “not living up to expectations” (Jarden et al., 2021, p. 6) and lacking knowledge when undertaking clinical placement. The RNs hold an expectation of basic nursing skills and knowledge in that “if the students coming here at least [knows] those basics [...] like the fundamentals of nursing [...] it’s easier for us as a preceptor” (Pere et al., 2022, p. 3). Registered nurses may also hold high expectations for GEN students undertaking clinical placement due to previous experiences of precepting GEN students (Stacey et al. (2016) as evidenced in Stacey et al.’s (2016) study who reported that “positive experiences” (p. 188) with other GEN students led to the RN “expecting more from these students” (p. 188).

4.2.3.2. Changing perceptions. The preconceived perceptions of GEN students held by RNs have the potential to change. One RN described how prior to precepting one GEN student she struggled to understand what a student who held a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree was doing studying nursing (Pere et al., 2022). However, after mentoring the student, the RN commented that the student “ended up being one of the most compassionate, most engaging nursing students I’ve ever met” (p. 3). The perceptions of RNs about GEN students changed once the RN met the individual student and were surprised by the individual student’s abilities, suggesting that RNs preconceived perceptions of GEN students can change after precepting them in the clinical environment.

When speaking generally about GEN programmes in focus groups, RNs remained sceptical about the efficacy of the programmes (Stacey et al., 2016), with RNs in Stacey et al. (2016)’s study expressing that the “enthusiasm and commitment” (p. 188) of GEN students they worked with “distinguished them from other nursing students” (p. 188), whilst maintaining suspicion towards the GEN programme (Stacey et al., 2015).

4.2.4. Positive perception of prior experience

In contrast to the RNs negative perceptions RNs perceived GEN students’ prior experience positively (Aubeeluck et al., 2016; Pere et al., 2022) given the values and skills they bring to their practice. Aubeeluck et al. (2016) suggests that GEN students are perceived by RNs to have “transferable skills”, such as “knowledge, flexibility” (p. 104). Pere et al. (2022) found that RNs perceive GEN students as having a “high-degree of self-governance, adaptability and motivation to learn” (p. 3) due to their prior completion of a degree, thus being perceived as more comfortable in the clinical environment. The RNs in Pere et al.’s (2022) study perceived GEN students as more self-motivated with their learning during clinical experience, with one RN commenting that in comparison to nursing students on “other programs where I find they think they know everything” GEN students are “more inclined to seek out information and ask questions and have more drive to find the answers” (Pere et al., 2022, p. 3).

5. Discussion

This scoping review highlights the issues regarding perception and acceptance of GEN students in clinical practice by RNs. Eight publications that explored registered nurses’ perceptions of graduate entry nursing students undertaking clinical experience were included. Four key categories were generated through narrative synthesis: ‘negative perception of prior academic experience’, ‘scepticism and suspicion’, ‘evolving perceptions’ and ‘positive perception of prior experience’.

Specifically, this review demonstrates the ongoing pervasiveness of an anti-intellectualistic paradigm within the context of resisting change in nursing education practices by RNs generally, and perhaps notable that it is the RNs who have undertaken traditional pathways to practice that are most vocal (Aubeeluck et al., 2016; Bowie and Camacho, 2013; Jarden et al., 2021; Stacey and Holland, 2017). Concerningly, this culture of anti-intellectualism impacts on GEN students as they enter the

nursing profession and causes them to view themselves as less accepted by traditionally trained RNs and as “imposters” (Aubeeluck et al., 2016, p. 105; Jarden et al., 2021; Stacey and Holland, 2017).

Simultaneously, however, studies noted that despite pre-conceived notions of what a GEN student may be capable of and how they differ from traditional educational pathways, RNs perceptions evolved over a period of preceptorship, with often positive outcomes. Yet, such positivity is short-lived, as these are student specific, with general scepticism and suspicion remaining in place (Stacey et al., 2016).

In keeping with previous literature, the anti-intellectualism discourse noted in this study has been present for many decades and is particularly related to the shift from hospital-based training to tertiary education (Racine and Vandenberg, 2021). This viewpoint suggests that the more academic a nurse is, the less compassionate care provision will be (Buchanan, 2013; Clark et al., 2015; Snee et al., 2021), with the populist ‘too push to wash’ and ‘too clever to care’ phrases being aligned with this shift in professionalisation of nursing at the turn of this century (Chapman and Martin, 2013; Magnet, 2003). This discourse has been specifically associated with GEN programmes, yet contradicts the positive experiences of GEN preceptors (Aubeeluck et al., 2016; Jarden et al., 2021; Pere et al., 2022; Stacey et al., 2016). This causes us to question whether it is the misunderstanding of GEN programmes and thus students that is problematic in clinical placement experience.

Such perceptions may, however, not be solely due to a lack of understanding of GEN programmes by RNs, but also because GEN students can present as being overconfident, often due to their prior education, together with work and life experience (Sedgwick et al., 2014; Stacey et al., 2015). Yet this contradicts how GEN students perceive their own abilities as indicated by Sedgwick et al. (2014) whereby preceptors consistently scored student performance more highly than the students themselves. As such, this may reflect how GEN students internalise their real or feared resistance and lack of acceptance from RNs (Aubeeluck et al., 2016; Jarden et al., 2021; Stacey and Holland, 2017). Intrinsically, this internalisation results in feelings of being an imposter in the nursing workforce ultimately causing doubts about their competency or ability (Aubeeluck et al., 2016; Jarden et al., 2021; Stacey and Holland, 2017). Yet, such dichotomous perceptions ultimately impact GEN students’ experiences of clinical placement which is a significant component of their degree programme globally.

Whilst anti-intellectualism and perceptions regarding student confidence are highlighted as key issues in this review, these are set in the context of GEN students navigating the overriding discourse of change resistance in nursing practice. Often considered to reflect a feeling of being threatened by change (DuBose and Mayo, 2020), GEN students conceal prior academic achievements from RNs to prevent being perceived as a threat (Stacey et al., 2016). This, however, becomes problematic given that the GEN student’s prior academic and life experience is part of their identity, but they disguise this as a mechanism to achieve acceptance by the established nursing workforce. That said, there appears to be potential of GEN programmes and students being accepted in clinical practice, given that some RNs are now recognising the values, skills, and attributes of this student cohort. Specifically, and given the context of anti-intellectualistic nursing culture, GEN students are noted to be highly self-motivated and self-directed (Aubeeluck et al., 2016; Pere et al., 2022; Stacey et al., 2016). Yet, given the newness of GEN programmes generally, and specifically in the Oceania region, there remains the potential to improve GEN student acceptance in clinical practice.

As such, this study offers an insightful, if somewhat concerning, snapshot of GEN students’ experiences of RN preceptorship when in clinical placement. Explicitly, the key findings of this review expose a deep-rooted culture of negativity towards change in nursing education, and suspicion of students who are seen as ‘other’ in comparison to the RN preceptors. Yet, there is potential for change to occur given that individual GEN students are acknowledged for their positive attributes that contribute to nursing practice. This, however, remains isolated and

in its infancy but presents the potential for change to occur, albeit slowly, given the relative newness of GEN programmes at present. As these experiences appear to be a global issue for GEN students in clinical practice, these findings offer an opportunity to explore opportunities to support these students when they encounter these negative experiences.

5.1. Strengths and limitations

The inclusion of only eight articles following comprehensive database searches suggests a gap in the existing literature on GEN degrees and students and so supports the decision to employ a qualitative scoping review research design. The strength of this review is that begins to address this gap in the literature regarding how RNs perceive and subsequently interact with GEN students in the clinical environment regarding GEN programmes and student experiences. Graduate entry nursing programmes offer one way to address international nursing shortages, therefore it is vital to understand more about how RNs perceive and subsequently interact with GEN students in the clinical environment as these interactions have the potential to influence how GEN students experience their nursing study.

The main limitations of this scoping review were the lack of literature on the topic and the records were not blind-screened for selection and data extraction. This led to the inclusion of articles of which the majority were not solely focused on the topic of RNs perceptions of GEN students, demonstrating the need for future research.

5.2. Gaps in the international qualitative literature

Whilst all the articles included discussion of RN perceptions of GEN students, only two of the articles focused on RNs precepting GEN students undertaking clinical placement (Pere et al., 2022; Sedgwick et al., 2014). The remaining six articles included RN perceptions of GEN students but the overall focus of the article was not RN perceptions and they also included the perspectives of GEN students and university faculty involved in the of teaching GEN programmes (Aubeeluck et al., 2016; Bowie and Camacho, 2013; Jarden et al., 2021; Stacey et al., 2015; Stacey et al., 2016; Stacey and Holland, 2017). Furthermore, some of the findings were gathered from GEN student perspectives where the RN perception can be inferred. The results of this scoping review therefore reflect a clear gap in qualitative research on registered nurses' perceptions of GEN students.

5.3. Recommendations for future research and nursing education and practice

There is an opportunity for future research to understand how RNs perceive GEN students as this interaction between RNs and GEN students can have implications moving forward for nursing practice. As such, this future research could be used to develop education to assist RNs understanding of GEN students, their programme and the life skills they may bring to nursing, thus improving the preceptorship experience. Key suggestions would include both the promotion of GEN programmes and building awareness of similarities and differences between traditional and GEN nursing during preceptorship programmes. The development of strong stakeholder relationships within the wider nursing community would provide the opportunity to engage awareness of the capability of GEN students and what they have to offer to the future of nursing.

5.4. Implications for nursing practice

The negative perceptions of GEN students by RNs are problematic given the necessity of nurturing a positive two-way relationship in the development of student nurse clinical competencies (Bowie and Camacho, 2013). As such, further exploration of this issue, and the development of appropriate solutions is essential if GEN students are to be able

to make the significant contribution to patient care that they are well positioned to do. Furthermore, RN perceptions of GEN students may impact the ability of GEN programmes to meet current international nursing shortages as a fast-tracked route to nursing registration (Jarden et al., 2021; Macdiarmid et al., 2021a; Winnington et al., 2023; World Health Organisation, 2020).

Such views of GEN students may lead many to feel that they do not belong in nursing which may impact how they view themselves in relation to other nurses as they transition from being students to RNs (Aubeeluck et al., 2016, p. 105; Jarden et al., 2021; Stacey and Holland, 2017). Therefore, more must be done to increase acceptance of GEN programmes and students by the established nursing workforce.

6. Conclusions

This scoping review has mapped RN perceptions of GEN students undertaking clinical placement demonstrating a breadth of viewpoints and acceptance of this new pathway to nursing. This is evidenced by RNs offering polarised perceptions of GEN students in clinical practice, however, there is evidence that positive viewpoints are often student specific and not about GEN programmes in general. Specifically, clinical placement comprises a large part of GEN programmes and therefore RN perspectives of this student cohort can greatly impact upon how GEN students experience their degrees. This scoping review, therefore, recommends further research exploring how RNs perceive GEN students thus responding to the gap in the literature. Furthermore, through developing improved information regarding GEN programmes for RNs, it may facilitate growth of understanding and acceptance of GEN students and programmes, thus improving the preceptorship relationship.

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CRediT authorship contribution statement

Eleanor Griffin: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Rhona Winnington:** Writing – review & editing, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Rachel Macdiarmid:** Writing – review & editing, Methodology, Formal analysis, Conceptualization.

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Declaration of competing interest

None.

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