

# “The course has given me a desire and interest in investigating practice” A study of nurses' experiences with a postgraduate course over eight years

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## Background

The Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at Hvidovre Hospital, Denmark conducts a postgraduate course for nurses to strengthen the evidence-based development of clinical practice.

The course runs once a year with a total of 14 days over a period of four months. The participants are taught evidence-based practice and classes in different relevant subjects based on newest evidence-based knowledge. Furthermore, the course includes reflection sessions, literature search and a written essay based on clinical issues.

Ten courses have been completed between 2011-2019 with a total of 98 participants, the majority of whom are still employed in the department.

The literature describes educational interventions aiming at developing and implementing evidence-based practice.

The interventions are diverse and are mostly evaluated based on short-term outcomes and primarily among the intervention's participants. However, studies evaluating long-term results and broader perspectives such as management and colleague perspectives are missing.

## Aim

To examine nurses' experiences with a postgraduate course over eight years with the perspectives from participants, colleagues, and managers.

## Method

- Ten semi-structured interviews consisting of six focus groups and four individual interviews were conducted in June 2019
- 26 nurses with and without special functions participated to include both a participant, a colleague and a management perspective. The interviews included participants from all years of the postgraduate course
- Data were analysed via thematic analysis

## Conclusion

The most significant gains from the course are personal gains. These are also dominant over time when the personal barriers become less dominant.

The gains remain individual e.g., due to the organisational barriers identified as a lack of structured knowledge-sharing, but with the many nurses who have completed the course, collective tendencies emerge.

To ensure collective gains, as well as a greater development of evidence-based practice, organisational and managerial support is needed before, during and after the course.



## Results

'Gains' from the course were described as **personal gains** such as changed behaviour in practice, a greater desire for developing practice and a more reflexive approach to practice, and as **clinical gains** such as greater knowledge about the patient pathways and changes in practice based on clinical issues or on subjects from the course.

'Barriers' from the course were described as **personal barriers** such as difficulties with literature search, understanding English scientific literature and writing a paper, and as **organisational barriers** such as a lack of a structure for sharing new knowledge.

