

Supporting the Director of Nursing Role in Long-Term Care: An Integrative Review

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Introduction

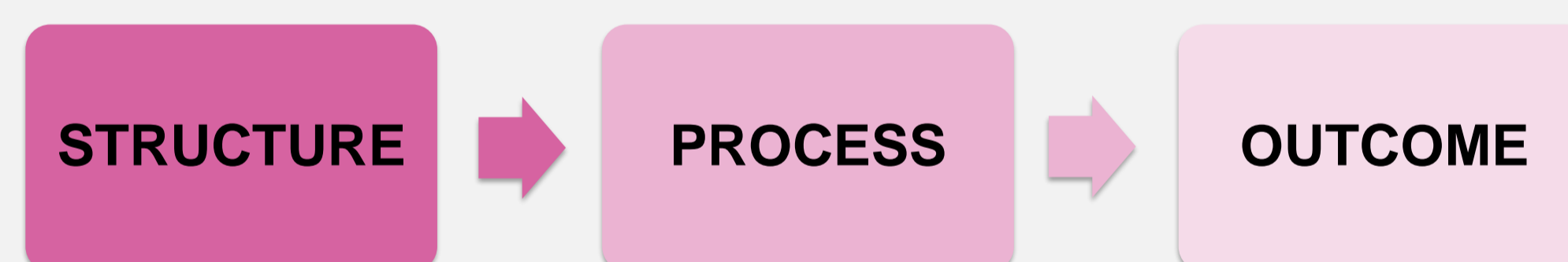
- The Director of Nursing (DON) is a critical member of the senior leadership team in long-term care (LTC) homes¹.
- DON turnover rates are high in LTC², and it is important to understand the factors that support the DON role and facilitate retention and recruitment of this nurse leader.

Objective

To synthesize existing literature to determine the structures and processes that support the DON in LTC homes.

Method

Theoretical Framework: Donabedian's Structure-Process-Outcome Quality Framework³



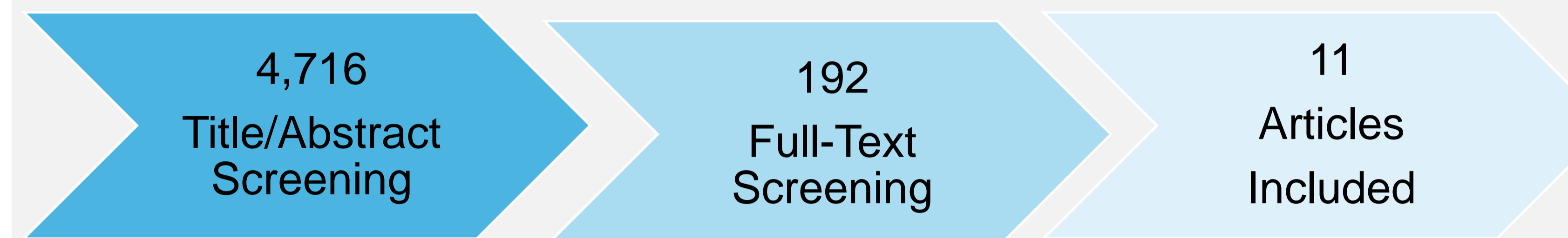
Databases: Medline, Embase, CINAHL, AgeLine, Cochrane Systematic Review

Keywords: “Long-term care homes” with synonyms & “Nursing administrator(s)” with synonyms

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

1. Registered Nurse in a DON position within the LTC home
2. Qualitative or mixed methods studies describing a relationship or theme relating to a structure or process influencing the role
3. Quantitative studies reporting a relationship between structure and process
4. English language.
5. **Excluded:** other reviews, dissertations, conference proceedings, and editorials.

Results



Study Characteristics

Methods: Qualitative ($n=6$), Quantitative ($n=5$)
Location: United States ($n=9$), Canada ($n=1$), Belgium ($n=1$)

Structures

- **Individual Level**
 - Years of experience ($n=7$)
 - Higher level of education ($n=5$)
 - Demonstrated leadership capabilities ($n=4$)
 - Completed certification and/or established linkages with professional associations ($n=2$)
 - Completed continued education ($n=2$)
- **Organizational Level**
 - Physical presence of leadership across the organization ($n=4$)
 - Job description that outlines DON's key responsibilities and expectations ($n=3$)
 - Salary ($n=1$)

Processes

- Nursing Home Administrator (NHA) and DON role relationship ($n=4$)
- Availability of onsite continued education opportunities targeting DONs and support for continued education ($n=4$)
- Cultivating relationships and enhancing networks beyond the LTC home ($n=3$)
- Orientation to the role ($n=3$)

Discussion & Conclusion

- The DON is an important leader in Ontario long-term care homes that has a positive influence on staffing, work culture and delivery of quality care. There are supportive strategies from the literature that enhance the DON ability to perform in their role, and in turn may influence their intent to stay.
- Supportive strategies, defined as organizational level structures lessened the need for the DON to cover leaders across the home, clarified roles and responsibilities, and led to their engagement in advancing the profession and organizational long-term care leadership.
- Supportive strategies, defined as processes enhanced the DON sense of autonomy, addressed learning needs, strengthened management of stress related to the regulatory processes, and supported successful transitions into the role.

Future Research Directions:

- Leaders from LTC will be engaged in semi-structured interviews to determine the relevance of implementing these supportive supports in Ontario.

Bibliography

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