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## **Sustaining nursing leadership through succession planning in Saudi Arabia**

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**Introduction:** Nursing Leadership development through succession planning is a strategy that has gained recent attention in Saudi Arabia in alignment with Saudi Vision 2030 and the National Transformational Plan 2020. Aim: this study explores how to develop and sustain nursing leadership competency through succession planning in Eastern Healthcare Cluster.

**Method:** A qualitative descriptive design took place in Eastern Healthcare Cluster that consists of 22 hospitals and 137 Primary Health Centers. Through a purposive sampling technique, a total of 121 potential candidate names were submitted to the Eastern Healthcare Cluster Nursing Affairs for consideration and acceptance on the Succession plan program. A comprehensive document package was developed which utilized the Structure, Process and Outcome (SPO) framework to examine and evaluate the development

of leadership competency.

**Results:** A total of 31 completed competencies aligned to the workshop and were found to be suitable for succession plan positions, the remaining 15 demonstrated leadership potential and their deadlines were extended to provide more time to develop competency.

**Recommendations:** Despite many challenges and limitations, the authors recommended maintaining and sustaining the succession plan program during 2021 by developing additional workshops that align competencies to further develop Nurse Leaders. Additionally, the provision of mentorship programs that have the aim of sharpening the mentor's skill set will provide mentees with the necessary support to successfully develop leadership competence. There is thus a requirement for further studies to be conducted in this nursing population in Saudi Arabia which is currently under-researched

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