



Failure to Fail Underperforming Trainees in Health Professions: A BEME Systematic Review of the Barriers Inhibiting Educators



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SDRME, JUNE 29, 2015





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Background

- The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) surveyed clinical faculty at ten schools and “unwillingness to record negative evaluations” was rated as a problem by 74.5%
- 2005, N.Dudek explored the factors identified by supervisors that affect their unwillingness to report poor clinical performance when completing In-Training Evaluation Reports
 - Tonesk X, Buchanan RG. J Med Educ. 1987;62(9):707-18.
 - Dudek NL, et al. Acad Med. 2005;80(10 Suppl):S84-7.

AIM

- Systematic Review of Healthcare Trainees Literature:
- Consolidate the available knowledge on factors that affect faculty 's ability and willingness to report poor clinical performance.

- Protocol and Registration



Reviews in Progress

Search Methods

- Selection of Search Terms
 - Research Librarian at USUHS
 - PubMed and Google Scholar identified 126 references citing Dudek's 2005 article
 - Selected key references and search terms
 - Several modifications to capture breadth of literature, focused on health care trainees. *Scoping Review as foreground to Systematic Review*
 - Relevant citations emerged from medicine, nursing and dentistry
 - Final search strategy includes all critical citations

Search Methods

- Search strategy was applied to PubMed, EMBASE, and CINAHL.
- Published Literature
- 2005 – 2014, updated January 2015
- English language
- Final library: 5,339 citations

Inclusion Criteria

- Studies that discuss the faculty's or evaluator's concerns or viewpoints on failing a trainee

Exclusion Criteria

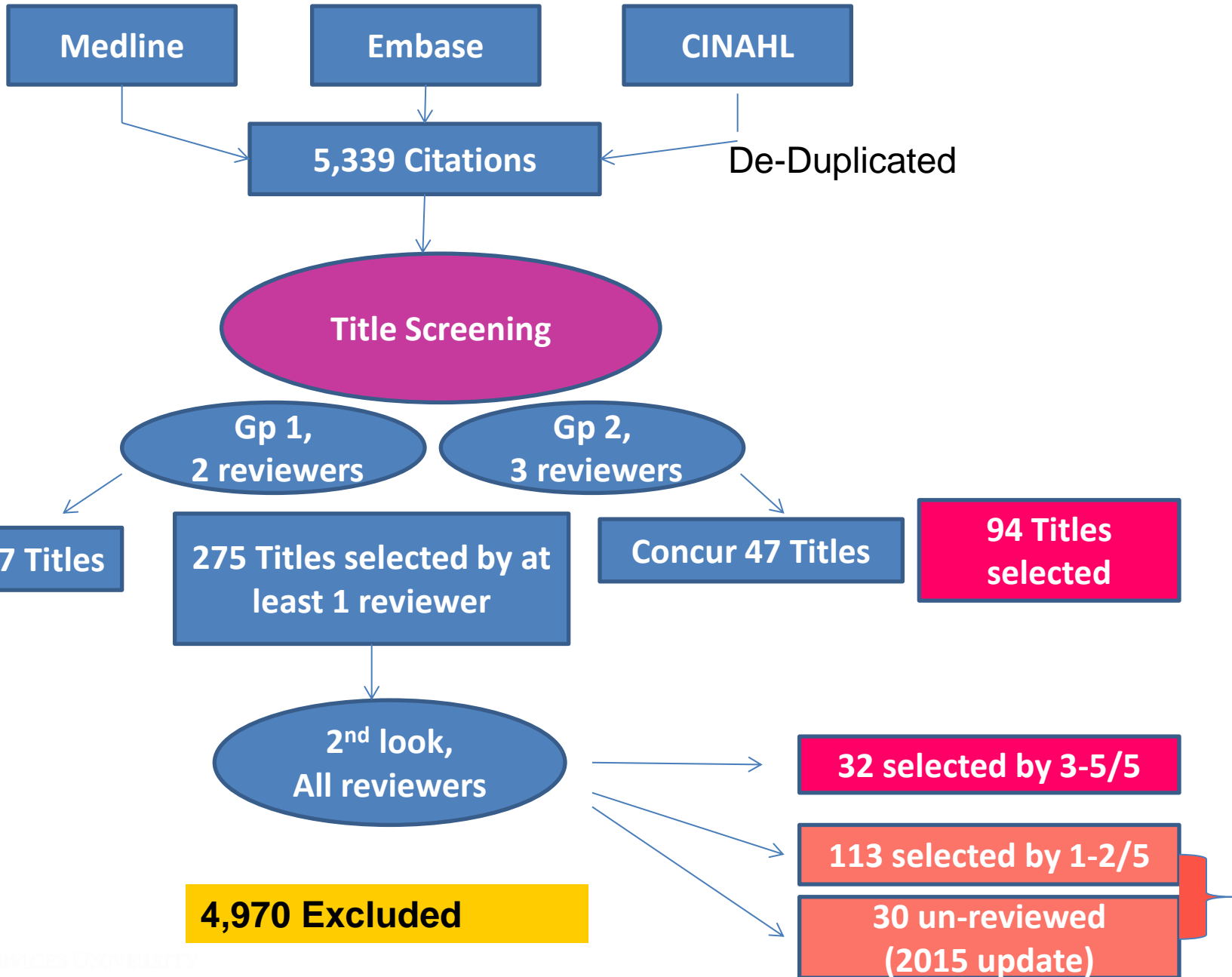
- Pilot tested, random sample of 150 citations, 3 iterations
 - 1) Not target profession
 - 2) Not related to trainee education
 - Clinical, Decision-Making, Practice Management
 - 3) Related to the development or vetting of an evaluation tool, knowledge assessment, curriculum, educational or skills intervention

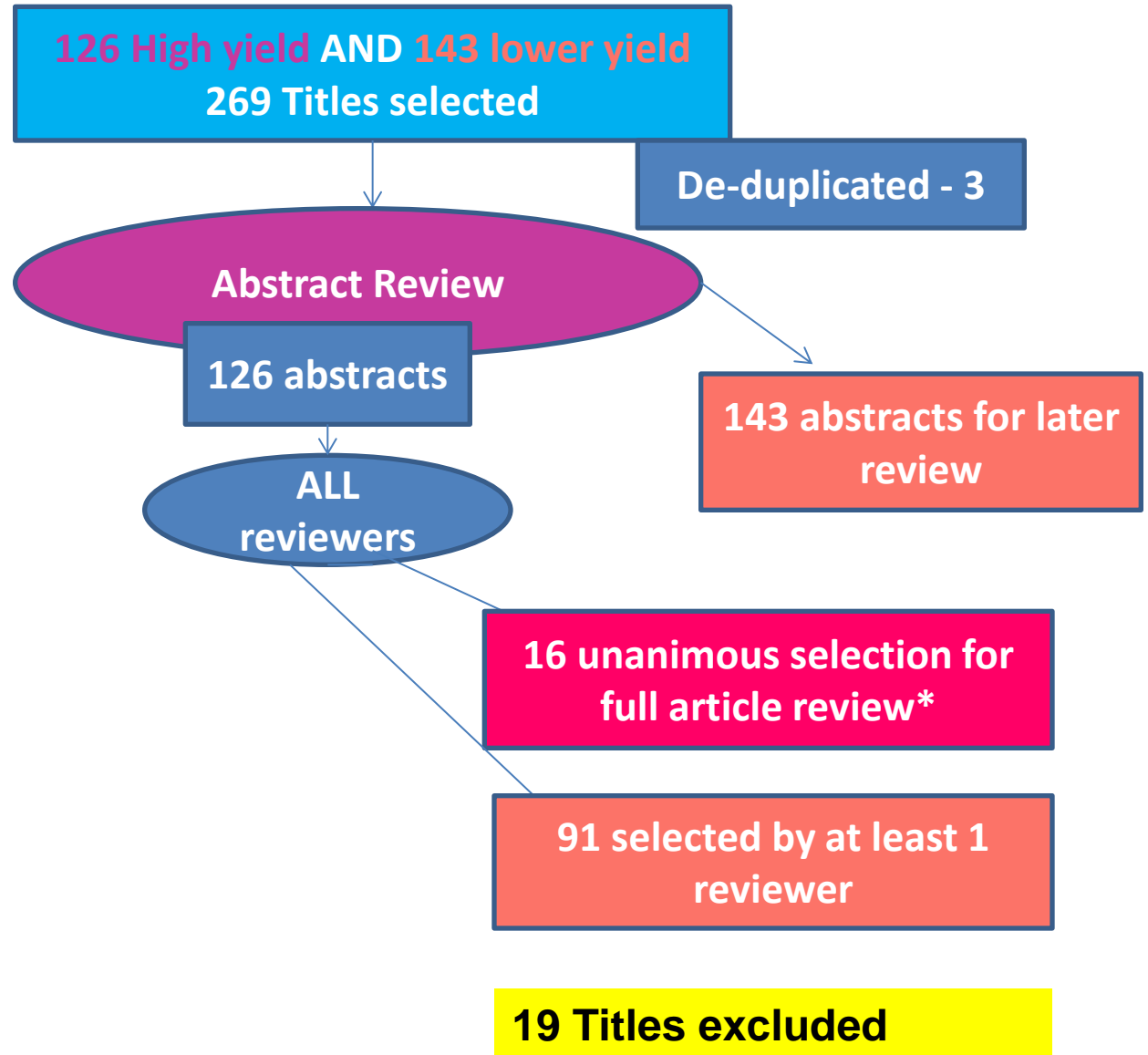
Exclusion Criteria

Related to the development or vetting of:

An Educational Intervention

Example: Leung FH, et al. 2009. “A theory-based curriculum design for remediation of residents' communication skills.”





Data Collection and Reporting PRISMA

- Piloted data extraction forms
- Data items:
 - Demographics
 - Study Type
 - Reported Themes
 - Type of Analysis and Theory
 - Quality - CASP -UK
- DistillerSR[®] Systematic Review Software

Preliminary Results

Results[N = 15]

Trainee	
Medical	2
Nursing	10
Dental	1
Health Professionals in Training	2
Study Country	
United States	1
Canada	7
UK	7
Study Type	
Qualitative	8 [Focus Groups (1), Individual Interviews (6), Both (1)]
Quantitative	1
Mixed Methods	1 [mailed survey]
Review	4
Other	1 [newspaper, unpublished research]

Faculty Demographics	
N	1,809 [mailed surveys] 198 [focus groups/interviews]
Gender (% Female)	61.72 %
Age, Years in Practice, Teaching Experience, Academic vs Community- based	Not consistently reported

Critical Appraisal Skills Program

CASP-UK

1. Is there a clear statement of the aims
2. Is the methodology appropriate
3. Is it worth continuing?

Results [Qualitative /Mixed Methods Studies]

- 10/10 Good Quality
- Review articles also rated Good Quality
 - Exploratory Theories, Descriptive Analysis, Reflective,

Thematic Analysis

- Data extraction arbitrated by 2 authors
- Barriers were clustered around 6 overarching Themes
- These themes were grouped into specific failure-to-fail considerations

Central Concerns

BARRIERS	N
Professional Considerations	14
Personal Considerations	14
Evaluation Process / Faculty Development	13
Trainee Related Considerations	10
Institutional Considerations / Normative Beliefs	10
Remediation Process	3

Professional Considerations

- **Extra Workload Involved**

“It ’s just a pain . . . way more work, way more documentation.... You ’re going to have to defend your actions with the program director or at the university level ”. (Dudek 2005)

- **Lower Faculty Evaluations,**

Label “bad teacher”

- **Fear of litigation, Grievances**

“We ... are very hesitant to consider dismissal for fear that we will be dragged into court. ” (Guerrasio 2014)

Personal Considerations

- **Guilt, Shame, Personal Failure**

“I think part of it is looking at yourself too because you are supposed to be getting this young nurse ready to step out into the professional world, and if she fails, maybe it's something you didn't do right. ” (Luhanga 2008)

- **Emotional Discomfort**

“...a lot of mentors don't fail. The students cry, are upset and telling you XYZ. It is like emotional blackmail.” (Jervis 2011)

- **Relationship with the Student**

Student personality, liking the student, being fair to the student, facing an angry student

Student-Related Considerations as Barriers for Failing a Student:

- **Financial**

“She was very keen to be a doctor, and her parents were spending a lot of money to send her to [country/school] [Cleland 2008]

- **Personal , Ending Career Goals**

“I didn't feel I wanted to end her nursing career on this one specialty.” [Luhanga 2010]

Institutional Considerations as Barriers for Failing a Student:

- **Health Professions Shortages**

“.. preceptors believed students passed because of the current nursing shortage... I think it 's because we need nurses so badly. So quickly they are rushed through.”

[Luhanga 2008]

- **Lack of Institutional Support, Pressure to Pass**

- **Diminished Institution Reputation**

“...perceived pressure from the university to pass students... this was associated with issues of finance and reputation, accompanied by the belief that faculty with high failure rates would deter potential students.” [Cleland 2008]

- **Inflated Grading from Previous Educators**

Evaluation Process Barriers for Failing a Student:

- **Lack of Experience and/or Confidence in the Evaluator Role**

“I guess it is my lack of experience of being a preceptor. I didn ’t really know how to do it in a nice way, probably, so I let it go. ” [Luhanga 2008]

- **Uncertainty, Variability in Evaluation Standards**

“We don ’t do a good enough job of recording performance. Then if the student challenges you, you do not have a leg to stand on because you cannot recall specific incidents...I had to go back and retrospectively create that documentation because I didn ’t realize that that was an issue. ” [Dudek 2005]

Remediation Process Barriers for Failing a Student:

None or limited remediation process

“.. many participants felt that they could not fail a trainee if remediation was not available to them. They felt it was their responsibility to provide remediation and, if unable to do so, they might not fail that person.” [Dudek 2005]

Facilitators: What helps faculty	N
Duty to Society: Patient Safety, Professional Standards, Moral Responsibility	7
Institutional Support	3
Faculty and Evaluation Tool Development	2
Remediation venues	1

What Helps Faculty

- **Duty to Society**

“A lot of us have that feeling... Would we let this person operate on our father? These are the people that are going to be your colleagues. Your reputation as a profession depends on it (a valid evaluation process).” [Dudek 2005]

“...you have a duty of care towards the patient.” [Bush 2013]

What Helps Faculty

- **Institution support**
- **Remediation Venue**

“Participants identified a sense of responsibility as the main motive to fail a trainee: to the public to ensure safety, to the profession to protect its reputation, and to the trainee to allow them the opportunity for remediation.” [Dudek 2005]

Conclusions

- Initial literature review has identified barriers to failing trainees, clustered around 6 overarching themes.
- Awareness of Professional Responsibility and Patient Safety
- Gaps in the literature include knowledge of faculty demographics, and few experiences of themes that help evaluators fail a failing trainee

Thank You

SDRME Grant Support



BEME Protocol Review

USUHS Colleagues

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Medline (Ovid)

Failure to Fail - Ovid MEDLINE search strategy

Results (05/01/2014): 2497 -16 duplicates = 2481 records

1. remedial teaching/ or (at-risk or below average or below expectation* or fail or failing or failure or grade inflation or incompeten* or low perform* or marginal perform* or milestone* or passing or pass rate* or performance deficienc* or poor performance or remedia* or struggling or student competenc* or trainee competence or underachiev* or underperform* or unsafe or unsuccessful student*).ti,ab.
2. (((academic or resident? or trainee?) adj2 (difficult* or performance)) or (academic adj2 (dismissal* or probation or warning*))).ti,ab.
3. or/1-2
4. 3
5. ((apprenticeship* or clerkship* or intern? or internship* or mentor* or precept* or preclerkship* or residency or residencies or resident? or trainee?) adj2 (medicine or medical or dental)).ti,ab.
6. (first year adj2 (doctor* or dentist* or nurse*)).ti,ab.
7. (nursing residen* or ((apprenticeship* or clerkship* or intern? or internship* or mentor\$ or precept* or preclerkship* or trainee?) and nursing)).ti,ab.
8. Clinical Clerkship/ or exp "Internship and Residency"/ or exp Preceptorship/ or exp Students, Nursing/ or exp Students, Medical/ or Students, Dental/
9. ((student* adj1 (medical or nursing or dental)) or nursing program).ti,ab.
10. or/5-9
11. 4 and 10
12. limit 12 to (english language and yr="2005 -Current")
13. (letter or comment).pt.
14. 12 not 13

EMBASE

Results (05/01/2014): 2478 - 768 duplicates = 1710 records

1. 'academic failure'/exp OR 'academic failure':ab,ti
2. (academic OR resident OR residents OR trainee OR trainees) NEAR/2 (difficulty OR difficulties OR performance)
3. academic NEAR/2 (dismissal* or probation or warning*)
4. 'at-risk':ab,ti OR 'below average':ab,ti OR 'below expectation':ab,ti OR 'below expectations':ab,ti OR fail:ab,ti OR failing:ab,ti OR failure:ab,ti OR 'grade inflation':ab,ti OR milestone:ab,ti OR milestones:ab,ti OR passing:ab,ti OR 'poor performance':ab,ti OR struggling:ab,ti OR 'trainee competence':ab,ti OR 'unsuccessful student':ab,ti OR 'unsuccessful students':ab,ti
5. incompeten* OR low NEXT/1 perform* OR marginal NEXT/1 perform* OR 'pass rate' OR 'pass rates' OR performance NEXT/1 deficienc* OR remedia* OR student NEXT/1 competenc* OR underachiev* OR underperform*
6. #1 OR #2 OR #3 OR #4 OR #5
7. residency:ab,ti OR residencies:ab,ti OR resident:ab,ti OR residents:ab,ti OR intern:ab,ti OR interns:ab,ti OR internship:ab,ti OR internships:ab,ti OR trainee:ab,ti OR trainees:ab,ti OR clerkship:ab,ti OR clerkships:ab,ti OR preclerkship:ab,ti OR preclerkships:ab,ti OR preceptor:ab,ti OR preceptors:ab,ti OR preceptorship:ab,ti OR preceptorships:ab,ti OR mentor:ab,ti OR mentors:ab,ti OR mentoring:ab,ti OR apprenticeship:ab,ti OR apprenticeships:ab,ti AND medical:ab,ti
8. nursing NEXT/1 (residency OR residencies OR resident OR residents) OR (intern:ab,ti OR interns:ab,ti OR internship:ab,ti OR internships:ab,ti OR trainee:ab,ti OR trainees:ab,ti OR clerkship:ab,ti OR clerkships:ab,ti OR preclerkship:ab,ti OR preclerkships:ab,ti OR preceptor:ab,ti OR preceptors:ab,ti OR preceptorship:ab,ti OR preceptorships:ab,ti OR mentor:ab,ti OR mentors:ab,ti OR mentoring:ab,ti OR apprenticeship:ab,ti OR apprenticeships:ab,ti AND nursing:ab,ti)
9. 'clinical education'/exp OR 'medical student'/exp OR 'nursing student'/exp OR 'nursing student'/exp
10. 'medical student':ab,ti OR 'medical students':ab,ti OR 'nursing student':ab,ti OR 'nursing students':ab,ti OR 'nursing program':ab,ti OR 'dental student':ab,ti OR 'dental students':ab,ti
11. "first year" NEXT/1 (doctor* or dentist* OR nurse*)
12. #7 OR #8 OR #9 OR #10 OR #11
13. #6 AND #12
14. #6 AND #12 AND [english]/lim AND [embase]/lim AND [2005-2014]/py
15. letter:it OR 'note':it
16. #14 NOT #15

CINAHL

Results (04/22/2014): 481 records - 47 dups = 434

1. (MH "Remedial Teaching") OR (MH "Academic Failure")
2. "at-risk" OR "below average" OR "below expectation" OR "below expectations" OR fail OR failing OR failure OR "grade inflation" OR incompeten* OR low perform* OR marginal perform* OR milestone* OR passing OR pass rate* OR "performance assessment" OR performance asesments OR performance deficienc* OR "performance evaluation" OR "performance evaluations" OR "poor performing" OR "poor performance" OR remedia* OR struggling OR "student competence" OR "student competencies" OR "trainee competence" OR "trainee competencies" OR underachiev* OR underperform* OR unsafe OR "unsuccessful student" OR "unsuccessful students"
3. ((academic OR resident* OR trainee*) W2 (difficult* OR performance)) OR academic W2 (dismissal* OR probation OR warning*)
4. S1 OR S2 OR S3
5. (MH "Preceptorship") OR (MH "Internship and Residency") OR (MH "Mentorship") OR (MH "Students, Nursing+") OR (MH "Students, Medical") OR (MH "Students, Dental")
6. (apprenticeship* OR clerkship* OR intern OR interns OR internship* OR mentor* OR precept* OR preclerkship* OR trainee*) AND (medical OR medicine OR dental)
7. "first year" W2 (doctor* OR nurse* OR dentist*)
8. ("nursing resident" OR "nursing residents" OR "nursing residencies") OR ((apprenticeship* OR clerkship* OR intern OR interns OR internship* OR mentor* OR precept* OR preclerkship* OR trainee*) AND (nursing))
9. S5 OR S6 OR S7 OR S8
10. S4 AND S9 Limiters: Date: 20020101-20141231; English Language; Peer Reviewed; Exclude MEDLINE records