

Fostering Baccalaureate Nursing Students' Interest in Community Health Nursing

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CHNC 2016 Conference
St John's NL
May 30- June 1, 2016

Background

- Ongoing trend and student interest in CHN
- BScN students' low attendance of CHN course
- No national or provincial or regional study exists, thus the need to investigate the issue and initiate a dialogue
- International contexts
- Curriculum development, policy making and recruitment planning

Research Purpose

- To explore issues that influence career choice in CHN from the perspective of baccalaureate nursing students.
- The study used a qualitative research approach to explicate both personal and contextual factors that may influence their decision to choose CHN.



Research objectives

- The objectives of this study are:
 - a) to learn about BScN students' perceptions, knowledge and attitudes about a career in Community health nursing;
 - b) to understand the issues that influence interest in; and choice of CHN; and
 - c) to identify ways of increasing awareness of CHN and motivation to become CHNs among undergraduate student nurses.

Literature Review-Key Findings

- Survey of CHN Curriculum
- Students Preconceptions of CHN Clinical Experience
- International Challenges in Recruitment/Retention
- Key Challenges surrounding CHN/PHN

Research Methodology

- Descriptive Qualitative design (Sandelowski, 2000)
- Study Setting- University of Ottawa
- Ethical considerations-REB approval obtained from University of Ottawa
- Recruitment
 - Purposive and Snowball sampling techniques
- Sample size: N=11 nursing students
 - 1st year N=2 4th year N=9, more 4th year students target
 - Rationale: 1st year: no exposure to any nursing related courses, provided insights into initiating change
- Data Collection
 - Semi -Structured interviews lasting approx. 60 mins
 - Two focus groups discussions
 - 1) Students
 - 2) members of OCHNLN
- Data Analysis
 - Thematic analysis approach
- Trustworthiness of data
 - Member-checking
 - External audit.



Findings

- Key Themes
 1. Defining Community Health Nursing
 2. Nature of Clinical Practicum Experience
 3. Stereotypes of CHN
 4. Societal Trends & Expectations
 5. Other issues influencing career choice in CHN

Theme 1: Defining CHN



- Definitions touched on community, acuteness, health promotion and prevention, disease management, nature of the environment
 - “CHN to me is kind of working with the community as a whole and as a nurse trying to improve the health of a whole community, as opposed to just one client or one patient. So kind of looking at the big picture and outcomes for a whole community, not just one person”
 - “From my understanding it’s a nursing job that’s more educational, so you are not necessarily working in a hospital setting, you are more in the community, doing outreach working with different kind of people to promote health and educate”
 - “To me CHN is anything that is nursing and health related that does not happen in an acute situation, it doesn’t happen in a crisis, it is very much something that is not in a hospital, not an emergency situation, more of an ongoing...and it involves the dimensions...promotion, prevention and chronic disease management, for me it is something that is not acute”

Theme 2: The Nature of Clinical Practicum Experience

1. Lived up to nobody's expectations
 - “ I feel like everyone has an idea of what CHN is and then we got put into that placement and it kind of lived up to nobody's expectations and we were all kind of like...‘this sucks’”
2. Doing “non-nursing” tasks
 - “All we did was make an orientation manual for nurses..for example who do you call when you cannot get xx to work...it was not nursing..I feel like we got put into these places as fillers for the work nurses did not want to do”
3. Meaningful Engagement
 - “Many people did not want to do our CHN clinical and felt doing it was a drag”
 - “I really like CHN...but I did not enjoy my CHN clinical at all...”

Theme 3: Stereotypes of CHN...

Community health nursing is:

- not “**real**” nursing
- “**less stressful and laidback** work
- the “**easy way out**” type of job
- “**end of the road**”



Hospital based nurses:

- Work harder
- Do fast pace work
- Do high tech nursing tasks..



Theme 3:

Stereotypes of CHN



- Workplace for **the older and mature** RNs. Participants viewed CHN as an area:
 - for older and experienced nurses,
 - to go after you have worked in the hospital and acquired your nursing skills,
 - to go when you are ready to settle down and have a family
 - to retire in

- **CHN as ‘pearls and pumps’ nursing:** They viewed CHNs as those who:
 - have the ability to dress pretty and look nice as opposed to other nurses who get dirty and get to do all sorts of procedures



Theme 4: Societal trends & Expectations

- **NCLEX prep/content:**

- Many students believed in order to do well on licensure exam they need to consolidate in med /surg areas to prepare for exam
- Most of these students end up staying on consolidation unit because of easier access to offer of employment

“ICU or ER nurses are cool”

- Students tend to be attracted to these complex areas of nursing that use different equipment and procedures

NCLEX[®]
EXAMINATIONS



Theme 4:

Societal trends and Expectations...



- Students tend to go into the areas of nursing that:
 - Offer new graduate employment opportunities,
 - Offer paid full time position for 6 months

Theme 5: Other issues influencing career choice in CHN

1. The Nature of Nursing Work: Community vs. Acute Care
2. Job Accessibility: *“Whatever I can get, I’ll take”*
3. Appropriate Incentives
4. Supportive Working Environment
5. Family Oriented Lifestyle and Personal Interests
6. Pedagogy of Teaching



Discussion and Implications

- Implications to Nursing Research

- Initiation of dialogue
- Platform for further inquiry
- Global context



- Implications to Nursing Education

- Early exposure and access to role models
- Develop guidelines for ensuring quality community health nursing clinical placements

Discussion and Implications...

- Implications to Nursing Practice
 - Stereotypes
 - Harmony in the nursing profession
- Implications to Nursing Policy
 - Recruitment strategies-sign on bonuses, flexibility in wages, job advertisement



Conclusion

- Community health nursing education and practice in the 21st century.
 - Primary target: Nursing Education



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