

Student Nurses' Experiences with Invisible Workers in the Backstretch

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Stephanie Eusebio, Laura McKenzie, & Aryn Nemani

University of New Brunswick/Humber College

Collaborative BN Program



WE ARE

HUMBER

Our Clinical Group



University of New Brunswick/Humber College

Nursing Curriculum

- Humber College is proud of its collaboration with the University of New Brunswick
- Community health nursing is the main focus during the fall of third year
- There were 31 community placements during the fall 2015 semester
- Each placement consisted of 7-8 students and a clinical instructor
- We were the first group to be placed at Woodbine Racetrack

Objectives

1. Highlight our “invisible population” at the racetrack including their strengths and health risks
2. Explore the use of the community health nursing process to address the health risks of the population
3. Demonstrate the value of unique clinical placements to advance practice for community health nursing students
4. Demonstrate the need for greater CHN advocacy in the backstretch community

Woodbine Racetrack



- Woodbine Racetrack is located in Toronto, Ontario
- Main focus is on horseracing and gambling
- It is the largest racetrack in Ontario
- Common perception is that horseracing is a glamorous industry
- Few know about the backstretch population
- This “invisible population” is underserviced and faces extreme health inequities

Our Population: The Backstretch

- This population is a tightknit community who share a unique lifestyle and culture
- Backbone of the horseracing industry
- Typical positions include: hot walkers, groomers, exercise riders and blacksmiths
- Working season is between mid-March and mid-December



Demographics

- Total population: approximately 1,800 backstretch workers
- Gender: primarily male dominated
- Age range: 18 - mid 70s
- Working status: a mix of local, migrant and immigrant workers
- Education level: varies



Gatekeeper

Chaplain Shawn

- Member of the Race Track Chaplaincy of Canada
- Various responsibilities on a daily basis
- Advocate for the backstretch population
- Key liaison between the backstretch community and outside resources
- Served as a gatekeeper for our group project



Our Project

Aim

- To determine the health assets and health risks of the backstretch workers at the racetrack
- To support the development of interventions that would improve the quality of health of the population

How

- Utilized the Community Health Nursing Process

Resource

- Diem, E., & Moyer, A. (2005). *Community health nursing projects: Making a difference*. Toronto. Lippincott & Williams

Community Health Nursing Process

Assessment

- Windshield Survey of the community was conducted
- Focused on the following sectors: economics, health and social services, recreation, physical environment, safety and working conditions, transportation, & social support systems
- Gathered information about the population, their strengths and their risks
 - a. Primary Sources
 - b. Secondary Sources



Assessment Findings

Economics

- Average salary between \$300-\$500 per week
- No benefits and sick days
- Unregulated profession

Health and Social Services

- Partnership with the Rexdale Community Centre
- Onsite access to social worker
- Massage therapy through Humber College
- Red Cross Blood Donor and One Match clinic events
- Limited access to healthcare providers (e.g., doctor, nurses)
- Limited access to dental services

Assessment Findings

Recreation

- Lack of organized recreational activities
- Lack of opportunities to socialize
- Greater risk of alcohol and drug use
- Increased rate of gambling

Physical environment

- John Howard Community Centre
- Physical isolation from the outside community
- Poor living conditions

Assessment Findings

Safety & Working Conditions

- 13-16 hour work days
- Unsafe work environments
- Lack of safety equipment
- High levels of physical and mental stress

Transportation

- Limited access to automobiles
- Limited access to public transportation
- Heavy reliance on bicycles and walking

Assessment Findings

Social Support Networks

- Organized activities through the chaplaincy
- Live onsite during race season
- Relationships among the population varied



Assessment Findings

Population Strengths:

- Strong work ethic
- A love of horses
- Dedication to their work and the horses
- Comradery and close friendships
- Resilience throughout the community
- Support from Chaplain Shawn



Assessment Findings

Population Risks:

- Poor living and working conditions
- Poor dental health and practices
- Poor knowledge and awareness of nutrition
- Limited knowledge about healthy sexuality and safe sex practices
- Inadequate management of repetitive work injuries and discomforts related to job
- Ineffective coping skills to deal with tremendous stress
- High risk of loneliness and depression related to social isolation

Community Health Nursing Process

Planning

Priority Issues for Action

1. Lack of access to information and support related to
 - a. Healthy sexual practices and consent
 - b. Effective dental health practices
 - c. Effective stress management skills
 - d. Appropriate joint and musculoskeletal pain management
2. Lack of access to positive recreational activities
 - a. Healthy social interaction

Community Health Nursing Process

Health Promotion Strategies

1. Develop Personal Skills: Health Fair

- Healthy sexuality and consent
- Dental health
- Stress management
- Joint and musculoskeletal pain management

2. Create Supportive Environments

- Bowling night



Community Health Nursing Process

Action

1. Health Fair

- Time
- Place
- Attendance

2. Bowling Night

- Time
- Place
- Attendance



Community Health Nursing Process

Evaluation

- Health Fair
- Bowling

Limitations

- Finances
- Time restrictions
- Varied schedules of the population



Sustainability

- Resources left behind

Community Health Nursing Process

Conclusions

- The backstretch workers are an invisible population
- Resilient and dedicated workers who are passionate about horses
- They experience many barriers to health
- Unique clinical placement
- There is a need to support and raise awareness about the population

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THANK YOU



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