Why Men Enter Nursing:
The Development of a Recruitment and Retention Strategy

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INTRODUCTION
The nursing profession is experiencing a significant shortage in the number of nurses available in the workforce, necessitating a need for increased recruitment of nursing students (Meadus, 2000). Strategies from the Canadian Nurses Association and Registered Nurses Association of Canada recommend increased enrollment and retention of nursing students (CNA, 2009; RNAO, 2008). Males currently comprise only 5% of nurses (Halloran, 2009) representing an untapped resource that should be specifically targeted. Yet, research shows that recruitment and retention of male nursing students is often not given consideration by nursing school programs (Meadus, 2000; Kippenbrock, 1990).

This study addressed the above problem by surveying male nursing students at Humber ITAL in order to better understand the factors that influenced their decision to enter the nursing profession as well as facilitators and barriers associated with program completion. The study was done to develop effective recruitment and retention strategies for male nursing students at Humber ITAL.

METHODS
• The target population consisted of all full-time male nursing students currently enrolled in the Practical Nursing (PN), Bachelor of Nursing (BN), and Bachelor of Nursing Second Entry programs at Humber ITAL (n=207 students).
• An online survey of these students took place from January 28 – February 12, 2010. Survey Monkey was used to administer the survey and each full-time male nursing student was sent a link to the survey.
• Upon completion of the survey, participants received a $25 gift card to the Humber College Bookstore.
• Analysis of aggregate data was conducted by the Research Assistant, Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator.

RESULTS
Demographics
• 144 students responded to the survey, indicating a 70% response rate. Students from all 4 years of the BN program and both years of the PN program participated in the study.
• Participants reported coming from diverse backgrounds. 79% originated from a country outside of the United States or Canada (Figure 1).
• Participants represented a range in age from 18-55 years old.
• 66% have previously completed a post-secondary education program (College, Baccalaureate, Master’s or PhD).

Country of Origin

![Figure 1. Participants’ Country of Origin](image)

Table 1
Factors that Influenced Participants’ Decisions to Enter Nursing

| Factor | %
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping/Caring for Others</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Security</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for career advancement</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement of Father</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a Male Member in Nursing</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for advanced degree</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement of Peers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants were asked: What should be done by nursing schools to encourage more men to enrol in nursing programs?

![Figure 2. Male nurses providing relief work in Pakistan.](image)

Table 2
Suggestions for Increased Recruitment of Male Nursing Students

| Suggestion | %
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educate high school students in male nursing as an acceptable profession for males &amp; females</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More male nursing career days</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the visibility of men in nursing</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing schools should hire more male faculty and staff</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the same language from educational resources</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public education about men’s role in nursing</td>
<td>68</td>
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CONCLUSIONS
The feedback from students has given us a number of avenues to pursue:
• Educating High School and Middle School guidance counsellors about men’s roles in nursing.
• Encouraging male nurses and nursing students to attend career days.
• Raising awareness about the experiences of male nursing students among nursing faculty.
• Taking steps to remove gendered language from educational materials.
• Incorporating men in nursing into Humber College’s promotional materials.
• Encouraging the hiring of more male nursing faculty.
• Conducting a follow-up study interviewing male nursing students who have withdrawn before program completion to discuss their experiences and suggestions for program improvement.

REFERENCES

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