

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 increasing 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)

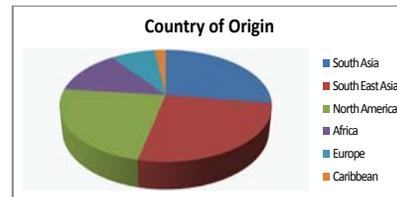


Figure 1. Participants' Country of Origin

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

Table 2

Suggestions for Increased Recruitment of Male Nursing Students (n=207 students)	
Educate high school counsellors to view nursing as an acceptable profession for males & females	97%
Have male nurses attend career days	93%
Increase the role/visibility of men in nursing	91%
Nursing schools should hire more male faculty and staff	79%
Eliminate sexist language from educational resources	76%
Public education about men's role in nursing	65%

Table 1

Factors that Influenced Participants' Decisions to Enter Nursing	
Job Security	87%
Helping/Caring for Others	83%
Salary	76%
Opportunities for career advancement	67%
Encouragement of Mother	58%
Having a Family Member in Nursing	52%
Opportunities for advanced degree	47%
Encouragement of Peers	43%

- Multiple factors influenced participants' decisions to enter nursing, including those related to job security and career advancement, personal interest, and encouragement from family and friends (Table 1).
- While studying at Humber, participants have received encouragement and support from fellow nursing students (95%), faculty (93%), family (92%), and friends (86%).
- However, participants have also experienced incivility, discrimination, belittling, and disrespect from non-nursing students (17%), faculty (16%), nursing students (14%) and agency staff (13%) since they entered their nursing program at Humber.



Figure 2. Male nurses providing relief work in Pakistan.

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.
- Encourage 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.

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