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Professional Practice Attributes Within Public Health Nursing

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

Modifiable organisational attributes that reflect a professional nursing practice environment are important determinants of both the experience of people who access health care services and the job satisfaction of nurses who work within health care organisations. Research relating to acute care settings, commonly known as the Magnet phenomenon has made an outstanding contribution to health sector knowledge by identifying features that attract and retain nurses, promote excellence in patient care, and achieve superior patient outcomes. These features have been studied by the Nursing Work Index Revised which measures attributes that reflect a professional nursing practice environment. More recently there has been an interest in the potential applicability of these attributes in the community setting. A recent study surveyed United States home health nurses and New Zealand district nurses to ascertain which of the Nursing Work Index Revised attributes were perceived by them as important to the support of their professional practice. In this study 92% of items previously tested in acute settings were considered important in community settings.

This descriptive study extends the previous work by investigating how another group of primary health care nurses in New Zealand (public health nurses) perceive the importance of specific organisational attributes within their practice setting. The Nursing Work Index Revised was utilised and participants were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with the importance and presence of 48 attributes on the Nursing Work Index Revised against a 4-point Likert scale. The findings of the study validate the use of the Nursing Work Index Revised as a tool in the community setting. The study's findings, implications for nursing practice, future research and the potential use of this tool to support the development of primary health care nursing in the New Zealand health sector is presented.

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"The secret of success is making your vocation your vacation"

Mark Twain.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....i

Acknowledgements.....ii

Table of Contents.....iii

List of Figures.....vii

List of Tables.....viii

Chapter 1: Introduction.....1

1.1 Background to the Study.....1

1.2 Professional Practice Environment.....3

1.3 New Zealand Health Sector.....5

1.4 Public Health.....7

1.4.1 Public Health Nursing.....8

1.5 Primary Health Care.....12

1.5.1 Primary Health Care Nursing.....14

1.6 Research Questions.....17

1.7 Overview of Thesis.....17

1.8 Summary.....19

Chapter 2: Literature Review.....21

2.1 Public Health Nursing.....21

2.2 Magnet Hospital Studies.....24

2.3 Development of the Original Nursing Work Index.....25

2.4 Nursing Work Index Revised Development.....26

2.5 NWI-R Sub-scales 33

2.5.1 Autonomy.....33
2.5.2 Control Over Nursing Practice 35
2.5.3 Nurse-Physician Relationship.....38

2.6 Summary.....40

Chapter 3: Study Methods.....41

3.1 Research Methodology.....41

3.2 Participant Selection.....42

3.2.1 Data Collection.....42

3.3 The Survey Questionnaire.....43

3.4 Data Analysis.....45

3.4.1 Quantitative Analysis.....45

3.4.2 Qualitative Analysis.....46

3.5 Ethics.....47

3.5.1 Cultural Safety.....47

3.5.2 Informed Consent.....48

3.5.3 Confidentiality.....48

3.5.4 Researcher-Participant Relationship.....48

3.5.5 Risks and Benefits.....48

3.5.6 Dissemination of Results.....49

3.6 Summary.....49

Chapter 4: Quantitative Results and Discussion.....50

4.1 Demographics.....50

4.2 NWI-R Results.....53

4.2.1 Ideal Attribute Ratings.....54

4.2.2 Actual Attribute Ratings and Comparison to Ideal Ratings....57

4.3 NWI-R Sub-scales....61

4.3.1 Presence and Importance of the NWI-R Sub-Scales....63

4.3.1.1 Autonomy Sub-Scale....64

4.3.1.2 Control Over Practice Sub-Scale....65

4.3.1.3 Nurse-Physician Relationship Sub-Scale ..66

4.3.1.4 Leadership Sub-Scale.... 66

4.3.1.5 Education Sub-Scale.... 68

4.4 Summary.... 69

Chapter 5: Qualitative Results and Discussion 70

5.1 Organisational Attributes not Covered by the NWI-R ...71

5.1.1 Recognition of Speciality Practice.... 71

5.1.2 Resources....72

5.1.3 Networking....72

5.1.4 Education/Research....73

5.1.5 Suggested Organisational Attributes....73

5.2 Characteristics of Public Health Nurse Services and Support of Nursing Practice....73

5.2.1 Leadership Category....76

5.2.2 Orientation/Education Category....82

5.2.3 Support Category....85

5.2.4 Recognition Category....87

5.2.5 Quality Category....89

5.2.6 Resources Category....91

5.2.7 Summary of Categories....92

5.3 Employment Setting Preference....93

5.3.1 Employment Setting Advantages and Disadvantages....94

5.4 Summary....104

Chapter Six: Discussion and Conclusion....105

6.1 Summary of Findings Relating to Ideal Professional Practice Environment....105

6.2 Implications for Practice....107

6.2.1 Aligning Nursing Practice with Community Need....108

6.2.2 Nursing Structures....109

6.2.3 Integrated Relationships....111

6.3 Implications for Further Research....114

6.4 Limitations of this Study....115

6.5 Concluding Statement....116

References....117

Appendix A Summary Table of Magnet Literature Reviewed....129

Appendix B Study Questionnaire....145

Appendix C Study Information Sheet....151

Appendix D Response Frequencies for Each Attribute – Actual Environment....153

Appendix E Response Frequencies for Each Attribute – Ideal Environment....156

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Organisational attributes, not covered by the NWI-R, which public health nurses identify as being specific to the community setting	71
Figure 2.	Characteristics that make public health nursing services a "good place to practice nursing"	74
Figure 3.	How public health nursing services can support nursing practice	75
Figure 4.	Public health nursing services characteristics and support features categories	75

List of Tables

Table 1 Number and percentages of public health nurses in each DHB region according to 2003 NCNZ statistics and participants' responses

Table 2 Public health nurses most highly endorsed attributes compared to the NZ district nurses, US home health and US hospital nurses

Table 3 Public health nurses' least endorsed attributes compared to the district nurses, US home health and hospital nurses

Table 4 Differences between reported presence (actual) and importance (ideal) for highly endorsed attributes

Table 5 Differences between reported presence (actual) and importance (ideal) for least endorsed attributes

Table 6 Differences between reported presence (actual) and importance (ideal) for remaining attributes

Table 7 Means, standard deviations and Cronbach's alpha scores for selected sub-scales of this study and other studies

Table 8 The actual and ideal percentage agreements, the difference between agreements of each attribute that makes up the autonomy sub-scale and the overall mean difference

Table 9 The actual and ideal percentage agreements, the difference between agreements of each attribute that makes up the control over practice sub-scale and the overall mean difference

Table 10 The actual and ideal percentage agreements, the difference between agreements of each attribute that makes up the nurse-physician relationship sub-scale and the overall mean difference

Table 11 The actual and ideal percentage agreements, the difference between agreements of each attribute that makes up the leadership sub-scale and the overall mean difference

Table 12 The actual and ideal percentage agreements, the difference between agreements of each attribute that makes up the education sub-scale and the overall mean difference

Table 13 Number and categories of advantages and disadvantages given for each employment option