

Measuring Student Nurses' Preparedness and Resilience for a Disaster Setting

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Introduction: Nurses have long been utilized in disaster response and recovery and they possess broad skill sets, which are critical in times of crisis. However, studies show that more than 80% of nurses who volunteered in disasters settings have no disaster education.

Aim: This project explored the disaster knowledge, preparedness, and resilience of 2nd and 3rd-year undergraduate student nurses in a Bachelor of Nursing Science program in a regional university to garner support for the introduction of dedicated disaster nursing education, which is currently absent from Australian undergraduate nursing curricula. Whilst disaster management processes in Australia are robust and Australian health care systems have explicit plans in place, the same cannot be said for all countries and health care systems. Australian trained nurses are highly valued and actively sought in the global health workforce market. In a world marked by increasing change and instability, the lack of dedicated disaster education and skills in the largest health workforce increases the overall vulnerability.

Methods: Data were collected using the Disaster Preparedness Evaluation Tool, the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, simple demographics, and a previous disaster experience questionnaire.

Results: The results highlight important gaps in current practice and vulnerabilities in the current disaster management framework. Local students scored higher results in preparedness and resilience.

Discussion: Student nurses are an underutilized resource in disaster preparation and by response teams around the world. With a global intent of shared responsibility and increased resilience in individuals and communities before, during, and after disaster events, dedicated capacity building of nursing staff has the potential to address key factors and simultaneously utilize an underappreciated demographic of student nurses. To the best of the author's knowledge, this project is the first to explore disaster knowledge, preparedness, and resilience in undergraduate student nurses using validated disaster preparedness and resilience tools in Australia.

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