

Educational Preparation of Rural Maternity RNs in Canada

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Outline

- **Background**
- **Nature of Nursing Practice in Rural and Remote Canada**
- **RNDB – methods and results**
- **Survey – methods and results**
- **Conclusions**
- **Next steps**

Background

- **Hospital maternity service closures**
- **Pending retirement of qualified staff**
- **Women traveling further for intrapartum care**
- **Less choice, and increasing reliance on Level III institutions**
- **Sustainability of rural maternity is key to survival of rural communities**

Nature of Nursing Practice in Rural and Remote Canada Project

- Study design on line at <http://ruralnursing.unbc.ca>
- a) a sub analysis of the Registered Nurses Database, 2000 (available at the CIHI web site ISBN: 1-894766-49-0)
- b) a survey of rural nurses
- c) narrative analysis, and
- d) a documentary analysis.

Research Questions

- *What is the educational preparation of rural maternity nurses who provide comprehensive care including labour and birth?*
- *Do these rural nurses have the added skills they believe adequately prepares them for maternity practice?*
- *What are the additional courses rural maternity nurses have to assist in delivery of care?*

RNDB - Methods

- The rural maternity nurses were identified if they responded:
- primary responsibility was maternal/newborn,
- their primary position was a staff nurse, and
- they lived in rural and small town Canada

Survey - Methods

- 685 RNs were identified in the survey
- 545 prenatal care, management of labour, management of delivery, and postnatal care
- 140 management of labour, management of delivery, and postnatal care

Demographics – Age of RN's

Age	RNDB	Survey
20 – 29	145 (8.8%)	64 (9.4%)
30 – 39	510 (31.2%)	184 (27.2%)
40 – 49	649 (39.8%)	271 (40.1%)
50 – 59	293 (17.9%)	135 (20%)
Over 60	33 (2.3%)	21 (3.1%)

Demographics – Highest Nursing Education and Employment status

Highest Education in Nursing	Diploma in Nursing	RNDB 1,421 (87%)	Survey 502 (73.4%)
	Bachelor's degree in Nursing	206 (12.6%)	172 (25.1%)
	Masters/PhD	4 (0.4%)	9 (1.5%)
Employment status	Full time	755 (46.3%)	347 (50.1%)
	Part time	875 (53.7%)	345 (49.9%)

Province of Registration (RNDB) Province of Work (Survey)

Province	RNDB	Survey
Newfoundland and Labrador	5.9%	6.4%
Prince Edward Island	1.5%	0.8%
Nova Scotia	8.5%	4.4%
New Brunswick	6.4%	2.2%
Quebec	16%	5.1%
Ontario	33.5%	7.6%
Manitoba	5.8%	3.9%
Saskatchewan	3.1%	12.3%
Alberta	9%	17.7%
British Columbia	9.6%	12.9%
Yukon	1.6%	3.4%
Northwest territories	As above	6.8%
Nunavut	As above	6.4%

Initial Education

- **During initial education the time spent in maternity varies across programmes**
- **Students are unlikely to have low risk rural maternity clinical experience**
- **Majority of nursing programmes in urban centres**

Clinical Experience Prior to Rural Maternity

- **Urban or larger centre experience**
- **Clinical experience in other fields such as ICU and emergency**
- **Northern nursing courses and midwifery particular valued by survey participants**

Conclusions

- **Maternity practice is complex**
- **Initial education does not prepare nurses for rural work**
- **Nurses still value hands on experience**
- **Recognition of maternity nursing as part of being multi-specialist**

Limitations to the Study

- **RNDB data does not capture additional qualifications**
- **RNDB has ‘several clinical areas’ designation**
- **Survey question did not ask specifically at major area of responsibility**

Next Steps

- **Undergraduate nursing experience should be carefully targeted to ensure rural clinical experiences are included.**
- **Study to determine the specific ongoing clinical experiences, continuing education, and primary education required.**
- **Collaborative maternity education for practice**