Recruitment and Retention of Male Nursing Students

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Background

- Men represent 6.8% of RNs in Canada (CIHI, 2012)
- Shortfall of 60,000 FTEs by 2022
- Strategies to eliminate gender barriers have been minimal and ineffective (Meadus & Twomey, 2011)
- Elusive and untapped human health care resource
Background

- Discrimination
- Social Isolation
- Sexual stereotypes
- Lack of recruitment strategies
- Nursing viewed as a female profession
Purpose

- Explore factors influencing male nursing students entry into their nursing program

- Explore factors that influence male nursing students decision to remain in their nursing program
Method

- Descriptive qualitative design
- Male students from all four years of BScN program invited to participate; 2 focus groups n=16
- Semi-structured interviews 1-2 hours
Student Focus Group Questions

- Why do young men consider the nursing profession for employment?
- How does level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction relate to male nursing students intentions to stay or leave their studies?
Results: What Attracted you to Nursing

- Interested in Health Care
- Working with people
- Family encouragement
- Family/friends in health care
- Life experiences
- Good job prospects
What Information did you receive in High school about Nursing as a career choice?

- very little information provided
- required courses and marks provided but nothing about “what nursing is”
- “would be nice if male nursing students came to recruitment day”
- “have to go out of your way to find information about nursing”
Prior to Beginning your Program, what were your thoughts about Nursing?

- Stereotypical Thinking
  - “if you want health care why not do medical school?”
  - “I was in 4th year (science program) and I hated it…..family member said I should consider nursing…..it hit me like an epiphany; nursing isn’t just for females”
  - “we were the only 2 males from our high school…..we were on sport teams and my buddy’s a big macho guy …..don’t judge a book by its cover”
Are there Unique Challenges experienced by male students?

- Males used for muscle power
  - “every patient that needs a lift they come to you.....my back is dead by the end of the day”
- Males do not belong in the Nursing Profession
  - “I actually had teachers challenge me because I was a male and saying ‘I don’t like male nurses’ ” .......“I stopped going to class ...she was really really rude to me”
- If you are Male you must by the Doctor
  - “When I walk in a patients room they’ll ask like am I the doctor”
Challenges continued:

- Nursing as a profession is geared to women
  - “even nursing shoes are feminine; white shoes with pink or purple; scrubs with hearts and little mermaids”
- Sexuality is always questioned
  - “gay patients hit on me assuming I’m gay”
- Males don’t care like females do
  - “a male can’t provide the same care because we can’t connect on that emotional level as a female could”
Have you thought about Leaving your Nursing program?

“I think about leaving the program all the time….not the nursing aspect, I love the nursing part of it; just feel like we are treated badly, I don’t think it has to do with me being a male…..never thought about it that way”
Key Points:

- Gender mistreatment predictor of intention to leave
- Negative stereotypes about being a male in nursing identified in open-ended comments:
  - “sick of having my gender placed in front of my profession”
  - “I have consistently needed to feel that I have to be better than my female peers”
Implications for Practice

- Gender sensitive education is warranted for all HCP
- Reporting procedures for incidents of gender mistreatment
Student Retention Strategies

➢ Identify gender biases and eliminate them from their practice

➢ Identify student learning opportunities based on competencies not gender

➢ Hire more male nursing instructors
Student Recruitment Strategies

- Have male nurses attend nursing fairs
- Encourage male nursing students to participate in high school recruitment
- Educate high school counsellors regarding nursing as a career for men
Conclusion

“we (men) bring a unique perspective to nursing; being different doesn’t make it bad”