

Perceptions of a community nursing workforce by first year pre-registration student nurses: a thematic analysis

Joanna Lavery

Liverpool John Moores University

Carmel Henshall

Liverpool John Moores University

Background

The expansion of workloads and the development of skills without proportionate resources has led to community practitioners and public health nurses being characterised as the 'invisible workforce' in the United Kingdom (UK). Contemporary literature suggests that community nursing as a career path is often overlooked by student nurses.

Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to explore first year pre-registration nursing student's perceptions of community nursing in a UK higher education institution. The research objective was to establish the level of understanding and insight students possess, to determine if they had considered a career nursing in the community on qualification.

Methods

This study directed questions to student nurses via an online digital voting platform, and analysed them using thematic analysis. There were key questions relating to the students' knowledge of this subject. Student answers were recorded verbatim and included a word cloud as a visual method of displaying some results.

Results

The findings demonstrated student's perceptions of community nursing roles were diverse. The themes identified fundamental gaps in the awareness of essential community nursing roles which were perceived as less task driven and more public health focused.

Conclusions and implications

This study has provided a platform from which to construct a more inclusive community focused nursing curricula. This can empower academics to appraise current strategies for teaching and learning, which promotes the concept of a sustainable community workforce and celebrate public health nursing roles.