

National Institute of Health Sciences Research Bulletin

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Cervical Spine Assessment using the Canadian C-Spine Rule - A Department Audit
- Holmium Laser in Urology - Six Years Experience in a Single Centre
- The Tape Measure as an Indicator of Quadriceps and Hamstrings Muscle Strength in Gaelic Footballers
- PMMA Based Optical Fibre Radiation Dosimeter for Clinical Applications

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Clinical Research

Nursing - Intellectual Disability Services

TITLE	Exploring the Experiences of Registered Nurses in Intellectual Disability of Managerial Support
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AUTHORS	<i>Galvin, G. Daughters of Charity Services, Lisnagry, Co. Limerick</i>
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OBJECTIVE

The aim of this study was to understand and illuminate the experiences of Registered Nurses' in Intellectual Disability (RNID's) of managerial support when working in an intellectual disability (ID) service. A paucity of available nursing research carried out on this topic for this particular group of nurses was identified and this study was deemed important in order to inform nursing and nursing management.

METHODOLOGY

A Heideggerian phenomenological research approach was utilized because this approach enables participants of the study to articulate the appearance of things as they are lived.¹ This method enabled RNIDs to express their feelings and experiences of managerial support when working in an ID service. A purposeful sample of 8 registered nurses in ID was chosen for this study. These nurses were chosen as the researcher felt they had the necessary experience of managerial support, (the phenomenon being studied), as it is only those people who have experience of a given phenomenon that can articulate how that experience impacted on them.² The data obtained through the interviews was analysed using Colaizzi's data analysis framework.³ This framework was chosen because it enables Heideggerian researchers to interpret meanings from the collected data and it provides a step by step approach to analysing the data and so enhances the validity of the study.⁴ Thematic analysis was conducted manually as this enabled the researcher to learn the analytic process and become immersed with the content and meaning of the data.

RESULTS

The findings of the study were presented with a review of the literature. The four main themes that emerged from the data included the Professional Role of the Clinical Nurse Manager (CNM), Leadership Role of the CNM, Personal Supports and the Effects of CNM support. Extracts of significant statements were presented in order to substantiate the formulation of the sub-themes and finally the main themes. The themes found in this research study are consistent with findings of managerial support received and required in other nurse settings.

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that the findings of this research study will illuminate and create an understanding for nurses, nurse managers and ID services of what managerial supports are helpful to this specific group of RNIDs working in this service for people with an intellectual disability.



Clinical Research

Nursing - Intellectual Disability Services

TITLE	The Role of the Registered Nurse in Supporting Student Learning - A Phenomenological Approach
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AUTHORS	<i>Collins, M. Daughters of Charity Services, Lisnagry, Co. Limerick</i>
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INTRODUCTION

This study used a qualitative phenomenological approach to ascertain the perceptions of registered nurses in the field of Intellectual Disability about supporting student learning. Intellectual disability was the chosen field of nursing for this study. A phenomenological approach is used to establish the perceptions of these nurses of their role. This approach acknowledges the complexities of human experiences and takes into account non-empirical data such as beliefs, values and feelings.¹ A literature review was undertaken prior to the study, which led the author to gain insight into the extent of existing work done in the area of nursing and student learning.

METHODOLOGY

A stratified random sample of registered nurses in intellectual disability nursing (RNID) was selected and questionnaires were distributed to the selected participants. This approach ensured that there was adequate and fair representation and that the small selected group achieved that fairness. Access to the site and ethical considerations were taken into account. Colaizzi's² method of data analysis was used to systematically examine the generated data. Results and conclusions were then critically analysed.

RESULTS

Following analysis, five key main themes emerged from the data including:-

1. Professional Development
2. Confidence Building
3. Support of Unit Managers and Colleagues
4. Difficulties Encountered
5. Rewards and Benefits

CONCLUSION

The themes reinforce the findings of previous studies from Great Britain³ and Australia.⁴ The study concluded that nurses are happy to continue in their role in supporting student learning. In order to do this to the best of their ability nurses must be supported by their managers and organisations. Ongoing training and the availability of trained nurses to support student learning must be addressed in collaboration with the Clinical Placement Coordinators (CPC). Findings are presented, conclusions and issues arising from the study are discussed and recommendations for practice are outlined.

REFERENCES

References available on request.



Clinical Research

Nursing - Intellectual Disability Services

TITLE	The Lived Experiences of Registered Nurses of Caring for Service Users in Ireland - A Phenomenological Study
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AUTHORS	<i>Fitzgerald, B., Daughters of Charity Services, Lisnagry, Co. Limerick</i>
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INTRODUCTION

This Husserlian phenomenological study describes the lived experiences of 6 Registered Nurses in Intellectual Disability (RNID's) caring for service users in a residential centre.

OBJECTIVE

The study explored the reality and complexities of caring from the nurse's perspective with a view to enhancing the understanding of caring within and beyond the discipline of Intellectual Disability for nurses and allied health care professionals. The profession of nursing has a well-established and articulated ethos of caring. However, there is minimal research describing caring and the RNID, thus presenting a gap in existing literature.

METHODOLOGY

In-depth interviews were used to ascertain the participants' experiences of caring for persons with an Intellectual Disability. Colaizzi's¹ seven steps were utilised to analyse the verbatim transcripts of the interviews, drawing meaning from the participants' work.

RESULTS

Three main themes emerged from the data: special bond between the nurse and service user, multifaceted essence of RNID's caring, and the maturing process of the RNID. Additionally, each theme contained several sub-themes. Nurses who care for people with an Intellectual Disability indicate that the special bond and knowing the service user were the most significant fundamental bases of caring. The all-important relationship was reciprocal for both parties and the nurse encountered feelings of loss when the relationship was severed. The essence of care emerged as a multifaceted concept, which was truly holistic in nature. The nurse is an advocate for the person with an Intellectual Disability. Caring for service users with an Intellectual Disability was shown to be challenging but rewarding. Many of the challenges pose barriers to the caring process. Caring can sometimes come at a personal loss leading to burnout. The nurses had a passion for their profession and the maturing process of the RNID was outlined. Support from managers was imperative to enable the delivery of high quality care.

CONCLUSIONS

Study findings suggest the need to include the implementation of supports for nurses in the practice setting and the consideration of ongoing structured professional development and education for Registered Nurses in Intellectual Disability.

Clinical Research

Disability Services



TITLE Exploring Key Working - Parents' Perspectives of the Key Worker System in Clare Early Intervention Service

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INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that parents of disabled children face a constant battle to negotiate access to services across different agencies. In order to overcome these difficulties key workers have provided a single point of contact in the form of a named person. The key worker helps the family to navigate through the maze of agencies from therapy services to counselling, family support to respite services. This study aims to explore parents' perceptions of key workers in Clare Early Intervention Service (CEIS), in order to inform decisions taken on the development of a key worker service for school age children and young people aged 6 to 18 years.

METHODOLOGY

A review of the literature was conducted and issues identified for exploration. A primarily quantitative postal questionnaire was sent to 100 parents of children with a disability on the CEIS database who were identified as having a key worker. A second shorter version of the questionnaire was sent to 60 other parents of children who were identified as not having a key worker from the database. A 65% response rate was achieved.

Table 1 - Satisfaction with Key Worker Service Received by Parents

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Not at all satisfied
41.70%	46.70%	8.30%	3.30%

RESULTS

The results in general support previous studies. The level of provision of key workers was higher than that of other studies (72%). Levels of satisfaction with the key worker service were high (88.4%) and the role was valued greatly by the parents for whom key working was going well. However, the open ended qualitative questions revealed issues of importance to parents such as isolation, confusion and at times lack of consistency in relation to the role of a key worker.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that key working is a worthwhile service to provide to parents of children with a disability. However, if key working is to be successful it should be a clearly defined role not just an 'add on' role to the other professional job. The key worker role needs to be incorporated into the job description, with time allocated for the role and with agreed protocols/standards. A service manager is required to ensure that best practice is achieved and sustained, and to provide training for the role.



Population Health

Health Promotion - Social Care

TITLE	Social Care Practitioners as Agents of Health Promotion? - An Examination of Attitudes, Knowledge and Training
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AUTHORS	<i>Kelly, C. Houghton, F. Department of Humanities, Limerick Institute of Technology, Limerick</i>
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Next Page ►►

INTRODUCTION

Inequalities in health status, health service access and health care uptake are prevalent throughout Irish society. A disproportionate number of those with the poorest health are among the most vulnerable in society. Significantly worse health is routinely found among those with low levels of education, people with a learning disability, people with mental health issues and the unemployed. These are precisely the groups that social care practitioners routinely work with. The role of social care practitioners typically revolves around advocacy, communication and empowerment, and routinely involves prolonged work 'in the life space' of clients. Given the clear health needs of their client group and the opportunities for health promotion, the role of social care practitioners as health promoters was explored.

OBJECTIVE

This research specifically aimed to explore social care practitioners' knowledge of and attitudes towards health and health promotion. This project also sought, where appropriate, to explore the training and experiences of social care practitioners as agents of health promotion.

METHODOLOGY

A purposive sample of 8 social care practitioners working across a spectrum of agencies in a provincial Irish city was selected to provide a broad cross-section of the social care workforce. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all 8 participants. Following transcription the results were analysed using thematic analysis.

RESULTS

The findings indicate that social care practitioners generally have a holistic approach to health, including aspects of physical, mental and social health. It was noted that social care practitioners are engaged in limited health promoting roles at present, particularly around issues of physical activity and healthy eating. Some attention was also given to mental health issues and sexual health. However, it is also clear that although promoting positive health was implicit in the role of social care workers, this role was given little attention directly. Although many social care practitioners actively tried to promote skills in relation to mental health, other aspects of this role were more often reduced to simply providing health education literature.

The majority of respondents felt that they had received little formal training in health promotion and would welcome further training in this field. They felt that this would aid their work with clients and also with client families. Although one respondent did not feel that health promotion was part of the role of a social care practitioner, most accepted it as an active element in promoting the well-being of clients. One additional finding



to emerge from the interviews was the lack of health promotion policies in social care agencies. Although this issue was implicit in other documents, it was never addressed explicitly.

CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that the majority of social care practitioners are open to acting as health promotion agents with clients. Most social care practitioners are already engaging in various forms of health promotion, albeit at a relatively superficial level. However the majority of social care practitioners feel that they have received little training in this field and would welcome such input. The development, implementation and formal assessment of a pilot programme in health promotion training for social care practitioners is therefore recommended. It is also recommended that the registration board for social care which will be established by the Health and Social Care Professionals Council under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 considers exploring the introduction of competencies in health promotion for social care workers.

It is also clear that most agencies in the social care field have not focused on the issue of health promotion explicitly with their clients. Further work on the development of such strategies explicitly may prove useful to focus on combating health inequalities, as well as to support the training and endeavors of social care practitioners engaging in health promotion.

PRESENTED

At Limerick Institute of Technology, Limerick on April 30th, 2008 by Claire Kelly.