

Educational Experiences in Gerontology and the Influence on New Graduate RNs' Career Path

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November 5, 2010

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Funding provided by Nursing Research Interest Group of Ontario

Nursing Students' Attitudes Towards Working with the Elderly

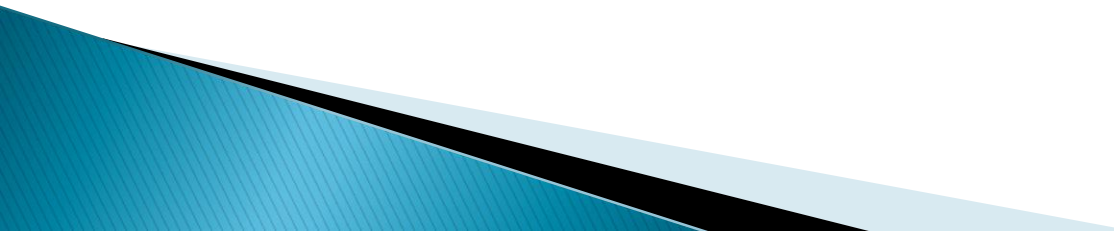
- ▶ Many studies show that nursing students do not aspire to work with older people upon graduation (Happell, 1999;2002; Rognstad, Asland & Granum, 2004; Stevens & Crouch, 1995).
- ▶ Students reported that working with the elderly was:
 - Physically difficult
 - Boring and lacking in excitement and challenge
 - Environment was depressing

- ▶ Some course experiences (clinical placements and lectures) have impacted on career choice (Marsland & Hickey, 2003) and students' experiences of clinical placement facilities are important when considering employment options (Brodie et al, 2005)

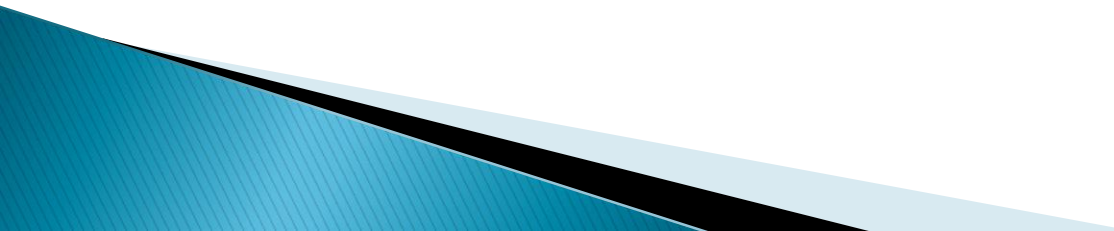


- ▶ Brown et al (2008) suggest that clinical placements have a 'far greater impact' on students identification of a good gerontological experience

Why is this an issue

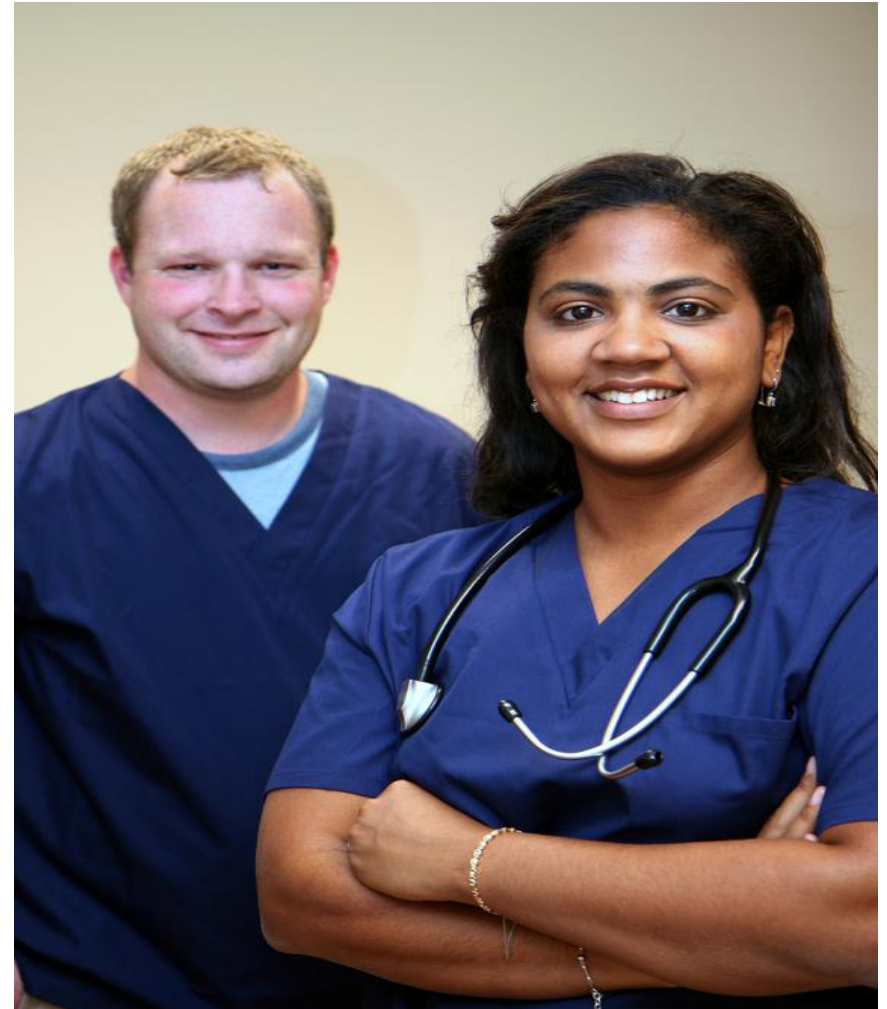
- ▶ Demographic changes indicate that by 2031, 23–25% of Canadians will be 65 years of age or older (Statistics Canada, 2005).
 - ▶ We will need nurses to care for this population
 - ▶ Statistics from the College of Nurses of Ontario (2009) show that in 2008 there were 3,213 graduate RNs however only 100 (3.2%) reported working in LTC
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Method

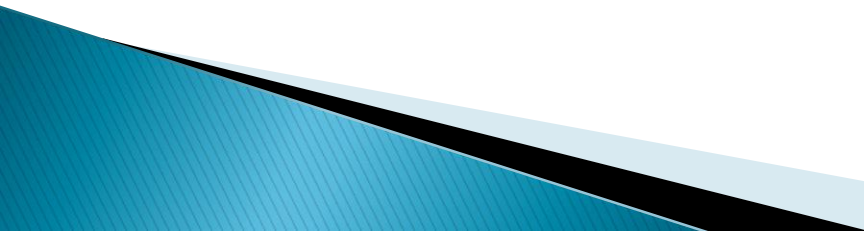
- ▶ Qualitative study
 - ▶ Descriptive exploratory method
 - ▶ Telephone interviews with 8 RNs who graduated \leq three years and worked in LTC facilities in Ontario
 - ▶ Interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim
 - ▶ Content analysis was conducted
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Findings– Two Major Themes

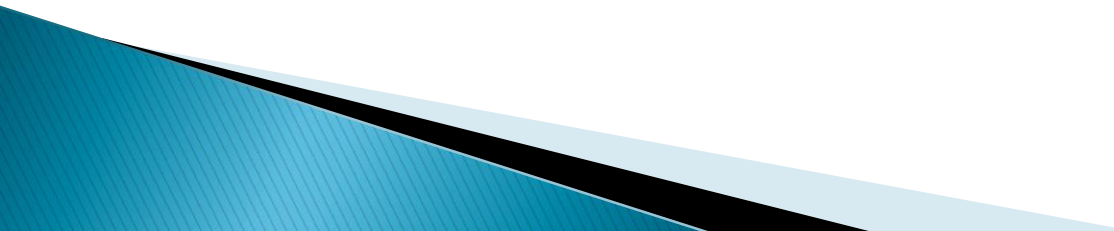
- ▶ **The Program**
- ▶ **The Person**



Implications for Practice and Research

- ▶ Need to ensure clinical instructors have the required knowledge and can role model (this is a specialty!)
 - ▶ Consider timing of the placement in the program– may be better as a senior placement
 - ▶ Gerontological content in nursing programs varies
 - ▶ Modest sample size need to conduct study with other new graduate RNs across Canada
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Key Messages

- ▶ Demographic trends indicate the elderly population will continue to grow
 - ▶ The number of nurses prepared to care for this population will continue to grow
 - ▶ Understanding nursing students' educational experiences in caring for older adults and using this information to change educational delivery, may ensure we have nurses choosing this career path.
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