

## **The University of Edinburgh Principal's Teaching Award Scheme**

### **PTAS Project Report (for REGULAR PROJECT GRANTS)**

**Project Title:** Exploring the attitudes and learning needs of student nurses in relation to care home nursing

**Project type** A Research Project

**Principal Investigator :** Professor Tonks Fawcett Schools/department : Nursing Studies, School of Health in Social Sciences

#### **Team members (including Schools and Departments) :**

Dr Julie Watson Nursing Studies, School of Health in Social Sciences

Dr Jo Hockley CPHS (Palliative Care Research Group)

Dr Sarah Rhynas Nursing Studies, School of Health in Social Sciences

Zoe Horseman – Prospective PhD student

What did you do?

The aim of the study was to explore undergraduate student nurses' attitudes to care home nursing and educational opportunities in the care home setting. We gained ethical approval and prepared a semi-structured topic guide. We wanted to gain an understanding of this issue because there is currently a crisis in the recruitment and retention of nurses in care homes. This is alarming given that student nurses currently receive the majority of their education in acute care settings despite the fact that care homes play a vital role in delivering health care, with three times as many beds as there are in the NHS. We invited students from Year 1 to Year 4 of the Bachelor of Nursing (BN) with Honours programme to volunteer to take part in a focus group to address this concern. We conducted six focus groups and two one-to-one interviews between October 2017 and March 2018. The focus groups/ interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis.

What did you find out?

Student nurses' attitudes towards care home nursing were shaped in a number of ways: visiting relatives; volunteering at school to gain work experience; community placements in primary care; the media. Teaching and practice placements, however, played a minor role in shaping students' attitudes but rather, gave the unspoken message that they were less important than other settings. Most students were initially not in favour of care home nursing as a career choice but in reality had given it little thought. During focus groups/interviews views shifted from seeing care homes as places where you "lose clinical skills" to places where there is "a lot of responsibility". Student nurses were open to learning about care home nursing as part of their education and keen to have

more positive exposure, making a number of practical suggestions for how care home nursing could be incorporated into the curriculum. Higher educational institutions must play a critical role to play in addressing the crisis in recruitment in care homes.

How did you disseminate your findings?

A briefing paper, summarising the key findings, was written and emailed to all the students who participated (attached). The team members have submitted a journal article reporting the key findings to the peer reviewed journal Nurse Education Today. This was submitted in September 2018 and is still under review (will send copy if published). Julie Watson was invited to present project findings at the British Geriatric Society/NHS Research Scotland annual meeting in April 2018 to an audience of Geriatricians, Nurses and Allied Health Professionals (presentation attached). Julie Watson was also invited to present at the Scottish Care conference in November 2018 and shared some of the findings at a session about research in care homes with an audience of care home staff (presentation attached). The findings were also shared by Julie Watson at round table discussions at two consultation events: 'Re-visioning Care Home Nursing', organised by COSLA, Scottish Government and Scottish Care (August 2018), and 'What needs to be prioritised to support people to live and die well in Scotland by 2040' organised by Marie Curie (October 2018). One of the key elements of this was a discussion of how care homes can be equipped as they are projected to be the main place of death by 2040.

One of the findings of the project was that undergraduate students are influenced by negative media stories which deters them from considering care home nursing as a career. They were keen to hear more positive stories about care home nursing. Based on this finding we successfully secured an Innovative Initiative Grant to make a film about the positive aspects of care home nursing – 'The Good News behind the Bad Headlines'. When the film is finished we plan to run a seminar to present the findings of the research and also screen the film in early 2019. The film project was featured in the latest newsletter of the Edinburgh Centre for Research on the Experiences of Dementia which has a wide readership within and beyond the university:

<https://sway.office.com/SNEM4WfvMhWx9WVL?ref=email>

What have been the benefits to student learning

The focus groups were most valuable in that the process itself led students who participated to engage with thinking about care home nursing in a way they had not done before and to challenge some of their preconceived ideas. There was a unanimous view, even among those who would never consider care home nursing as a career, that it is an important aspect of nursing that they should learn about in their nurse education. The project highlighted the gap in teaching that students currently receive about care home nursing. Students already have some teaching input from care home staff on the topic of risk assessments, However, students said they would like this enhanced by hearing more directly from nurses who work in care homes about what they do day to day. We were able to act on this immediately by inviting a practice development nurse from a local care home to teach third year students on one of their courses (Management of Transitions) in 2018 and this is being repeated in 2019. As part of the Innovative Initiative Grant project, six students

volunteered to take part in the DIY Film School run by the university and have interviewed and filmed 3 care home nurses and a GP who works closely with care homes. We are currently working with the students to edit the films and also film short clips of the students on what they have learnt from the filming project. This film, a resource made by students for students, will be used as a teaching resource in the Management of Transitions course this year and also will be used at the planned seminar in 2019 and potentially at conferences. In the process of making the film, as well as learning about care home nursing, the six students have also gained skills in interviewing, film making and creativity. They will also have an opportunity to develop their presentation skills by being involved in the seminar.

The new BN with Honours curriculum is now being developed ready for revalidation in 2020. This process is taking place in HEA's across Scotland in response to the new Nursing and Midwifery Standards. Given the needs of the ageing population which nurses serve, this PTAS study supports our firm hope to ensure care homes become a central part of the curriculum. Following on from the 'Re-visioning care home nursing' consultation in August 2018, we have invited two members of the National Care Home Contract Workforce subgroup to take part in a curriculum stakeholders consultation planned for early 2019.

Zoe Horseman, a 2016 graduate (BN with Honours) worked alongside the team on the study, analysing data, joining team meetings and contributing to drafting the journal article. Zoe is keen to pursue a PhD in Nursing Studies and this was an opportunity for her to gain research experience and mentoring from experienced researchers. She has now joined the department as a research assistant. Zoe has written a blog about what she gained from being part of the PTAS project here:

<https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/nursing-blog/2018/11/23/reflections-of-a-novice-nurse-researcheropportunities-and-optimism/>

How could these benefits be extended to other parts of the university?

The same challenge care homes face in delivering nursing care to an increasingly frail population of residents with multimorbidity including dementia also faces other professions e.g. social work, medicine and dentistry. We will invite people from these disciplines to the seminar and film screening we are planning early in 2019. This will enable students and staff from these disciplines and engage with the issue and provide an opportunity to share experiences and ideas for future collaborations.