Untold stories: lessons for workforce sustainability, recruitment and retention

“Workforce excellence and sustainability”

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Outline of Presentation

• The aim of this presentation is to give you an insight into this oral history research study.

• The objectives are to provide an outline of:
  • Context and rationale for the study
  • Aim and objectives
  • Research methods
  • Findings from UK and Ireland
  • Recommendations and implications
Context

• In the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland (ROI) pre-registration undergraduate students of nursing choose to follow one of four fields of nursing practice: children, adults, learning disabilities (intellectual disability) or mental health.

• The number of learning disability nurses in England, despite their contribution to the lives of people with learning disabilities and their families (Doody, et al., 2017; Brown, et al., 2016), has dramatically reduced over the last few decades (Gates, 2010; Gates, 2011; Glover and Emerson, 2012; Health Education England, 2018).

• In the ROI the numbers of registered nurses in intellectual disability (RNID) has increased over the past 15 years by 50% - from 4,061 in 2001 to 6,085 in 2016 (NMBI, 2017), a phenomenon that may, in part, be accounted for by the Irish Economic Boom (colloquially known as the Celtic Tiger) which led to the expansion of service provision and the training of more nurses in intellectual disability to address acute staff shortages (DOHC, 1998; Humphries, et al., 2012).

• The ROI has experienced difficulties in securing an adequate nursing workforce through recruitment, the net result being the employment of nurses from countries such as India and the Philippines; these were predominantly trained in the areas of general, mental health and children’s nursing (McGonagle, et al., 2004; Humphries, et al., 2008).
Aims & Objectives

• The aim of this research study was to collect and analyse data obtained by using the oral history approach to support and, or, challenge current knowledge of the trajectory of learning disability nursing during the last thirty years.

• The specific objectives of this study were to:
  • Explore the lived experience of nurses and health care assistants in both the UK and Ireland of their working lives;
  • Examine factors affecting the sustainability of the workforce and relate this to contemporary issues of recruitment and retention;
  • Unearth lessons for contemporary providers of health and social care of services and make appropriate recommendations regarding workforce sustainability;
  • Establish an archive of learning disability nurses’ and health care assistants’ oral histories.
Methods

An oral history approach was adopted.

Sample: Non-probability purposive snowball sampling adopted. Began with a small population of known individuals and expanded the sample by asking initial participants to identify others that might participate in the study.

Inclusion criteria: Staff (registered ID nurses and non nurses) who have worked in services that care for and support people with intellectual/learning disability for at least 30 years.

Data collection: Semi Structured Interviews (16 nurses & 4 non nurses in UK, 10 nurses & 3 non nurses in Ireland)– each participant was interviewed for circa one hour using a structured interview schedule.

Ethics: Ethical permissions were received from the Universities.

Data analysis: Coding was adopted and categories identified. Categories were then clustered together to form themes and these inform the overview of findings.
# Findings – Overall Themes

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<td>The nature of intellectual disability services</td>
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<td>The Nature of the Registered Nurse for Intellectual Disability (RNID)</td>
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# Findings – Republic of Ireland

| The nature of intellectual disability services | • Historical conditions  
• Changing nature of intellectual disability support  
• Current culture |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| The Nature of the Registered Nurse for Intellectual Disability (RNID) | • Perspectives on intellectual disability nursing  
• Building connections while retaining boundaries with individuals with an intellectual disability  
• Being assertive |
| Lifetimes Journey | • Entering the profession  
• Developing and upholding the values inherent in ID nursing  
• Journey’s end(ing) |
| Societal change | • Moving on from congregated settings  
• Changing perspectives |
## Findings – England

| Shared visions and shared agency | Sense of justice - doing the right thing and making a difference  
|• Enjoyment and satisfaction and passion  
|• Early interest in LD work  
|• First experience of LD  
|• Falling into learning disability work by accident  
|• Fighting the system (now and then)  
|• Personal Resilience and digging deep  
|• Isolation  
|• Can’t cope |
|---|---|
| Opportunities and restrictions | Self/professional development and learning  
|• Knowing the right people  
|• Undervalued as a professional  
|• Early promotions |
| Internal and external Support | Team working as key  
|• NMC / RCN not relevant to LD nursing  
|• Importance of family / essential support from others |
| Changing contexts | We have lost something important  
|• Exciting times in the 70s 80s 90s  
|• Learning from others how not to do the job  
|• Putting up a personal/professional distance |
Possible Recommendations and Implications

• Currently preparing a series of recommendations that we hope policy makers might incorporate into future workforce planning.

• Encourage younger people to consider a career in learning disability nursing.

• Articulate a clear career structure, with pathways to exciting opportunities.
Conclusion

• Uniquely these stories are preserved in a collection of digital recordings held by the Royal College of Nursing’s archive in order for nursing, social science, or history scholars of the future to have access to data that ordinarily would have been at risk of being lost.
Thank You

Go raibh mile maith agat

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References


References


References


