Rural and Remote Nursing in British Columbia: Results from a National Survey

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Association of Registered Nurses of BC
November 2nd 2017
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What is the nature of registered nursing practice in rural and remote Canada?

- Survey of RNs
- Registered Nurses Data Base (RNDB) CIHI 2002
- Narrative Study
- Documentary Analysis

Results: First of its kind, survey response rate 68%
- Access to care, quality of care, sustainability of care
- Aging workforce
- Need for rural/remote specific education & continuing education opportunities

Recognize complexity of rural and remote practice
What is the nature of nursing practice in rural and remote Canada?

How can access to nursing care in rural and remote Canada be enhanced?

http://www.unbc.ca/rural-nursing
RRNII
2012-2017

- Update and expand the RRNI study:
  - Survey of RNs, NPs, LPNs & RPNs & greater focus on primary health care
  - Updated Nurses Database Analysis
  - Updated Policy Document Analysis

- Inform policy and health human resource planning in order to better support nursing workforce
Nursing Practice in Rural and Remote Canada II - BC

Purpose: to describe the regulated rural and remote nursing workforce in British Columbia (BC)

- Who are the rural nurses in BC and where do they work?
- What is the scope of practice of rural nurses in BC?
- What are the career plans of rural nurses in BC?
Survey Method

National nursing survey (data collected 2014-2015)
- Mailed survey with option for online completion
- French and English
- Persistent follow-ups (Dillman’s Tailored Design Method)
- 10,072 surveys sent out to every province and territory

Response rate: 40%
- 3,822 returned questionnaires
- We can say with over 99% confidence that the rural Canada nurse respondents are representative of rural Canada nurses as a whole (margin of error 1.5%)
British Columbia Response Rate

- 311 questionnaires returned
  - 157 RNs
  - 16 NPs
  - 129 LPNs
  - 9 RPNs
- Eligible sample: 764 individuals
- Response Rate: 40%
Who are the Rural Nurses in BC?

- Regulated BC nursing workforce: **46,665 nurses**
- **7.2%** work in rural or remote settings

The Regulated Nursing Workforce in BC by Nurse Type and Geographic Distribution.

![Bar chart showing the distribution of nurses by geographic location and type: NP N=236, RN N=33,545, RPN N=2,401, LPN N=10,483. The chart indicates higher numbers in urban areas compared to rural/remote areas.](image-url)
Age and Gender of Rural BC Nurses

- **6.3%** of rural BC nurses were male
- **33%** of rural BC nurses were 55 years of age or older
- **19%** were under 35 years of age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>&lt;25 %</th>
<th>25-34 %</th>
<th>35-44 %</th>
<th>45-54 %</th>
<th>55-64 %</th>
<th>&gt;64 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural BC RNs (n=157)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td><strong>33.5</strong></td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Canada RNs (n=2,082)</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td><strong>27.2</strong></td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural BC LPNs (n=129)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td><strong>23.3</strong></td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td><strong>23.3</strong></td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Canada LPNs (n=1,370)</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td><strong>17.8</strong></td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td><strong>30.3</strong></td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where do Rural BC Nurses Come From and Where do They Work?

- **52%** of rural BC nurses grew up in a community with a population under 10,000

- **64%** of rural BC nurses were living in their primary work community

  - Daily (53%) or weekly (27%) travel was common for those not living in their primary work community

  - **78%** spent ≤ 7 hours commuting each week
Who are the Indigenous Nurses: Rural Canada and Rural BC

- **6.8%** of rural Canada nurses self-declared as having First Nations, Inuit, or Métis ancestry
  - 4.0% of NPs
  - 5.9% of RNs
  - 8.0% of RPNs
  - 8.4% of LPNs

- **5.9%** of rural BC nurses self-declared as having First Nations, Inuit, or Métis ancestry
Highest Nursing Education Credential: Rural BC Nurses

**RNs**: bachelors (49%)

**NPs**: master’s (88%)

**LPNs**: diploma (98%)

**RPNs**: diploma (100%)
Where do Rural Nurses in BC Work?

- **92%** currently working in nursing
- **8%** on leave or retired and occasionally employed in nursing

### Population of Primary Work Community

- **40%** of rural BC nurses

![Bar chart showing population of primary work community](chart.png)
Nursing Employment Status: Rural BC Nurses

- **Positions:** permanent full-time (43%); permanent part-time (36%); casual (25%)

- **Work settings:** hospital (41%); LTC (29%); community (25%)

*41% of rural BC nurses*
The large majority of rural BC nurses reported being **satisfied** with their primary work community (80%).

- **Satisfied**: 80%
- **Neutral**: 11%
- **Dissatisfied**: 9%

N=311

### Satisfaction by Nursing Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>NP %</th>
<th>RN %</th>
<th>LPN %</th>
<th>RPN %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The majority of rural BC nurses were **satisfied** with their current nursing practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>NP %</th>
<th>RN %</th>
<th>LPN %</th>
<th>RPN %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=311
• **85%** of rural BC nurses reported working within their registered/licensed scope of practice (*11%* below; *4%* above)

100%  
- Rural BC NPs  
  - Rural Canada NPs – 83%

90%  
- Rural BC RNs  
  - Rural Canada RNs – 84%

78%  
- Rural BC LPNs  
  - Rural Canada LPNs 77%

78%  
- Rural BC RPNs  
  - Rural Canada RPNs 90%
Scope of Practice: Promotion, Prevention and Population Health

- Chronic disease management (59%) and lifestyle modification programs (46%) were reported most often.
Administering medication (87%) and dispensing medication (58%) was a responsibility of rural BC nurses.
Scope of Practice: Leadership

Rural BC nurses involved in supervising/mentoring nursing students (**60%**), supervising/mentoring nursing colleagues (**48%**) and leading a unit/shift in a practice setting (**47%**)

![Rural BC RNs n=157](image1)

![Rural BC LPNs n=129](image2)
Interprofessional Practice: Rural BC Nurses

Who Nurses in Rural BC Work With

- Aboriginal/community health worker
- Security/police services
- Paramedic
- Specialist physician
- Public health nurse
- Social worker/Social services worker
- Mental health and addictions counselor
- Home care nurse
- Occupational therapist
- Dietician
- Licensed/Registered practical nurse
- Physiotherapist
- Pharmacist
- Registered nurse
- Family physician

Rural BC Nurses
n=311
Rural BC Nurses’ Perspectives on Primary Health Care in Their Workplace

- Patient-centred care
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Comprehensiveness
- Accessibility/availability
- Quality improvement
- Continuity
- Equity
- Population-orientation
- Community participation
- Intersectoral team

Bar chart comparing perspectives of 'Rural BC Nurses' (n=311) vs. 'Rural Canada Nurses' (N=3,822) on key aspects of primary health care.
Recruitment: Rural BC Nurses to Primary Work Community

- Top reasons why rural BC nurses came to their primary work community:
  - Location of community: 60%
  - Lifestyle: 50%
  - Family or friends: 36%
  - Income: 34%
  - Interest in practice setting: 50%
Retention: Rural BC Nurses to Primary Work Community

- Rural BC nurses continued to work in their community because: location of the community (60%), interest in the practice setting (55%), lifestyle factors (53%) and income (53%).

![Bar chart showing reasons for retention of Rural BC nurses and LPNs.]

- **Rural BC RNs n=157**
- **Rural BC LPNs n=129**
Career Plans of Rural BC Nurses

- 33% of rural BC nurses were planning on leaving their present nursing position within the next 12 months
- 32% of RNs; 23% of NPs; 34% of LPNs
- Future plans of these nurses included:

  - Relocate within Canada
  - Nurse in a large community
  - Go back to school for further nursing education
  - Nurse in the same community
  - Nurse in a different rural/remote community
  - Work outside of nursing
  - Go back to school for education outside of nursing
  - Retire
  - Move because of family commitments
  - Other

Rural BC Nurses
n=99
Intention to Retire in the Next 5 Years

- Intention to retire in the next 5 years ranged from 19.5% (Quebec) to 39.4% (Saskatchewan)
Career Plans of Rural BC Nurses

- Rural BC nurses who intended to leave their current nursing position within the next 12 months would consider continuing to work if they could:

  - **48%**
    - Update skills and knowledge
  - **47%**
    - Have increased flexibility in scheduling
  - **43%**
    - Receive an annual cash incentive
  - **35%**
    - Utilize more of their skills
  - **31%**
    - Have access to online education
“Being a rural/remote nurse in Canada means to be constantly challenged in your nursing practice, maintaining flexibility and creativity … It can be difficult when you know your patients on a personal level outside of work, changing your relationship during that visit and possibly forever. You must always anticipate the worst and be prepared for changes that may arise in the patients condition and/or weather.

There are no "teams" that will come to your rescue when [you] are struggling … I believe you get to pull out your creative side of nursing when working rural - you often have to makeshift supplies due to lack of or not the correct supplies being available. It can be very stressful knowing you are the only stop for healthcare, but also rewarding when you can give the appropriate care and/or advice to your patients, friends & family”. (Id: 1011185)
Conclusions

- 2015 – 7.2% of BC nurses cared for the rural population (11.9%)
- 2010 – 6.7% of BC nurses cared for the rural population (12.4%)
- A quarter of rural BC nurses hold a casual nursing position
- The vast majority of rural BC nurses work within their scope of practice
- **Rural nursing practice**: the interconnection of the workplace and the community – while focused on patients and the people of the community
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Questions?