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# The characteristics of nurses in relation to their attitudes about career planning and development activities.

**A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Masters of Philosophy**

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** The dilemma of nursing workforce capacity in coming years, as older nurses prepare to exit the workforce to retire, creates pressure on those that remain and makes retention of nurses a priority. Career planning and career development concepts characterise the factors that lie within the nurse's influence, or are within the influence of the employer/organization.

**Aim:** This study examines nurses' attitudes to activities that promote career progression as well as training and education in order to identify demographic characteristics of nurses that are the most as well as the least positive about career progression and training/education.

**Method:** This study undertakes secondary analysis of existing data, from the NZNO Employment Survey 2015, examining the data from nurses (n = 944) that responded to five questions about their attitude to career progression and training/education. Data were analysed using quantitative methods to describe and compare with nurses registered with the Nursing Council of New Zealand, and investigate the relationship between nurses' attitudes about career progression and training/education and their experiences of participating in some of those activities.

**Results:** A strong significant association was found between nurses who engage in career development activities and their positive attitude about career progression, in particular for nurses who had recent access to career planning ($p$ = .001) and who had a performance appraisal in the last 12 months ($p$ = .001). A similar association was found between nurses who engage in training/education activities and their positive attitude to training/education, in particular for nurses who access three or more professional development days per year and who receive a range of employer support for education ($p$ = .001). The demographic characteristics of nurses who were the most and least positive were identified.

**Discussion:** When nurses are engaged in activities that promote career progression and training/education, they are more positive about career progression and training/education. This means that employers/organisations that prioritise facilitating nurses' access to these activities stand to benefit from nurses having a more positive attitude to career progression.

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