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The health status of Māori nursing students:
A cross-sectional survey

A thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Philosophy
In
Nursing
at Massey University, Albany,
New Zealand

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2009

Abstract

In New Zealand Māori are less likely to engage in tertiary level education and less likely to complete a tertiary level qualification than non Māori. These issues of recruitment and retention are reflected in other areas for Māori such as health, where Māori have worse levels of health Māori are more likely to have lower socioeconomic status. The initial findings of recent research indicate that Māori nursing students find it a struggle to remain on the Bachelor of Health Science in nursing degree programme. This study is designed to explore further what might be occurring for Māori nursing students by obtaining a snapshot of their health.

Aim: To describe the health status of Māori nursing students.

Participants: 75 nursing students undertaking nursing degree programmes in New Zealand, who identified as Māori.

Method: A cross-sectional survey was undertaken with Māori nursing students completing nursing degrees from thirteen of sixteen tertiary institutions in New Zealand.

Instrument: A questionnaire comprising demographic data, SF-36, and two cultural questions was used for students to self assess their health status. Participants were also invited to write relevant comments on the survey.

Findings: Descriptive statistical data revealed participants with a stronger cultural identity as Māori were more likely to have their cultural needs met whilst studying compared to participants with a weaker Māori cultural identity. Participants in a relationship had more income than those who were not in a relationship. Participants' overall health was worse than one year prior and their physical health was better than their mental health. More specifically, for physical health, general health, tiredness and lack of vitality were most affected, while roles and relationships were most affected for mental health.

Implications: Institutions providing cultural support and kaupapa Māori programmes may assist in improving the recruitment and retention of Māori in nursing programmes. These results revealed a snapshot picture of the health

status of Māori nursing students and identified issues around their health status which is consistent with the literature.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following:

My supervisor, Dr Denise Wilson, for her awhi, tautoko, patience and sharing of knowledge and time;

The Wharangi Ruamano rōpū for their tautoko and knowledge;

The Māori nursing students who so generously participated in this study;

Nursing and administration staff who assisted me with this study, particularly from Whitireia;

My friend Tania Forrest and my tamariki, Alex, Tuari and Jamie who were there all the way through;

Last but not least, my friend Daril Thomas who was there at the end.

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