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Professional Practice Attributes  
Within  
Public Health Nursing

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## **ABSTRACT**

Modifiable organisational attributes that reflect a professional nursing practice environment are important determinants of both the experience of people who access health care services and the job satisfaction of nurses who work within health care organisations. Research relating to acute care settings, commonly known as the Magnet phenomenon has made an outstanding contribution to health sector knowledge by identifying features that attract and retain nurses, promote excellence in patient care, and achieve superior patient outcomes. These features have been studied by the Nursing Work Index Revised which measures attributes that reflect a professional nursing practice environment. More recently there has been an interest in the potential applicability of these attributes in the community setting. A recent study surveyed United States home health nurses and New Zealand district nurses to ascertain which of the Nursing Work Index Revised attributes were perceived by them as important to the support of their professional practice. In this study 92% of items previously tested in acute settings were considered important in community settings.

This descriptive study extends the previous work by investigating how another group of primary health care nurses in New Zealand (public health nurses) perceive the importance of specific organisational attributes within their practice setting. The Nursing Work Index Revised was utilised and participants were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with the importance and presence of 48 attributes on the Nursing Work Index Revised against a 4-point Likert scale. The findings of the study validate the use of the Nursing Work Index Revised as a tool in the community setting. The study's findings, implications for nursing practice, future research and the potential use of this tool to support the development of primary health care nursing in the New Zealand health sector is presented.

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*“The secret of success is making your vocation your vacation”*

Mark Twain.

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