

Acute care registered nurses caring for people with intellectual disability: An educational void.

PRESENTERS:

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Background

- People with intellectual disability (ID) experience poorer health outcomes than the general population.
- One barrier to accessing quality healthcare is lack of knowledge and skills in ID care by nurses.



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AIMS

To explore the lived experiences of registered nurses (RNs) in caring for people with ID in the acute care hospital context in Australia.



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METHODS

- Husserl's (1859-1938) descriptive phenomenology
- Data were obtained through phenomenological interviews
- Twelve RNs across Australia
- Interviews were audio recorded then transcribed
- Data were analysed using Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step framework.

RESULTS

Participants in this study identified:

- Lack of ID content throughout their nursing studies
- Feeling unable to provide the right care to this vulnerable group.
- Being forced to learn on the job
- Being compromised in their legal and ethical obligations as a nurse
- Lack of guidance and support from the nursing profession and health service organisations
- The expertise of specialist ID nurses was highly valued

CONCLUSIONS

- The Australian nursing profession currently not meeting the educational needs of the RN workforce in ID care
- This impacts nurses' ability to provide quality care to the ID healthcare consumer

CONCLUSIONS (cont.)

- Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery: adamant that the curriculum is overcrowded
- More needs to be done to assist acute care RNs in learning how to care for people with ID

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the absence of ID content:

- RNs who work with people with ID and have the expertise must extend themselves to fill the gap

RECOMMENDATIONS (cont.)

RNs with ID expertise to:

- Offer in-service education in ID care
- Act as a resource person in acute care
- Role modeling
- Telehealth services with specialist ID nurse
- Extend the ID Nurse Navigator role nationally



Thank you