Breaking the Drought

WHY UNDERGRADUATE NURSES WANT TO WORK IN RURAL AREAS
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Did you know?

• The current nursing workforce in rural areas is ageing and experiencing a shortage in the numbers of staff. (2)
• Rural nurses are an integral and essential component of health care delivery in rural areas. (2, 3)
• Despite the majority of undergraduate nursing students intending to practice in metropolitan settings, a number of students desire to practice in rural hospitals following their graduation. (1, 2, 4, 15)
• A literature review was conducted to explore the reasons why undergraduate nurses desire to practice in rural settings and provide suggestions for the development of strategies to recruit more graduate nurses to rural areas.

A Rural Background

• Students with a rural background are more inclined to pursue rural practice. (1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)
• A rural background can be acquired by living in or making connections with a rural community. (14)

Filling the Gaps

• Students are aware of the shortage of health professionals in rural areas and want to help overcome this situation. (1, 5, 7, 10, 15)
• Students are attracted to the diversity and challenges of rural nursing practice. (1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 15)

First Hand Experience

• Undertaking a clinical placement in a rural setting is known to establish rural career intentions in many students, regardless of background (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 15)
• Placement allows students to experience the nature of rural clinical settings and enjoy the lifestyle and sense of community (2)

Recruitment Implications

• More students need to experience clinical placement in rural settings.
• The ageing nursing workforce needs young graduates to embrace rural nursing, thus ensuring the ongoing health of rural communities.

Conclusion

• Undergraduate nursing students with a rural background, an awareness of the workforce shortage or a previous experience in a rural clinical setting are more likely to pursue rural nursing careers.

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