UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF NURSES WORKING IN CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITALS

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Critical access hospitals in New Hampshire provide local residents and tourists with a variety of health care services some of which are related to primary care and others involve life-saving interventions. The nurses that staff these hospitals rural nurses are expected to demonstrate excellence in clinical decision making and function in as independent practitioners meeting the global needs of patients in need of care (Hurme, 2009). However, little is known about the lived experience of nurses working in critical access hospitals.

Research/Aim: The purpose of the descriptive, phenomenological study is to look at the lived experience of nurses working at Monadnock Community Hospital in Peterborough, New Hampshire. Colaizzi’s (1978) method will be utilized to explore and better understand the everyday experience of rural nurses working in a critical access hospital in Peterborough, New Hampshire.

Method: Face-to-face interviews will be conducted with nurses who will be asked open-ended questions about their personalities, attributes, and coping strategies they utilize to enhance their clinical practice in a rural setting. Using Colaizzi’s method, the participants’ responses will be organized, and analyzed into a narrative dataset.

Results: The eventual outcome sought from applying Colaizzi's strategy in a descriptive phenomenology will be to produce a comprehensive account about the phenomenon regarding the personalities and attributes of nurses working in one critical access hospital.

Implications for Practice: Providing cognitive and affective support for nurses working in rural settings is inexplicably connected to maintaining and growing the nursing workforce in these unique practice settings. In order to provide this support nursing leaders must have an understanding of the lived experiences of nurses working within these settings.