

# **NURSING ROLES IN A NURSE-MANAGED PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CLINIC: PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCE OF STAKEHOLDERS**

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## **Investigators:**

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**Purpose:** The research study was a year-long qualitative research investigation to identify and describe the roles of nurses who work in a university-sponsored primary health care nurse-managed clinic in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

**Background:** Although the preliminary research about nurse-managed clinics suggests that clients are satisfied with the services they receive, it is not clear how the nurses' practice roles contribute to their or other stakeholders' experience of such clinics. There is a need to consider the attributes of the practice setting, including the nature of the clients it serves, and the ways in which the nursing roles are defined, perceived and enacted by the stakeholders, in determining how and why nurses function as they do.

**Methods:** An Interpretive Description design was used to explore the everyday experiences and responses of the stakeholders of a university-sponsored nurse-managed clinic in regard to how nurses' roles in the clinic changed over time and the factors that influenced this change. Participants (n = 28) included clients, nurses, volunteers, and community stakeholders. Individual interviews focused on the participant's perspectives regarding the nurses' roles in the FCHC. Group interviews were held at the completion of the study to share our interpretation of the research findings and to obtain feedback from the participants.

**Results:** The evolution of nurses' roles occurs in the context of mutual vulnerability between nurses, clients and community stakeholders as they develop and attempt to sustain collaborative relationships; the nurses at the FCHC provide complex care and create a safe environment for the clients they serve, many of whom have previous history with health care practitioners that results in them feeling distrustful and judged; there are socio-political factors that influence the nature of nurses' roles over time and at times compromise and complicate the ability of nurses to enact their roles as they desire; the staff of the FCHC operate as a truly integrated interdisciplinary team, meaning that stakeholders cannot always decipher the role of the nurse from that of other disciplines; the FCHC provides a "living laboratory" for faculty and students wishing to learn about primary health care and community development and wishing to practice in that setting.

**Conclusion:** In order to achieve the goals of the FCHC, nurses need to have skills of leadership and political action, as well as competence in relationships with the media and community stakeholders.