

Scoping Review Protocol

Title: Strategies to diversify Canadian baccalaureate nursing education: A scoping review protocol

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Abstract

Objective: This review seeks to identify strategies that have been implemented by Canadian baccalaureate nursing (BSN) programs to recruit and retain students of systemically and historically marginalized populations.

Introduction: Diversity within the nursing workforce has been shown to improve patients' healthcare experiences. However, Eurocentric-heteronormative Canadian society has facilitated the exclusion of people who are Indigenous, Black, Asian, LGBTQ2IA+, have disabilities, or identify as male from nursing education. The country's first Indigenous nurse, Edith Monture, graduated in 1914 from a program in the United States after being denied access to training in Canada. This story repeats approximately 30 years later when Bernice Redmon graduated from an American training program before returning to Canada to become the country's first Black nurse. Implementing strategies to recruit and retain students from these historically underrepresented groups could diversify the nursing workforce; thus, improving patient experiences with healthcare.

Inclusion criteria: This review will include English language publications dating from 1990 that describe recruitment and/or retention strategies aimed to increase and/or sustain the enrolment of students of systemically and historically marginalized populations within Canadian baccalaureate nursing education programs.

Methods: Using JBI scoping review methodology, records will be searched in the following datasets: CINAHL (EBSCO), MEDLINE (EBSCO), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, Web of Science, and ERIC (EBSCO) to identify strategies implemented within Canadian BSN

programs. The search will be limited to publications dated from 1990 and will include terms to focus on Canadian content. To capture grey literature, websites of approved Canadian BSN programs will be hand searched for recruitment and/or retention strategies.

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Keywords: Baccalaureate; diversification; nursing education; recruitment; retention

Introduction

Nursing education in Canada has historically lacked diversity. This is likely due to the explicit denial of entry for Indigenous and Black people into Canadian nursing training programs. This exclusion persisted until the 1930's and 1940's, respectively,¹ forcing many to seek nursing training in the United States.² Today, disaggregated statistical data indicative of diversity within the nursing workforce, or a lack thereof, is not collected on Canadian nurses nor nursing students.³ Rather, the profession relies on qualitative studies to capture the experiences of marginalization, racism, othering, and objectification that historically and persistently highlight a lack of representation within the workplace,³ classrooms, and clinical settings.⁴ A lack of diversity within the nursing workforce has been shown to negatively impact the quality of patient care.³

While Indigenous and Black aspiring nurses are no longer explicitly excluded from nursing education, evidence of marginalization, discrimination, and other barriers remain. Systemic racism is an oppressive structure built into every aspect of Canadian life and impacts Indigenous and Black people from an early age.³ For instance, Indigenous and Black children are overrepresented within Canada's child welfare system, a system symptomatic of inequitable exposure to poverty, intergenerational trauma, and a lack of adequate support services.⁵ Such barriers might explain some of the challenges to accessing and successfully completing post-secondary nursing education. In addition, attrition, or an intent to leave nursing education programs has been related to the experience of being belittled in the classroom,⁴ feeling disliked by nursing instructors,⁶ and curricula lacking Indigenous and Black nursing perspectives.⁷

Today, society continues to perceive nursing and nursing professionals through a Eurocentric and heteronormative lens, one which persists in defining nurses by the outdated Victorian-era ideals of white womanhood.⁷ Thus, Indigenous and Black students are not alone in facing exclusion within nursing education. Sedgwick et al.⁶ found Asian student populations also lack belongingness and experience isolation within their nursing education programs. Some students expressed themselves as being the targets of derogatory comments from clinical nursing instructors and patients and feeling inadequate when compared to their white peers; a phenomenon especially true if the student had an accent.⁶

Derogatory comments and stereotyping within nursing classrooms and clinical settings extend beyond race and are commonly experienced by or directed towards cisgendered male nursing students.⁸ Cisgender is a term that defines a gender identity that is

consistent with the gender prescribed at birth. Some may simplify this definition to refer to a person whose gender identity and sex are consistent.⁹ Heteronormativity and misogyny reflected in the gendered nature of nursing, that which has been historically established and perpetuated by Canadian society, has been reported to have left cisgender male nursing students feeling emasculated, inappropriately stereotyped, ostracized, or excluded altogether in classroom and clinical settings,^{8,10-12} thus, affecting male nursing student retention.¹²

Due to the historical and systemic nature of the racism and discrimination faced by Indigenous, Black, Asian, and cis-gendered men in nursing,^{11,13} it is assumed that additional identities may face exclusion and systemic marginalization from nursing education. In addition to the previously described identities, our research team has chosen to include people who are Latin American, members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, or who have disabilities, as being systemically and historically marginalized populations within the context of Canadian nursing education.

One way to promote diversity within the nursing workforce is to direct approaches to diversifying the nursing student population.³ Thus, the proposed scoping review seeks to identify and characterize strategies that have been implemented across Canada to recruit and retain individuals from a wide array of identities, to not only protect against inequity in access to nursing education, but also to improve patient health outcomes by diversifying the nursing workforce. A scoping review methodology was chosen to inform this research question as this methodology is ideal for identifying the evidence about a particular topic and allows for searching and including a wide range of information sources.¹⁴ Also, this review will be limited to the Canadian setting since we intend to understand this phenomenon within the local context of the review authors, recognizing that every country has a unique sociocultural framework and history with marginalization, and the groups that are affected by this experience vary in different settings. However, we anticipate that some of the programs have the potential to be applied in other similar settings outside of Canada.

A preliminary search of PROSPERO, MEDLINE, the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, and *JB* Evidence Synthesis was conducted in February 2023. We identified two literature reviews that described strategies to increase racial and ethnic student participation in the nursing profession,^{15,16} one scoping review that described strategies for retention of nursing students,^{17,18} and a protocol for a scoping review intending to identify educator strategies for engaging diverse students in undergraduate nursing education.¹⁹ Although similar, none of these reviews or protocols incorporated the scope of our review question due to a narrower population focus on ethnically diverse students^{15,16} or a concept

that was focused on retention strategies.^{19,20} None of these reviews and protocols focused on strategies implemented specifically in the Canadian context.

Our overarching objective is to identify strategies that have been implemented in BSN programs across Canada to recruit and/or retain individuals from historically marginalized populations. Although we cannot propose practice recommendations based on the findings of this scoping review, our goal is to identify strategies that have already been implemented in the Canadian context to support future research in this area and guide the implementation of recruitment and retention strategies at the local level.

Review question(s)

What is the available evidence on strategies used by Canadian baccalaureate nursing programs to recruit and/or retain students from systemically and historically marginalized populations?

Inclusion criteria

Participants

This review will consider studies that include groups of people that have been systemically and historically excluded from nursing education. Our review team defines systemic and historical marginalization in this context as people and identities who have faced overtly exclusive policy that denies admission into nursing education and/or have faced colonialism in such a way that impacts their access to the social determinants of health. Such groups include Indigenous people, Black people, Asian people, Latin American people, members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and people with disabilities. Within the context of nursing education, cis men also experience discrimination rooted in the systemic exclusion of men from the profession.¹¹ For this reason, cis-gendered men have been identified by our team to be systemically and historically marginalized within the context of nursing education.

Concept

This review will consider studies that describe approaches undertaken by Baccalaureate nursing programs to recruit and retain students from groups that have been systemically and historically marginalized from nursing education. The term “recruitment” focuses on admission and enrollment of students, while “retention” centers on facilitating successful completion of BSN programs once students are enrolled.^{17,18} Recruitment strategies include

any policy or outreach strategy that BSN programs currently have in place to enroll students of systemically and historically excluded populations into their programs. Retention strategies include any policies, programs, aids, or changes to curricula that support students of these groups to reach graduation and prevent attrition of this student population.

Context

This review will only consider studies of baccalaureate nursing programs in Canada since the socio-cultural context, the historical underpinnings of marginalization, and the identity of marginalized groups and individuals is unique to a country. This review will also focus on BSN programs because evidence suggests educating nurses at the baccalaureate level is associated with improved patient outcomes.²¹

Types of sources

This scoping review will consider quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods study designs for inclusion. Systematic reviews, and text and opinion papers will also be considered for inclusion in the proposed scoping review. In addition, websites of approved BSN programs in Canada will be hand-searched for recruitment and/or retention strategies.

Methods

The proposed scoping review will be conducted in accordance with the JBI methodology for scoping reviews²² and reported in line with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR).²³ This protocol has been registered in Open Science Framework (<https://osf.io/cne3a>).

Search strategy

The search strategy will aim to locate both published and unpublished primary studies, reviews, and text and opinion papers. With the assistance of a research librarian, an initial limited search of MEDLINE (EBSCO) and CINAHL (EBSCO) was undertaken to identify articles on the topic. The text words contained in the titles and abstracts of relevant articles, and the index terms used to describe the articles were used to develop a full search strategy for CINAHL (EBSCO) (see Appendix I). The search strategy, including all identified keywords and index terms, will be adapted for each included information source. In addition, the reference lists of included articles will be screened for additional papers.

Due to a lack of translation resources, only articles published in English will be included at full text. Since access to BSN education in Canada was limited prior to 1989, only articles published from 1990 to the present will be included.

The databases to be searched include CINAHL (EBSCO), ERIC (EBSCO), Medline (EBSCO), Proquest Dissertations and Theses, and Web of Science. Also, a hand search of approved BSN websites for recruitment and/or retention strategies will be included to capture relevant grey literature and unpublished data.

Study/Source of evidence selection

All identified records will be collated and uploaded into Covidence (Veritas Health Innovation, Melbourne, Australia) and duplicates removed. Following a pilot test, titles and abstracts will be screened by two independent reviewers for assessment against the inclusion criteria for the review. The full text of selected citations will then be assessed in detail against the inclusion criteria by two independent reviewers. Reasons for exclusion of full-text papers that do not meet the inclusion criteria will be recorded and reported in the final scoping review. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers at each stage of the selection process will be resolved through discussion or with a third reviewer. The results of the search will be reported in full in the final scoping review and presented in a PRISMA flow diagram.²⁴

Data extraction

Data will be extracted from papers included in the scoping review by two independent reviewers using a data extraction tool developed by the reviewers. The data extracted will include specific details about the population, concept, context, methods, and key findings relevant to the review question. A draft extraction tool is provided (see Appendix II). The drafted data extraction tool will be modified and revised as necessary during the process of extracting data from each included paper. Modifications will be detailed in the full scoping review. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers will be resolved with a third reviewer. Authors of papers will be contacted to request missing or additional data, where required.

Data analysis and presentation

The evidence from this scoping review will be presented in tabular and graphical form. A table of the characteristics of implemented strategies (e.g., retention or recruitment strategy, combination or single strategy, population affected) and key study findings will be presented. Figures of relevant details like the number of strategies from each professional school will be provided. A narrative summary will accompany the table and figures to describe how the results relate to the review's objective of identifying strategies that have been implemented in BSN programs across Canada to recruit and/or retain individuals from historically marginalized populations.

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Author contributions

JH, JJ, DD contributed to the conceptualization of the review topic and development of methods for the review. JH, JJ, JM developed and ran the search strategies. JH, BZ drafted the manuscript and all authors contributed to critical review of the manuscript before submission.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Appendix I: Search strategy

CINAHL (EBSCO) – May 2, 2023

The default fields for unqualified searches in CINAHL consist of the following: Title, Abstract and Subject headings, PubMed ID (PMID), Digital Object Identifier, Author.

#	Query	Limiters/Expanders	Last Run Via	Results
S14	S9 AND S10 AND S11 AND S12	Limiters – Published Date: 19900101- Search modes – Boolean/Phrase	Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen – Advanced Search Database – CINAHL Complete	187
S13	S9 AND S10 AND S11 AND S12	Search modes – Boolean/Phrase	Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen – Advanced Search	189

			Database – CINAHL Complete	
S12	S4 OR S8	Search modes – Boolean/Phrase	Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen – Advanced Search Database – CINAHL Complete	208,124
S11	S3 OR S7	Search modes – Boolean/Phrase	Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen – Advanced Search Database – CINAHL Complete	580,765
S10	S2 OR S6	Search modes – Boolean/Phrase	Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen – Advanced	153,127

			Search Database – CINAHL Complete	
S9	S1 OR S5	Search modes – Boolean/Phrase	Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen – Advanced Search Database – CINAHL Complete	1,330,157
S8	(MH “Students, Nursing”) OR (MH “Students, Nursing, Baccalaureate+”) OR (MH “Students, Pre-Nursing”) OR (MH “Education, Nursing, Baccalaureate+”) OR (MH “Baccalaureate Nurses”) OR (MH “Education, Baccalaureate+”)	Search modes – Boolean/Phrase	Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen – Advanced Search Database – CINAHL Complete	52,368
S7	(MH “Students, Minority”) OR (MH “Sexual and Gender Minorities+”) OR (MH “Students, Foreign”) OR (MH “Students, Non-Traditional”) OR (MH “Students with Disabilities”) OR	Search modes – Boolean/Phrase	Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen –	196,743

	(MH "Ethnic Groups+") OR (MH "Minority Groups") OR (MH "Students, Nursing, Male")		Advanced Search Database – CINAHL Complete	
S6	(MH "Canada+")	Search modes – Boolean/Phrase	Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen – Advanced Search Database – CINAHL Complete	111,458
S5	(MH "School Admissions+") OR (MH "Student Recruitment") OR (MH "Student Retention") OR (MH "Student Dropouts") OR (MH "Student Assistance Programs")	Search modes – Boolean/Phrase	Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen – Advanced Search Database – CINAHL Complete	10,109
S4	nurs* N5 (education OR student* OR undergrad* OR program* OR baccalaureate OR bachelor* OR degree OR school* OR curricul*	Search modes – Boolean/Phrase	Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search	205,924

	OR 15anadian15y* OR college*)		Screen – Advanced Search Database – CINAHL Complete	
S3	minorit* OR “ethnic group*” OR black* OR 15anad* OR 15anadian* OR 15anadi* OR “first nation*” OR indigenous OR inuit OR metis OR aboriginal* OR bipoc OR ibpoc OR bpoc OR bame OR race OR racial OR ethnicity OR (male N2 nurs*) OR (“non-traditional” OR international) N3 student*) OR lgbt* OR 2slgbt* OR 15anadian15y* OR disabled OR queer OR gay OR “cultural safety” OR “culturally safe” OR “cultural humility” OR “anti-racis*” OR latin*	Search modes – Boolean/Phrase	Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen – Advanced Search Database – CINAHL Complete	542,383
S2	15anadi OR 15anadian OR “British Columbia” OR Alberta OR Saskatchewan OR Manitoba OR Ontario OR Quebec OR “New Brunswick” OR “Nova Scotia” or “Prince Edward Island” OR Newfoundland OR Labrador OR “Northwest Territories” OR Yukon OR Nunavut	Search modes – Boolean/Phrase	Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen – Advanced Search Database –	153,127

			CINAHL Complete	
S1	recruit* OR retention OR retain* OR “drop* out” OR quit* OR abandon* OR withdraw* OR attrition OR engag* OR “pre nurs*” OR “prospective nurse” OR admission* OR inclusion* OR participant* OR diversity OR participat* OR enroll* OR registration OR register OR registrant* OR “student assistance program*”	Search modes – Boolean/Phrase	Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen – Advanced Search Database – CINAHL Complete	1,328,867

Appendix II

Data Extraction Tool

Title	Authors	Published Year	Journal	Type	Location	Context	Population	Methodology	Intervention/Strategies (as suggested by the article) (explicitly list strategies)	Aim/Purpose	Key findings
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