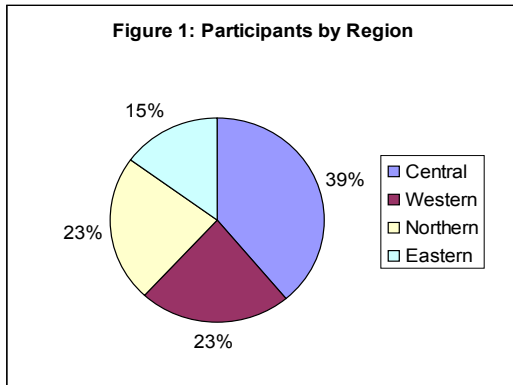


Research In Action: Completed Projects

This fact sheet is the first in a series of fact sheets that highlight findings from a research study entitled “Exploring Worklife Issues in Provincial Correctional Settings”. The research team led by Drs. Diane Doran and Joan Almost includes Linda Ogilvie, Crystal Miller, Shirley Kennedy, Carol Timmings, Don Rose, Mae Squires, Charlotte Lee and Sue Bookey-Bassett. The study was conducted at the Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto and funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The full report is available on our website at: www.nhsru.com.



Characteristics of Study Participants:

- Participants included a total of 270 RN or RPNs (90.9%) and 27 health care managers (9.1%)
- Of all participants 46 (15.7%) were males and 247 (84.3%) were females
- Participants represented various regions of the province with 39% from Central Ontario (see Figure 1)

Research Background & Purpose

Correctional nurses hold unique positions within the nursing profession as their role and work environment combine the demands of two systems, corrections and health care. However there has been limited research regarding this unique nurse population. This study aimed to explore the worklife issues for nurses in provincial correctional settings in Ontario and their effects on recruitment and retention. A mixed methods research design guided this study which was conducted in two phases: Phase 1 involved interviews with 17 nurses, health care managers and superintendents working in Ontario correctional facilities. In Phase two, surveys were distributed to all 511 nurses and health care managers working in provincial corrections facilities throughout Ontario. Two hundred and ninety-eight surveys were returned for a response rate of 59%.

Participants’ Age, Experience and Level of Education

On average, RN/RPN participants were:

- 46.0 years old, with 20.7 years experience in nursing, 7.9 years experience in correctional nursing, and 6.5 years experience in their current institution
- Diploma prepared (81.1%) with 18.9% having baccalaureate degrees
- Classified full-time (50.8 %) or unclassified (44.4%)

On average, health care managers (HCMs) were:

- 47.6 years old, with 25.1 years experience in nursing, 13.0 years in correctional nursing, and 10.9 years experience in their current institution
- Diploma prepared (70.4%) with 25.9% having baccalaureate degrees, and 3.7% having a masters degree
- Classified full-time (92.6%)

Job Characteristics: Participants were asked about various aspects of their jobs including hours worked, amount of overtime worked, ability to work to full scope of practice and whether their immediate supervisors were nurses. During the interviews, participants expressed both their satisfaction and frustrations with corrections nursing. Further results are presented in the tables below.

Table 1: Average Hours and Overtime Worked per Week in the Past Year

	Full-Time RN/RPN		Full-Time HCM	
	M	SD	M	SD
Number of paid hours worked weekly	43.24	7.38	48.02	8.95
Number of paid OVERTIME hours worked weekly	7.16	6.47	15.89	14.44
Number of unpaid OVERTIME hours worked weekly	1.49	2.16	10.24	7.77

M=mean or average; SD=standard deviation or the variability of the scores

“We are so short (of staff)...I hang on thinking, maybe it’ll be a better environment... if we can get our numbers (of nurses) up... I will be able to do the things that I was hired to do, that I would find exciting to do.”

As shown in Table 1, HCMs reported working more paid hours per week on average as well as more paid and unpaid overtime hours compared to RNs/RPNs. Thirty percent of all participants indicated that the overtime situation in their organization had increased over the past year and 39.0% indicated it had remained the same.

Scope of Practice

Participants were asked whether they were able to practice to their full scope of practice. As shown in Table 2, the majority of participants reported that they are able to practice to their full scope. Reasons given for not being able to practice to their full scope included: the type of setting, type of patients, facility set-up; workload (lack of policies, limited resources); staff shortages and administrative limitations (e.g., management style, values/beliefs).

In both the interview and survey responses, participants referred to the diverse and complex nature of corrections nursing. This is reflected in the following quote from one participant:

“...every moment is different. It’s a very fast paced, ever changing environment, demanding... people don’t see what nurses do in correctional setting. They don’t realize we have acute patients just like they do in a hospital. We do most of the same treatments that a hospital nurse would do.”

Table 2: Are you able to practice full scope of practice?

	Overall	
	n	%
Yes	179	62.2
No	109	37.8

Table 3: Is your immediate supervisor a nurse?

	Overall	
	n	%
Yes	269	90.9
No	27	9.1

Supervisor Background

As seen in Table 3, the majority of participants (90.9%) reported their immediate supervisor to be a nurse. However, 70.0% of HCMs indicated that they reported to non-nurses and these included roles such as superintendents, program deputy, and deputy superintendents.

Job Satisfaction

Overall, the findings indicate that RN/RPNs and HCMs are slightly satisfied with most aspects of their jobs (Table 4). Both groups reported being the most satisfied with the level of enjoyment in their job and being the least satisfied with the limited time they have to do their work. HCMs are more satisfied with salary & benefits, and scheduling compared to the RN/RPN group.

“I love the corrections setting. I can’t see myself doing any other type of nursing.”

“I love my job! What I do affects my clients, their families and the public at large!”

Table 4: Nurses’ Satisfaction with Aspects of Current Job

	RN/RPN		HCM	
	M	SD	M	SD
Overall Job Satisfaction	3.38	0.55	3.27	0.56
Nurses’ Job Satisfaction Scale				
Subscale - Enjoyment	3.58	0.63	3.63	0.65
Subscale - Time to do one’s job	2.83	0.86	2.24	0.85
Subscale - Quality of Care	3.32	0.81	3.37	0.87
McCloskey/Mueller Satisfaction Scale				
Subscale - Salary & Benefits	2.76	1.00	3.16	0.97
Subscale - Scheduling	2.92	0.95	3.18	1.01

Scale range is 1 to 5. High score indicates high satisfaction.

Additional fact sheets are available that highlight other factors within the correctional work environment.