Internationally Educated Nurses: Barriers and Facilitators in the U.S.

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Presentation Overview

- Study Background
- Motivation
- Methods
- Key Results
- Discussion
Acknowledgement

A Comparison of Internationally Educated and U.S. Educated Nurses

Survey of International & U.S. Nurses
Study Team . . .

Dr. Cheryl Jones, UNC-CH School of Nursing
Dr. Linda McGillis Hall, U. Toronto School of Nursing
Dr. George Pink, UNC-CH School of Public Health
Mr. John Carlson, UNC-CH School of Nursing
Ms. Julie George, Executive Director, NC Board of Nursing
Dr. Leah Masselink, Post-doc
Ms. Deonni Stolldorf, Pre-doc
Ms. Yin Li, Pre-doc
Ms. Lindsay Thompson, Pre-doc
• There almost always seems to be a nursing “shortage”
• Nursing workforce is changing
• U.S. health care organizations have hired IENs to fill nursing vacancies
• The U.S. is a top importer of IENs
Proportion of IENs in the U.S. Nursing Workforce (2008)

IENs in the U.S. – where they come from

IENs in the US – where they (and USENs) go

Where IENs (and USENs) work

The educational backgrounds of IENs and USENs

Overall Study Aims

• Compare IENs and USENs
  – Socio-demographic, professional, employment characteristics
  – Working relationships
  – Integration into the work environment
    • Safety behaviors
  – Examine IENs’ perceptions of barriers and facilitators to U.S. employment
Motivation for this Analysis

- We know **relatively little** about what encourages or discourages IENs to come to the U.S.
- **Policy-makers** have little information to guide decision-making and regulations
  - Policies and regulations subsequently tend to be reactive versus proactive
- **Research** is therefore needed to
  - Better understand the strategies for integrating IENs into the U.S. nursing workforce
  - Develop more targeted policies
Methods

• **Comparative, cross-sectional design**
  – Survey
    • Web-based and paper and pencil
    • Derived from the literature and existing nursing workforce surveys (e.g., NSSRN)
    • Separate surveys for IENs and USENs

• **Tailored Design Method (Dillman, Smyth, Christian, 2009)**
Methods

• Sample
  – Accessed by obtaining a list of all currently licensed nurses from state boards of nursing
  • IENs: those who obtained their basic or initial RN education from a school outside of the U.S.
  • USENs: those who received their basic RN education from a U.S. nursing school
Our sample was drawn from...
Key Results: Description of Sample

- **Survey Response**
  - **IENs**
    - 3,265 sampled; 991 “usable” returns
    - Response rate = 30%
  - **USENIs**
    - 1,640 sampled; 603 “usable” returns
    - Response rate = 37%
### Key Results: Description of Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>IENs (n = 991)</th>
<th>USENs (n = 603)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>47 (SD = 11)</td>
<td>50 (SD = 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<tr>
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<th>IENs (n = 991)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial Degree (%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest Degree (%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s/Doctorate</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Key Results: Description of Sample

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years experience working in US</td>
<td>14 (SD = 10.5)</td>
<td>20 (SD = 12.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently working</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empl. Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per diem</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term care</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public/Comm/Home</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulatory/primary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position (%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff nurse</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educator</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adv Pract</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Mgr/DC Planner</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNL</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Motivation, Methods, Key Results, Discussion*
IENs were asked . . .

- **Looking back, what difficulties did you experience when you started working as an RN in the US?**
  - 18 response options
    - Select all that applies
  - Open-ended option
- **14% (142) reported experiencing no barriers**
- **86% (849) reported experiencing 1 or more barriers**
Number of Barriers Reported

Background
Motivation
Methods
Key Results
Discussion
### Types of barriers experienced...

- US nursing practice = 43%
- RN licensure exam = 37%
- Bias because I am foreign = 32%
- Transition into community = 29%
- Moving expenses = 26%
- Being understood/language = 25%
- Learning new language = 18%
- Doubts about my qualifications/others = 17%
- Finding place to live = 17%
- Job interview (in person) = 13%
- Finding support from other IENs = 12%
IENs were also asked . . .

- **Looking back, what kind of assistance did you receive...and from whom?**
  - 13 response options
    - Select all that applies
    - Check entity providing (e.g., recruitment agency, family/friends)
  - Open-ended option
No assistance received . . .

Finding a place to live
Getting through immigration process
Finding employment
Help with travel arrangements
Transitioning into community
Gain technical skills to work in US
Prepare for licensure exam
Gain cultural skills to work in US
Find job spouse/partner
Find schools for children
Learn communication skills
Prepare for language exam

Percent Reporting

UNC SCHOOL OF NURSING
Sources of assistance

1. **Family**
   - Preparing for licensure and language exams
   - Finding place to live, spouse/partner job, children’s school
   - Transitioning into community

2. **Recruitment agency**
   - Finding employer
   - Getting through immigration process
   - Making travel arrangements

3. **Health care organization**
   - Gaining technical skills
   - Gaining cultural skills
   - Gaining communication skills
Summary of IENs’ barriers and/or a lack of assistance...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice-related</th>
<th>Personal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Understanding US practice</td>
<td>• Family concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Language</td>
<td>– Schools for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication</td>
<td>– Jobs for spouse/partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gaining cultural skills</td>
<td>• Transitioning into their communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gaining technical skills</td>
<td>• Moving expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Licensure exam preparation</td>
<td>• Finding a place to live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bias because they were foreign</td>
<td>• Finding support from other IENs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Others doubting their qualifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Incentives

• IENs and USENs were asked:
  
  *What incentives, if any, were offered to recruit you to work as an RN?*

• 14 response options
  – Select all that apply
  – Open-ended response

• IENs: 53% reported being offered an incentive

• USENs: 70% reported being offered an incentive
IENs and USENs differed in the types of incentives they were offered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IENs</th>
<th>USENs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Sign-on bonuses</td>
<td>• Tuition reimbursement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relocation assistance</td>
<td>• Flexible scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Payment of licensure exam fees</td>
<td>– On specific shifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reduced housing</td>
<td>• To work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– In specific facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– On specific units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– In specific positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• On-the-job training in specialties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

IENs are an important component of the US nursing workforce.

They face certain barriers . . .

And facilitators when they migrate to the U.S.
• IENs bring diversity into the nursing workforce
• The majority of IENs possess a baccalaureate degree or higher in nursing
• A higher proportion of IENs work in hospitals, and in staff nurse positions
• IENs experience a number of barriers, which are professional, cultural, and personal
Can Nurse Migration Help Solve the U.S. Nursing Shortage?

• Maybe . . . but
  – IENs may desire incentives similar to those offered USENs
  – The US may need more IENs
  – BUT -- the shortage is GLOBAL
  – Countries will compete for IENs
    • Ethical dilemma of recruiting IENs
    • Source country demand
Can Nurse Migration Help Solve the U.S. Nursing Shortage?

• In addition to IENs, the U.S. nurse workforce will need:
  – Young females to enter
  – Nurses from diverse backgrounds
    • Males
    • Hispanics

• Questions remain:
  – Health care reform
  – Economic recovery
  – Future of Nursing