



Ngā Reanga o ngā Tapuhi

Generations of Māori nurses

Te Runanga o Aotearoa

NZNO



Background

- There are 3510 regulated Māori nurses in NZ
- Nursing workforce should match population
- Māori women (& nurses) have specific cultural caregiving responsibilities
- These additional responsibilities are invisible
- Strategies are required to support and retain Māori nurses

Methods

- Collaborative
- Kaupapa Māori
- Interviews
- Co-construction

Findings

Whānau

- Whānau comes **first**
- Whānau includes much wider reach than immediate family, including multi-generational support
- Decisions: where to live, where to work, when to work are all based on whānau



“I’m a registered nurse. I’ve got three children at home, my older girl’s a mother too, so my moko lives with us. I’m helping her through college, which sometimes puts pressure on us when she’s unwell. Mum lives over the road and recently had a fall and hip surgery. Fortunately, my sister and her children live close, she just lives up the hill and I would go over when I could and just to relieve them. We’ve got quite a big whānau but I think a lot of it falls onto the girls, yeah onto us, me and my other two sisters. When mum gets to a point that she needs full time care - to put her into care - for me that’s just not an option, I don’t feel I could do that. I would rather give up my job or take a year’s leave or whatever if possible and stay home and look after her. It’s not that I think she’d be mistreated or hurt in a home I just think she would die very, very quickly because she’d be very lonely and, she’d be miserable

Findings

Cultural responsibilities and obligations

- Māori nurses have cultural, spiritual and leadership roles and responsibilities within their own communities
- Particular roles and responsibilities relate to kaitiakitanga, to functions within the wider Whānau
- Tangi bring rituals, roles and requirements that cannot be over-ridden

“Well I can say that I’ve been a nurse for thirty years and it’s been a huge commitment not just for my whānau but for my hapū, my iwi. You know we go to any Māori events and I scan the place to make sure there’s help if somebody collapses because everyone knows I’m the nurse, I’m going to be the one to be called. And you know that’s all voluntary stuff that we have, it’s a commitment and my role on the marae starts at 5 in the morning and finishes midnight or after for the three days during the tangi. No matter which way you look at it there will always be a kai on the table, you’re never going to know where it’s coming from you never know what it’s going to be but it will be there to feed the kids to keep the whānau going while someone’s away looking after this baby or looking after this kuia or this Kaumātua. That’s what we do. There’s no questioning it.”

Findings

Struggle

Conflict between being part of the community and perceived professional boundaries as a nurse can be difficult, and even lead to disciplinary consequences.

“you know that’s the difference - like when you have other colleagues who are non Māori and you’re trying to explain you know you can hear some comments not only with me but with other people too you know, oh why aren’t you coming back to work. But you can’t focus on your work because you’re always thinking you know what’s happening - how’s the family, what needs to be done, I should be in the kitchen, I could be in the kitchen or I could be chasing some kids around the marae, they’re getting up to mischief. Yeah and you get home and you can’t switch off and say I’m no longer a nurse. No you get the phone call, you get the knock on the door. Can you have a look at “this”. We’re just fulfilling our calling, well that’s how I see it because there’s been lots of healers in my family you know, I call them the nurses.”

Findings

Organisational

- Organisational support for culturally safe working environments was patchy, at best
- Balancing cultural needs with organisational needs is sometimes distressing
- Using own leave for family support and cultural needs leaves Māori nurses with inadequate leave for their own needs.



“I’m lucky that I have a Māori charge nurse that understands tikanga, kaupapa Māori and I’ve rung her on two occasions to say look I’ve had a tangi I need to go. She said it’s whānau you need to go. Even our previous nurse manager said; well if you’re not 100% your-self and you’re not looking after yourself and you’re worried about your mother you’re not going to work as well here. That’s how she looked at it. So you know for whatever, if she could do to accommodate me so that I could spend a little bit of time at the hospital and still make it to work, she did. But my sick leave ran out pretty quick to be honest. At one part there where mum was in hospital for two weeks, the day she got out dad went into hospital for two weeks and then he got out and mum went back in again for a week so yeah it was a busy month.....”

Recommendations

- Heighten awareness / cultural competence
- Increase Bi-cultural management and organisational support
- Māori nurses must be supported to deliver care in a Māori paradigm

Summary

*Māori nurses battle constant discrimination within a health system that neither acknowledges their beliefs, customs, cultural and linguistic requirements, nor supports these nurses to meet these obligations in an holistic or humane way – **this must change!***