Internationally Educated Nurses in Canada: A cross-sectional survey

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Background

* Nurses are the largest group of internationally educated health professionals in Canada.

* In 2013, 7.2% (n=25,656) of the regulated nursing workforce was trained in another country (CIHI, 2013).

* The actual number of IENs is likely to be much higher, as many are unable to professionally recertify and practice their profession in Canada (Bourgeault, Neiterman, Covell, Quarto, 2012).

Barriers & Facilitators to IEN Professional Recertification & Employment
(Covell, Neiterman & Bourgeault, 2014; 2015)

* Personal Factors
    * Country of training
    * Level of education
    * Professional experience
    * Language fluency
* Contextual Factors
    * Federal & provincial immigration policy
    * Jurisdiction
        * Availability of financial and educational resources for IENs
    * Participation in bridging programs

Methods

* Design: Cross-sectional survey
* Setting: All jurisdictions except Yukon
* Sample: Nurses who received their basic nursing education outside of Canada.
* Eligibility criteria: Immigrant, permanent license and employed as regulated nurse in Canada
* Data collection: Participants identified through regulatory colleges. Data collected via online and paper survey.
* Survey response rate: 26% of 14,540 IENs approached
* 2693 (19%) provided complete and usable data.

Methods

* For this study we used a subgroup of 742 IENs:
    * Immigrated ≥ 2002
    * Permanent RN licenses
    * Employed as RNs in Canada
* IENs in Quebec were not included in this analysis
    * Differences in licensing exams
    * Language requirements
* Analysis: Descriptive statistics and binary logistical regression models

Table 1. Demographic and Professional Characteristics of Sample (N=742)

Characteristic	Survey Respondents N(%)
Gender	
Female	614 83)
Male	124(17)
Age	
20-30	74(10)
31-40	232(31)
41-50	286(39)
≥51	128(17)
Visible Minority	
No (White)	217 (29)
Yes	512 (69)
Arab (n=10, 1%)	
Asian (n=435, 59%)	
Black (n=55, 7.4%)	
Other (n=12, 2%)	
Jurisdiction	
British Columbia	151(15)
Alberta	219(22)
Manitoba	104(11)
Saskatchewan	45(5)
Ontario	159(16)
Atlantic Provinces	64(7)
Nova Scotia (n=43, 4%)	
New Brunswick (n= 13, 1%)	
Newfoundland & Labrador (n=8, 1%)	
Prince Edward Island (0)	
Territories (0)	

Table 1. Demographic and Professional Characteristics of Sample (N=742)

Characteristic	Survey Respondents N(%)
Source country by region	
Africa	44(6)
Asia	418(56)
Europe	163(22)
Middle East	24(3)
Oceana	21(3)
South America	10(1)
The Caribbean	26(4)
United States	32(4)
Country of basic nursing education	
Developing Country	464(63)
Developed Country	180(24)
English language fluency	
First &/or language of education	508(69)
Second language	157(21)
Little or no experience with language	56(8)
Level of prior nursing education	
Diploma (non-university degree)	209(28)
Baccalaureate degree	445(60)
Masters or PhD	80(11)
Years of prior nursing experience	
< 3 years	154(21)
3-5 years	88(12)
> 5 years	495(67)

Table 1. Demographic and Professional Characteristics of Sample (N=742)

Characteristic	Survey Respondents N(%)
Participated in bridging program	
No	565(76)
Yes	177(24)
Passed RN exam on first attempt	
No	155(21)
Yes	550(74)
Employed as RN in < 6 months	
No	233(31)
Yes	463(62)

Table 2. Summary of logistical regression analysis for variables predicting passing registered nurse licensing examination on first attempt and securing employment as registered nurse in < 6 months

Predictor	B(*SE*)	Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper	B(*SE*)	Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper
	Passed registered nurse licensing examination on first attempt (N=603)				Employed as a registered nurse in < 6 months (N=593)			
		95% CI for Odds Ratio				95% CI for Odds Ratio		
English first language or language of education	1.127 (.395)**	1.423	3.086	6.690	.110(.389)	.521	1.116	2.390
English second language	.823(.424)*	.992	2.278	5.232	.228(.422)	.549	1.256	2.870
Diploma degree in nursing at time of immigration	-.849 (.437)*	.182	.428	1.008	-.204(.320)	.436	.815	1.526
Baccalaureate degree in nursing at time of immigration	-.595 (.412) †	.246	.551	1.237	-.187(.299)	.462	.532	1.491
> 3 years of nursing experience at time of immigration	.800(.296)**	1.245	2.225	3.978	.406(.236)*	.944	1.500	2.384
3-5 years of nursing experience	.301(.328)	.710	1.351	2.570	.893(.315)**	1.316	2.442	4.531
Did not participate in Canadian bridging program for IENs	-.341†	.427	.711	1.183	-.628(.230)**	.340	.534	.838
Constant	2.404				1.101			
X² (*df*)	11.118 (8), p= .195				10.599(8), p=.225			
Nagelkerke R square	.14				.05			
% of respondents passed registered nurse licensing examination on first attempt	78.8							
% of respondents employed in < 6 months					65.3			

Note:. CI=confidence interval. B=beta coefficient. SE=standard error. X² = Chi square. df= degrees of freedom. Control variable: Training country coded as 0= developing, 1=developed (omitted from

Results
Professional Recertification

* If English is their first or second language IENs are greater than 2 times more likely to pass the RN exam on their first attempt.

* If IENs who have baccalaureate degrees in nursing or lower are 2 times less likely to pass the RN exam on their first attempt.

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Results
Employment

* If IENs with greater than 3 years experience are 1.5 times more likely to be employed as RNs in 6 months or less.

* IENs who do not participate in Canadian bridging programs are 2 times less likely to be employed as RNs in 6 months or less.

Discussion

* Language skills are a significant predictor for IENs quickly passing the RN examination in Canada. Language skills are required to traverse the credential verification and assessment process, study and take the RN exam. Opportunities for IENs to develop their language skills are highly recommended.

* The higher the level of nursing education the more likely the IEN will pass the RN exam on their first attempt. Although IENs who arrive in Canada with diploma degrees must return to school to obtain a baccalaureate degree in order to qualify for registration with a regulatory college in Canada, their participation in these programs may not guarantee they acquire all of the necessary information to be successful. More information is required to understand the influence of baccalaureate education on IENs' exam performance.

* IENs who are recent graduates are less likely to pass the RN exam on their first attempt. The amount of previous professional experience seems to be a factor than positively influences IENs' performance on the exam.

* IEN who are recent graduates (less than 5 years) are finding employment as RNs in Canada in less than 6 months. This may infer that IENs with less experience are more likely to accept positions in hard to fill setting or sectors of the health care system. Alternatively it could mean that IENs with experience are searching for employment in clinical areas that are highly desirable and employers tend to choose Canadian educated nurses to fill these positions.

* Participation in bridging programs facilitates IENs quickly finding employment in Canada. This may be related to the information IENs obtain about the Canadian health care system and the clinical experience acquired by IENs who participate in these programs.

References

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