

What is a nurse?

Authors: V Cope, & B Ewens.

Introduction: The purpose of reflective learning is widely accepted to improve personal and intellectual growth. This educational assessment piece was to garner critical reflection from post graduate students enrolled in a Master's program. What nurses do with regard to patient outcomes is increasingly documented especially with regards to safety and quality (Aiken et al, 2014) yet what nurses are, in the sense of what is understood by their role in the contemporary healthcare system is not clear. Recently, a Miss America contestant (2015) chose to 'perform' in the talent section of the competition, 'costumed' in her nursing scrubs complete with stethoscope around her neck and described her 'talent' as a nurse. What the contestant said about nursing created controversy but paved discussion on "What is a nurse?"

Aim: The aim of the study was to explore post-graduate Master's students about what it is to be a nurse in contemporary healthcare.

Data collection: Content analysis of an academic assignment which sought student reflections on the role of the nurse was undertaken to garner an understanding of their perception of their own role and to address the public understanding of the role of a nurse.

Conclusion: This data provides insights into the postgraduate nursing student's view of What is a nurse? The responses tied nursing with a number of substantial themes however, the results highlighted a lack of a leadership and safety focus relevant to nursing today.



Participants: Ethical consent was provided by 6 students from a possible cohort of 9.

Results: Seven major themes emerged from content analysis of the data. These were: Advocate, Educator, Comforter/provider of care, Scientific knowledge, skills and research-based practice, Life-saver, Critical thinker and problem solver, and Communicator. The absence or low prevalence of discussion concerning themes such as Leadership, Safety, Autonomy, and Ethical practice was an interesting result.