**Purpose:** Identity is to know ‘who’s who’ (and hence ‘what’s what’). Identity affects human experience and influences action. People cannot live routine lives as humans without knowing who they are. It is likely that migrant nurses undergo a search for self in their new contexts, in some of the same ways as their native colleagues. However, migrant nurses are likely to confront additional challenges when trying to find their sense of self and place in the world within alien socio-historical, cultural, spiritual, and environmental contexts. It is critical to uncover the tensions and contradictions of what it means to be a migrant nurse, and for nursing educators to take practical steps to guide them in a positive direction.

This study applied Giddens’ identity theory to examine identity, and influencing factors, of Chinese migrant nurses in Australia. The objective of the study was to understand how past selves and identities of Chinese migrant nurses interacted with current social situations in Australia, and what was developed further for the individual and his/her self and identity.

**Methods:**

(1) **Theoretical framework:** The study combined Giddens’ theory of modernity and self-identity with theory of structuration to direct concept development, research questions and data analysis. Giddens’ theory of structuration has attracted considerable attention in various areas of social sciences, and within structuration theory as the general theoretical point of departure, Giddens developed his theory of modernity and self-identity. These theories provide a sophisticated explanation of how people construct self-identity in modernity and offer insights into how to examine the connections between individual and society, between identity and structure, within a socio-historic context.

(2) **Research design:** Narrative inquiry was used in this research. People form narratives as a process while constructing and reconstructing their identities. Storytelling is integral to sharing and understanding lives.

(3) **Data Collection:** This study was undertaken in the socio-cultural context of Australia and employed snowball sampling to recruit participants. Based on Giddens’ theories, this study viewed identity as a reflexive project of self and a developmental process that links the past with the anticipated future. In-depth interviews were used to generate narrative data on the identities of Chinese migrant nurses. In total, 17 Chinese nurses who worked in Australia were interviewed.
between February and June of 2017. The interviews were conducted in English or Chinese, dependent on the participant’s choice.

(4) Data analysis: Each interview was transcribed verbatim as soon as possible after the interview was conducted, and transcripts of Chinese interviews were translated fully into English. Textual analysis was guided by Giddens’ theories. Giddens’ theories direct attention in analysis to how the person reflects on themselves and their experience, what significant transitions in life (identity) have taken place as they have experienced life events and what life choices the person made, how the person manages interactions between opportunities and risks, how the person is achieving coherence in everyday life, how things changed with time and how personal growth is identified.

Results: The findings reveal the identities of Chinese migrant nurses as internally and externally interacting with the world. Identity is sociological as well as psychological. Chinese migrant nurses created and sustained their identities by reflections on themselves and their experiences. In these reflections, they achieved coherence in everyday life, which was important to a continuing sense of ontological security. The participants changed with time, and they could identify their personal growth. Significant transitions in life and in identity took place as Chinese migrant nurses experienced life events. The migrant nurses were responsive to new demands and new possibilities when there were risks or opportunities coming into life. The life choices the migrant nurses made and their management of risks and opportunities were related to their fundamental identities, and concerned their future plans. These choices also had consequences for further identity development in the migrant nurses.

Conclusion: Negotiating identities is not simply about who Chinese migrant nurses are but about who they can become as Chinese Australians. Chinese migrant nurses’ identities and voices must be heard, valued and counted if they are to fully live as themselves in their host country. The study will offer some direction for health policy, and for nursing educators and leaders in their efforts to provide appropriate, effective and acceptable support to migrant nurses in their transition. Much more is required than provided by transitional programs or other education. Preceptorship schemes should be strengthened to provide clinical and emotional support. Establishing social networks of friends and professional colleagues will also be beneficial. The research will also have implications for policies that seek to achieve cultural safety and integration of migrants.

Title:
How Do Chinese Migrant Nurses Construct Their Identities While Living in Australia?

Keywords:
Chinese immigrant nurses, Giddens and Identity
Abstract Summary:
Identity affects real human experience. Migrant nurses have a complex sense of identity as their identities are contested and renegotiated in new contexts. This study applied Giddens' identity theory to present an understanding of how the identity of Chinese nurses in Australia is impacted through migration.

Content Outline:
I. Introduction
A. There is a need to understand Chinese migrant nurses and the impact of migration.

B. Identity is a valuable concept for understanding the complexity of Chinese migrant nurses’ work and lives.

II. Body
A. Theoretical framework
1. Giddens’ theory of modernity and self-identity
   a) Identity is a reflexive project of self.
b) Identity is a developmental process that links the past with the anticipated future.

2. Giddens’ theory of structuration

a) The activities of situated actors are produced and reproduced in interaction across time and space.

B. Methodology

1. Research design

a) Narrative inquiry

2. Data collection

a) In-depth, semi-structured interviews

3. Data analysis

a) Textual analysis informed by the work of Giddens

C. Results

Two key themes:

1. Personal reflections on themselves and their experiences

a) Achievement of coherence in everyday life

b) Changes with time

2. Significant transitions in life (identity)

a) Risks / opportunities
b) Management of risks / opportunities

III. Conclusion

A. Giddens’ theories are analytically useful to research other migrant groups

B. Chinese migrant nurses need appropriate care and support to transition.

First Primary Presenting Author

**Primary Presenting Author**

Yaping Zhong
Monash University
School of Nursing and Midwifery
PhD Candidate
Monash University, Clayton Campus
Clayton
Australia

**Professional Experience:** 2015 - present -- PhD student, School of Nursing & Midwifery, Monash University, Australia 2012 - 2015 -- Teacher, Nanjing Medical University, Nanjing, China 2009 - 2012 -- Master of Medicine, Major in Nursing, Fudan University, Shanghai, China 2004 - 2009 -- Bachelor of Medicine, Major in Nursing, Central South University, Changsha, China

**Author Summary:** Yaping is a PhD student at Monash University. She received her bachelor degree in nursing from Central South University and her master degree in nursing from Fudan University in China. Her research focuses on Chinese migrant nurses.

Second Author

Cheryle Moss, PhD
Monash University
School of Nursing and Midwifery
Associate Professor
Monash University
Clayton
Australia

**Professional Experience:** 2008-present Associate Professor of Nursing, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Monash University, Australia Author of over 60 publications. Numerous presentations at national and international conferences.

**Author Summary:** Cheryle has authored over 60 publications, and has made numerous presentations at national and international conferences. Cheryle’s research interests include practice development, the
needs of health professionals for effective delivery of care and their professional wellbeing; and clinical leadership for evidence based practice.

Third Author

Lisa McKenna, PhD
La Trobe University
School of Nursing and Midwifery
Professor Nursing and Midwifery Research
Bundoora
Australia

**Professional Experience:** In 2012, Lisa and a colleague were awarded the Monash University Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Programs that Enhance Learning for work into peer teaching and learning. Lisa has published seven textbooks, including Introduction to Teaching and Learning in Health Professions, and over 150 publications in refereed journals across nursing, midwifery, and health professional journals. She is currently the Editor-in-Chief of Collegian: The Australian Journal of Nursing Practice, Scholarship and Research, Associate Editor for Women and Birth, and Editorial Advisor for Nurse Education Today.

**Author Summary:** Lisa is Professor and Head of the School of Nursing and Midwifery at La Trobe. She has extensive experience in teaching undergraduate and postgraduate health professionals. Lisa has researched and published extensively in educational research in nursing, midwifery and health professions, in particular in the areas of interprofessional education, simulation, graduate transition to practice, peer-assisted learning, non-technical skills and professional role development.

Fourth Author

Beverley Copnell, PhD
La Trobe University
School of Nursing and Midwifery
Associate Professor
Epping
Australia

**Professional Experience:** 2017-present – Associate Professor of Clinical Nursing Practice, School of Nursing and Midwifery, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia 2009-17 – Senior Lecturer, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. Author or co-author of 56 journal articles. Numerous presentations at scientific meetings

**Author Summary:** Bev is an experienced nurse academic and researcher with over 50 peer-reviewed publications. Her research interests include professional nursing issues, nursing education, and psychosocial issues in the care of hospitalised children.