Employment Status and Preferred Employment of 2009 Baccalaureate of Nursing Graduates from the Faculty of Nursing, University of Manitoba

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INTRODUCTION
The Manitoba Centre for Research and Health Research (MCNHR), a research unit supported by the Faculty of Nursing, University of Manitoba conducted a survey on the employment status and preferred employment of 2009 Baccalaureate of Nursing graduates as they were exiting the four year nursing program. Graduates were also asked to give their perceptions about the employment opportunities and challenges for graduating nursing students in Manitoba.

METHODS
The MCNHR surveyed undergraduate nursing students who completed the four year nursing program in December 2008, March 2009, July 2009, and subsequently graduated in February 2009, May 2009, October 2009 and respectively. Nursing students were asked to complete a self-administered questionnaire at their final evaluation meeting with their faculty advisor just prior to, or shortly after, completion of the final course in their nursing program, their senior clinical practicum. Of the n= 283 graduates in 2009, n=209 (73.9%) responded to questions on their employment status and preferences.

RESULTS
Opportunities and Challenges in Seeking Employment

Graduates were asked to identify from a list, the opportunities they felt are available in the current job market for graduating nursing students. The most commonly identified opportunities were abundance of choices in the profession (n=168; 80.4%); abundance of nursing positions (n=166; 79.4%); availability of continuing education (n=152; 72.7%); variety of specialties (n=148; 70.8%); mobility or travel as a RN (n=138; 66.0%); and availability of employment in the U.S. and abroad (n=133; 63.6%).

Graduates were also asked to identify from a list the challenges for graduating nursing students in the current job market. The most commonly identified challenges were a lack of experience (n=137; 65.6%); lack of permanent positions (n=79; 37.8%); lack of full time positions (n=78; 37.3%) and lack of jobs in specialty areas (n=42; 20.1%). Less common challenges identified were the amount of casual nursing positions (n=31; 15.8%); holding multiple nursing positions (n=28; 13.4%); employment instability (n=16; 7.7%) and lack of jobs in a specific region (n=14; 6.7%).

1 The questions for this survey were developed as part of National Study of Nursing Graduates led by Dr. Andrea Baumann at the Nursing Health Services Research Unit, McMaster University.
At the time of the survey, 34.0% (n=71) of the 2009 graduates were working as nurses or had been offered a position in nursing (Figure 1), while 64.1% (n=134) were looking for a position in nursing. Only 3 (1.4%) of the graduates were not currently looking for employment in nursing. Two of these 3 were not looking for employment because they had not yet written the RN exam, and one was delaying employment due to pregnancy. One graduate did not answer this question.
As shown in Figure 2, most graduates who were working or had been offered a position in nursing, were employed as general duty/staff nurses (n=55; 77.5%). Twelve graduates (16.9%) were employed as graduate nurses. Five working graduates (7.0%) did not answer this question.

Most of the employed graduates (n=62; 87.3%) reported being satisfied with their current employment status. Very few graduates were dissatisfied (n=3; 4.2%). Seven employed graduates did not answer this question (9.9%).

The most important deciding factor in accepting their first nursing position included having completed their senior clinical placement in the facility/organization (n=56; 78.9%). Other deciding factors included being the first place to offer employment (n=41; 57.7%); the position being close to home (n=33; 46.5%); the positive reputation of the facility/organization (n=31; 43.7%); and having had a student clinical placement in the facility/organization (n=15; 21.1%).
As indicated in Figure 3, of the 71 graduates who were working or had been offered work, n=60 (84.5%) cited positions in Winnipeg. Ten graduates (14.1%) reported working in Manitoba outside of Winnipeg. Three (3.6%) graduates left Manitoba to work in another province. One (1.4%) graduate did not identify where they were working.

About half (49.3%) of the 2009 graduates who were working or had been offered a position in nursing were in full-time positions including full-time permanent (n=19; 26.8%) and full-time term positions (n=16; 22.5%). Twenty four graduates reported working in part-time positions (33.8%), five (7.0%) in casual positions and two (2.8%) was working in multiple positions. Five (7.0%) working graduates did not answer this question.

Twenty three (32.4%) graduates indicated that although they were currently employed or had been offered a position in nursing, they were looking for other positions. Six (26.1%) of these were looking for a permanent position and seven (22.5%) indicated an interest in working in a particular area. Seven were looking for part-time positions (30.4%).
Unemployed Graduate’s Characteristics

There were 134 graduates (64.1%) that were not working at the time of the survey but looking for a position in nursing. Most of these graduates (n=116; 86.6%) were looking for nursing employment in Winnipeg. Eighteen (13.4%) were seeking employment in other health regions of Manitoba.

![Figure 5 – Employment Type Sought](image)

As shown in Figure 5, almost three-quarters of the graduates that were looking for work at the time of the survey were seeking full-time (n=57; 42.5%) and part-time (n=39; 29.1%) permanent positions. Fourteen (10.4%) were seeking multiple positions, seven (5.2%) wanted part-time term positions, seven (5.2%) wanted full-time term employment and five (3.7%) preferred casual employment. Five (3.7%) did not answer this question.

Opportunities and Challenges For Employment Outside Manitoba

Few of the graduates surveyed indicated an interest in working outside of the province. Of the total graduates who completed the survey (n=209), nineteen (9.1%) reported seeking employment in other provinces, twelve (5.7%) reported seeking employment in the United States and nine (4.3%) reported seeking employment in other countries.

When asked to select from a list of opportunities that were attracting them to work outside of Manitoba, twenty three graduates who were not employed as a RN but who were seeking employment outside of Manitoba responded. The most commonly selected responses were travel and weather (n=15; 65.2%), family/personal reasons (n=11; 47.8%); pay and benefits (n=10; 43.5%) and professional opportunities (n=5; 21.7%).

These graduates were also asked to select from a list of challenges that are encouraging them to seek employment outside of Manitoba. The most commonly selected answers were weather (n=9; 39.1%), family or personal issues (n=7; 30.4%), lack of full-time employment (n=4; 17.4%), and not feeling valued (n=4; 17.4%).
IMPLICATIONS
This study describes the employment status and employment preferences of graduates just prior to or shortly after completing the final course in their nursing program (senior clinical practicum). At this time, 34.0% of surveyed graduates from 2009 were working or had been offered a position in nursing. Most of these working graduates were working as general duty / staff nurses and about half were working in full-time permanent or full-time term positions. For those graduates looking for a nursing position at the time of the survey, about three-quarters indicated a preference for permanent positions (full-time or part-time). The majority of graduates reported working and/or seeking employment within Manitoba. Less than 10% are seeking employment in other provinces and fewer still are seeking employment in the United States (5.7%) and other countries (4.3%). The results of this study may be of value to employers to improve their recruitment strategies of new nursing graduates.

Further information on this survey can be obtained from the Manitoba Centre for Nursing and Health Research, Faculty of Nursing, University of Manitoba.