

## ENHANCING STUDENT NURSE PREPARATION FOR PAEDIATRIC PRACTICE

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An innovative pilot project at the University of the Sunshine Coast is giving undergraduate students an opportunity to develop their skills in caring for child clients and their families.

The project brings together nursing students and actors to explore the unique needs of children and their families accessing healthcare. Further, the project investigates the ethical and practical issues associated with the employment of children in tertiary training programs to establish a robust and sustainable model for broader application. The experience offered nursing students the opportunity to practice applying knowledge and skills related to working with families, demonstrating developmentally appropriate communication and obtaining consent and assent from children and parents in an acute care setting.

An action research cycle involving two rounds of simulation was employed. Each included a suite of three scenarios where children aged 7-10 and adults performing the role of a family sought care for an injured child. Actor preparation involved a series of preparatory workshops. During this they were given detailed information regarding the learning objectives of the nursing students. These were integrated into an unscripted scenario challenging students to respond to authentically crafted interpersonal communications. In each cycle students ( $n=12$ ) were immersed in a replica clinical environment. Simulations were video recorded and live streamed to other students who were able to observe their peers in action and contribute to scenario debriefing sessions. Debriefing included a two tier approach where students were able to explore their learning and obtain feedback from actors.





Data was collected from actors and nursing students after each simulation. Actors were interviewed. Nursing students completed a modified Satisfaction with Simulation Experience Scale (Levett-Jones et al. 2011), and ranked the simulation experience in relation to clinical learning, critical thinking and reasoning, reflection and debriefing. They also participated in an interview. Results revealed that all students agreed or strongly agreed that the simulation was a valuable learning experience with 91% indicating that the simulation reinforced content learnt in the degree. Ninety nine percent thought the actors' performance positively influenced learning, felt more prepared for practice, and had developed their confidence working with children and families. Valuable information from children regarding their preparation, the impact of the scenario and support was gathered and will inform development of future simulations.

This pilot project provides valuable insights informing development of a safe workable model that provides students with opportunities to develop skills working with children, prepare for paediatric clinical experience, and for developing policy and process for wider application when working with vulnerable groups in simulation.

### Reference

Levett-Jones, T., McCoy, M., Lapkin, S., et al., (2011). The development and psychometric testing of the satisfaction with simulation experience scale. *Nurse Education Today*, 31(7):705-710.

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## WOMEN'S HEALTH IMPROVES WITH AGE

All women's mental health improves steadily throughout their 30's while their mental health in their early 20's varies according to life circumstance, research reveals.



According to Professor Christina Lee, Professor of Health Psychology and Associate Dean Research, Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences at the University of Queensland, better mental health is associated with women moving into long-term relationships in their mid-twenties and having a first baby in their late twenties to early thirties.

Yet the timing was affected by life circumstance, she said. "Women who live in the country, women who have lower education, and women who have some health problems are likely to get married and become mothers earlier than average, and these young women are also likely to have poorer mental health."

Despite this Professor Lee said overtime the trajectory for almost every group of women is upward. "Whether you have a child at 18 or 25 or 35 years of age, or never, and whether you are in a stable relationship or remain single.

"Women are making responsible and sensible decisions with what they've got. As they move through their twenties and get themselves established and gain confidence in dealing with adult life, the pattern is that mental health does improve for every group of women." The research is part of the Australian Longitudinal Study of Women's Health which is a longitudinal population based survey examining the health of over 58,000 Australian women.