

# When it is someone you know: lived experiences of rural nurses

Tracy McConnell-Henry (PhD candidate), Prof Karen Francis, Dr Ysanne Chapman  
School of Nursing and Midwifery  
Monash University, Gippsland, Churchill, 3844  
email: tracy.mcconnell-henry@med.monash.edu.au

## Background

Many years ago, as a novice nurse, I was required to care for a senior colleague; the medical director of the unit. Although the outcome for the patient was ultimately favorable, the impact of the experience stayed with me. I reflected, for a long time, on many things associated with the event, such as how to deal with suddenly 'knowing stuff' that was not common knowledge about the person, my concern with re-encountering him, the potential change in our (working) relationship and feelings of having been watched and potentially judged for what I knew, and especially what I didn't. After thinking about the situation and the implications, I started to wonder what the experience was like for other rural nurses professionally obliged to look after people they knew. Hence the research question was born.

## Research Question

What is the experience of nursing a person you know?

## Aims of the study

- Provide insight into one of the greatest potential stresses faced by rural nurses
- To value what rural nurses do, and for the nurses themselves to value what they do
- Develop insight into the strategies employed by rural nurses in dealing with caring for those they know
- Offer the knowledge gained from the experiences of other to students and those new to rural practice to better prepare them for practice
- To retain nurses in the rural setting
- Through the experience of others provide better care for patients in the rural setting

## Methodology

Phenomenology has been chosen as it focuses on the peoples' lived experience of phenomena, in an attempt to glean meaning from the event(s). More specifically Heideggerian Phenomenology will be utilised. The primary reason for this choice is Heidegger postulates that there is no such thing as interpretive research, free of the judgement or influence of the researcher. More to the point, he sees the researcher as being-in-the-world of the participant and research question. For me, having experienced the phenomena in question, many times, the fit of this methodology, with the researcher and the question alike, is perfect.

## Participants

Participants will be Division 1 Registered Nurses, employed in a rural setting. They must be fluent in English and there will no age limit imposed. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, however, will be excluded because they place different cultural meaning on interpersonal relationships.

## Data collection method

Data will be collected via in-depth interview with the participants, at a location convenient to them. It is proposed that the interaction will last between one and two hours. A follow up contact may be required for clarification of content.

## Dissemination of Results

It is proposed that apart from the thesis, proper, that results will be published in journal articles and presented at conferences.

