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## Nurses' and Nurse Educator's Experiences of Applying Knowledge and Skills to Clinical and Academic Settings in Rwanda after Participating as Learners in Paediatric Nursing Continuing Professional Development Program

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Abstract for AWC Day 2020: Nurturing Excellence by Advancing Academic Diversity

**Title: Nurses' and Nurse Educator's Experiences of Applying Knowledge and Skills to Clinical and Academic Settings in Rwanda after Participating as Learners in a Pediatric Nursing Continuing Professional Development Program**

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## **Abstract for AWC Day 2020: Nurturing Excellence by Advancing Academic Diversity**

### **Background and Significance**

Excellence in pediatric nursing education and practice can ultimately significantly impact child health globally (Hockenberry, Mulemba, Nedege, Madumetse, & Higgins, 2020). Highly educated pediatric nurses form a strong foundation for healthcare systems globally (Nzinga, McKnight, Jepkosgei, & English, 2019; Opiyo & English, 2015). Yet, in countries defined as low-income by the World Bank (2020), implementation of quality health care services for children can be particularly challenging due to limitations in formal professional development of pediatric knowledge and skills (Hockenberry et al., 2020; Pantoja et al., 2017). Traditional nursing education primarily focuses on educating nurses about adult medicine, however, children require specialized nursing, and nurses caring for children require specialized knowledge and skills (Glasper, 2016; Hogewood, Smith, Etheridge, & Britt, 2015). The greatest contributor to health care is human resources, yet health systems and human resources for health (HRH) remain in crisis due to lack of resources and capacity (Amde, Sanders, & Lehmann, 2014; Ross, Barr, & Stevens, 2013).

### **Research project and purpose**

Recognizing this shortage of formally educated pediatric nurses, a Pediatric Nursing Continuing Professional Development (PNCPPD) program was created and implemented in Kigali, Rwanda, through a partnership project between Canada and Rwanda from 2016-2019. Forty-one Rwandan nurses and nurse educators were educated in pediatric nursing theory and clinical practice through the first offering of this six-month program. Research was conducted to explore the experiences of nurses and nurse educators applying pediatric knowledge and skills in academic and clinical settings after participating as learners in the PNCPPD program. This

interpretive descriptive study involved a purposive sample of fourteen nurses and nurse educators who undertook study in the program. Individual interviews were audio-recorded, and participants responded to semi-structured study questions.

### **Findings**

Initial findings emanating from the study analysis highlight the ways in which the PNCPD program transformed participants' pediatric nursing teaching and practice, including positive changes in pediatric assessment, clinical decision making, and interprofessional collaboration, which were perceived to ultimately positively influence patient care outcomes. Barriers to implementing pediatric nursing knowledge and skills were identified as human resources, materials, and workplace culture, with facilitators including institutional support and internal motivation. Participants also shared ways of scaling up the PNCPD program within the health system to further enhance nurses' abilities to address pediatric health care issues.

### **Implications**

The findings of the study will be beneficial to both academic and practice settings, which can help inform nursing education programs, child health initiatives, and collaborative capacity building projects in health-related fields.

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