

Continuing Education Needs and Barriers for Public Health Nurses in Aboriginal Townships in Taitung , Taiwan.

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Abstract

In the fast-changing arena of health care, it is important for public health nurses (PHNs) to receive professional training through continuing education (CE) to maintain practice competencies in the community. However, little information is currently known about needs for and barriers to CE for PHNs in role transition; therefore, the aim of this study was to identify CE needs and barriers for 21 PHNs in four Taitung Aboriginal townships where density of Aborigines is the highest in Taiwan. Focus group interviews were used to collect data. Interview data were then analyzed using the four step processes of data analysis suggested by Webb and Kevern (2001). The results indicated that CE for PHNs in Taitung was limited. Community assessment, psychological consultation, gerontological care, palliative care, statistical analysis and interpretation, and emergency care were identified by PHNs as CE needs. For CE barriers, about 98% of the PHNs indicated that long distance traveling was the main barrier. Family factors and inadequate support from administrative leaders were the next. It is concluded that establishing local nursing schools, using the Internet to provide CE, and planning computer systematic education courses may reduce barriers for PHNs in Taitung county.