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Descriptive Study of Nursing Scope of Practice in Rural Medically Underserved Areas of Africa, South of the Sahara

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ABSTRACT

Aims

The aims of this study are to describe the scope of “non-nursing duties” carried out by nurses, in rural low-resource regions of Tanzania, and describe how the role of nurses is viewed in their communities.

Background

More than 70% of Tanzanians live in rural areas. Nurses are more likely than physicians to practice in these communities. As a result nurses are frequently forced to function beyond their educational preparation and expand their practice to meet the health needs of the community.

Design

This exploratory study sampled two randomly selected district hospitals, with associated health centers and dispensaries (small village clinics), in each of the four target-regions (Tanga, Mtwara, Singida, and Shinyanga).

Methods

In November 2014, members of the Faculty of Nursing at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University–College (KCMUCo) in Moshi, Tanzania interviewed nurses, health facility managers, non-nurse health professionals, and health service consumers.

Results/Findings

Nurses at all levels of education, with or without additional training, are

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