



Barriers Impacting LPNs Academic Progression

AACN Research Presentation
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Statement of Problem

- ☑ 3 entry levels for nurses
- ☑ Current & Projected nursing shortage
- ☑ Improved patient outcomes with BSN educated nurses
- ☑ Improved outcomes with increased diversity of healthcare providers
- ☑ LPN is the most diverse group of nurses
- ☑ Systemic barriers exist for LPN academic progression



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Research Questions



1. What demographic data describe urban vs rural LPNs' ratings of their desire for academic progression in the next 5 years?

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Research Questions



2. What is the frequency of barriers reported by selected region (selected urban vs rural counties)?

3. What barriers are reported in the qualitative data from the open-ended survey question "What else would you like us to know?"

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Research Methods

Descriptive Data
Analysis

Mixed Methods
Secondary
Analysis

Transcription
Coding
Theme Analysis

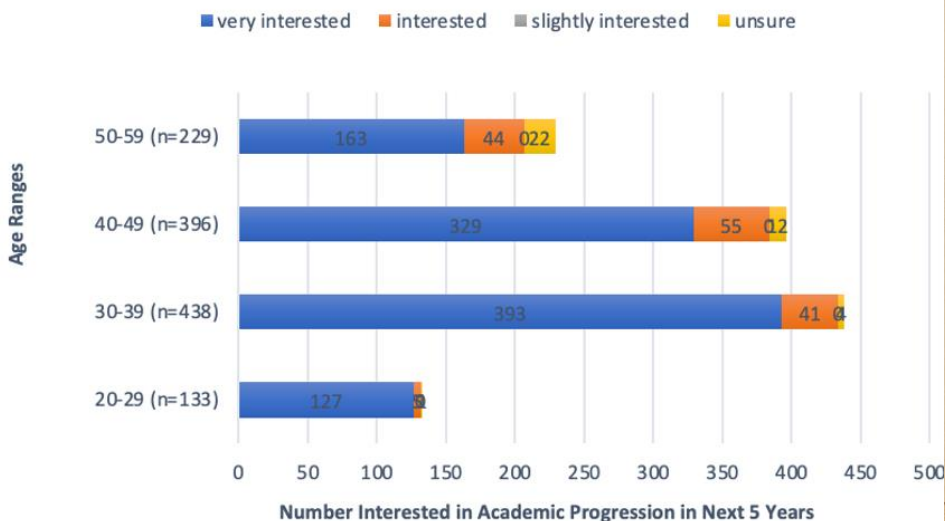
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Findings

1. What demographic data describe urban vs rural LPNs' ratings of their desire for academic progression in the next 5 years?

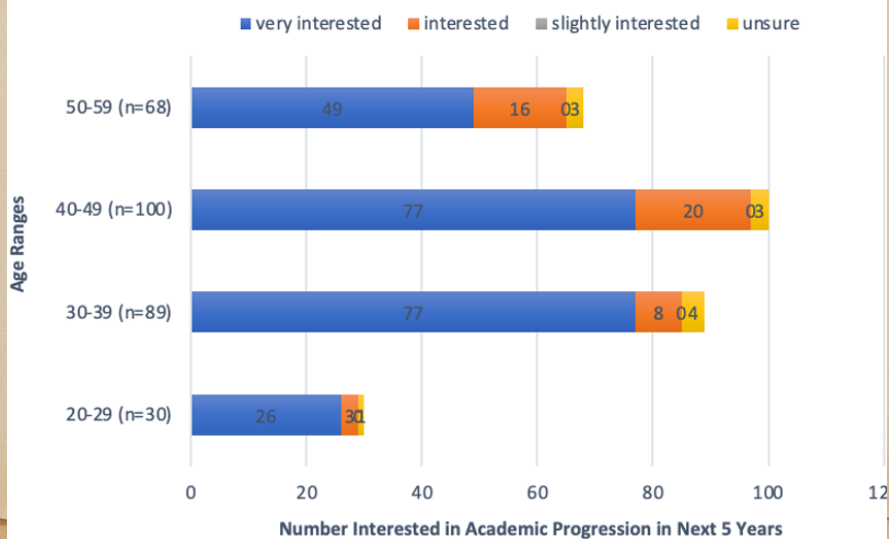
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Washington Urban LPN Ages: Interest in Academic Progression in Next 5 Years

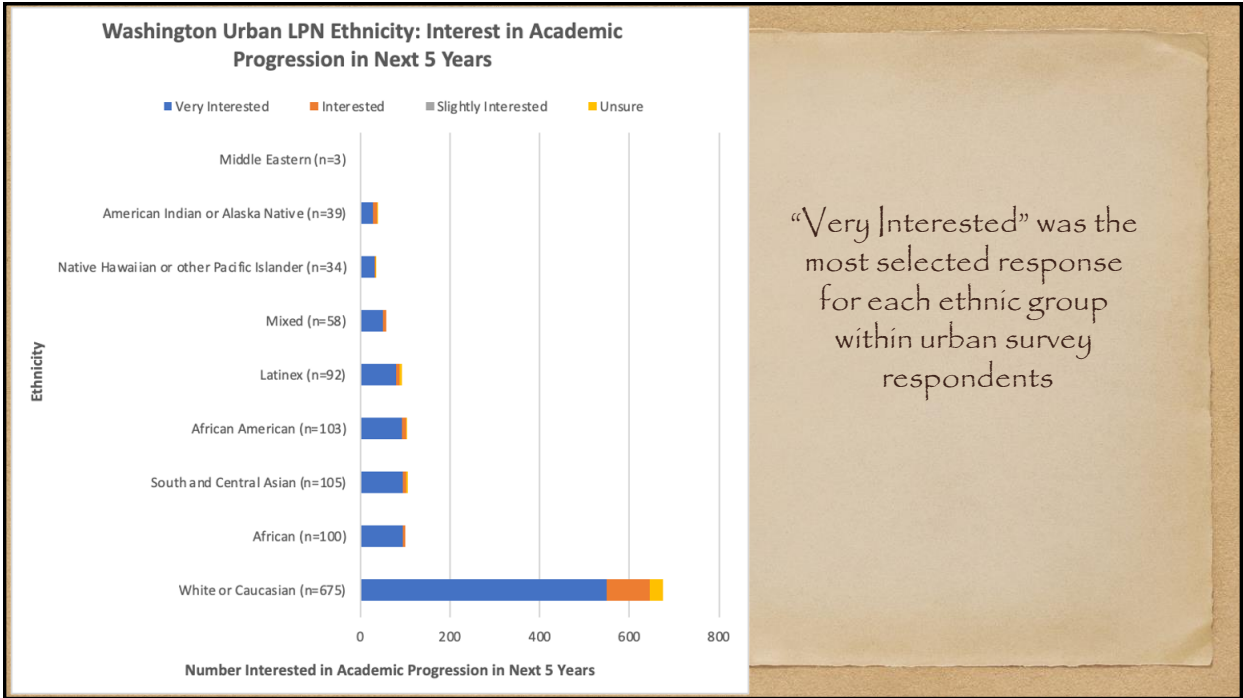


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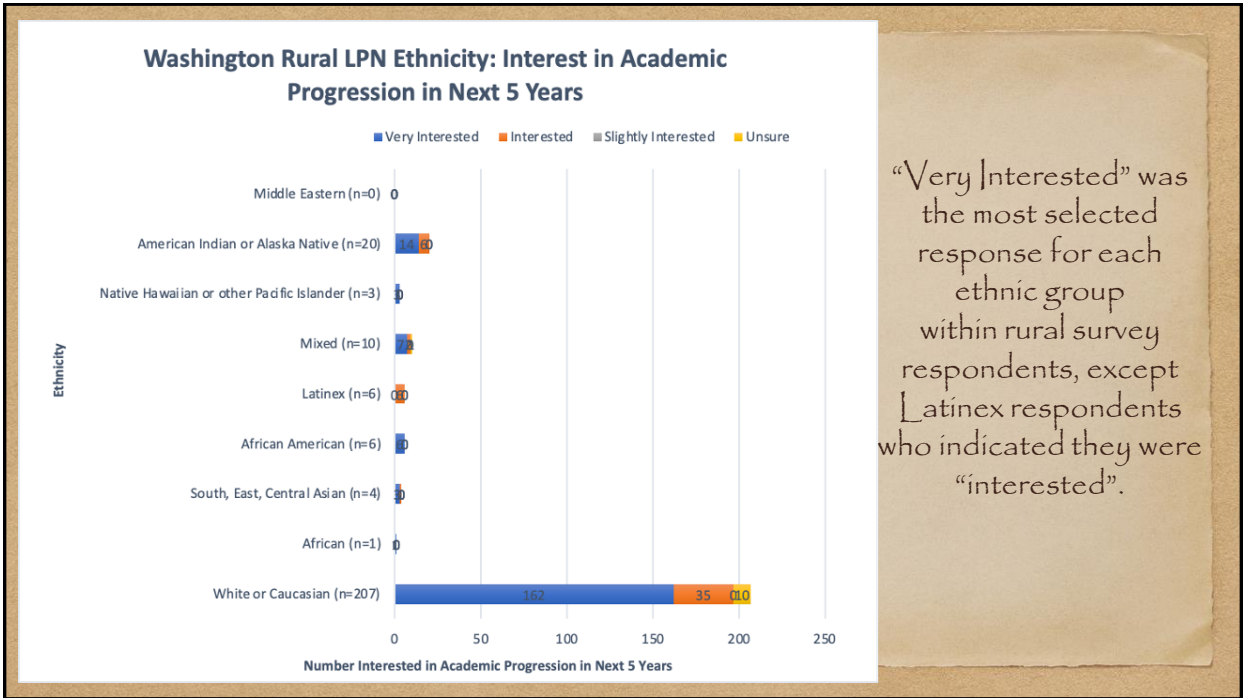
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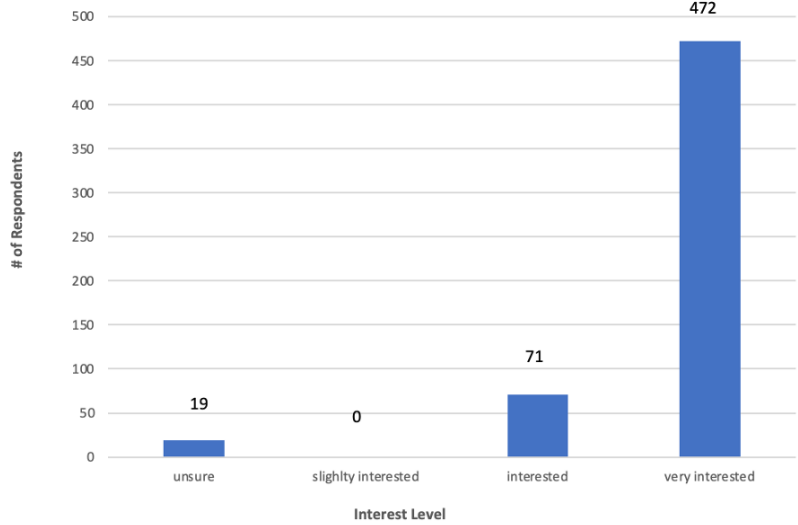
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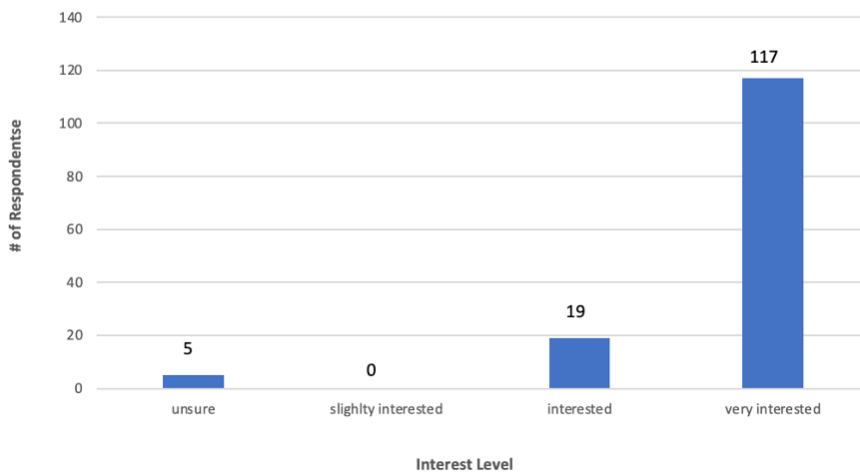
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The majority of urban sole or major income earners were "very interested" in Academic progression in the next 5 years

Washington Urban LPNs:
Sole or Major Income Earner Interest in Academic Progression in Next 5 Years (n=562)



Washington Rural LPNs:
Sole or Major Income Earner Interest in Academic Progression in Next 5 Years (n=141)



The majority of rural sole or major income earners were "very interested" in Academic progression in the next 5 years

Findings

3. What is the frequency of barriers reported by selected region (selected urban vs rural counties)?

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Frequency of Barriers Reported by Urban & Rural Counties

Extreme or Significant Barrier	Urban (n=1187)	Rural (n=290)
Online Learning	157 (13.3%)	38 (13.1%)
Face to Face Classes	609 (52.2%)	162 (56.3%)
Family Care	343 (29.2%)	79 (27.3%)
Work Flexibility	645 (54.5%)	134 (46.4%)
Cost	698 (59.0%)	184 (63.7%)
Program Availability	919 (77.8%)	237 (82.3%)

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Findings

4. What barriers are reported in the qualitative data from the open-ended survey question "What else would you like us to know?"

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Themes from Open-ended Question

1. Constraints of the LPN Population
2. Lack of Access & Program Options
3. Barriers to Entrance
4. Perceived Unfairness toward LPN Advancement
5. Drastic Consequences of Program Shortages to Nursing Losses
6. Hope for change

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Theme One: Constraints of the LPN Population

Family obligations & need to continue full-time work

“I can’t rid our household of its second income to go back to school.”

“There needs to be a way to work full-time and work on your degree at the same time. I can’t quit work or go part-time and still support my family for any substantial length of time.”

“Bridge programs need to account for nearly all LPNs needing to continue working full-time while in school and maintaining their family lives.”

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Theme Two: Lack of Access & Program Options

More available programs & credit for experience

“There aren’t enough LPN-RN programs and support.”

“The sparse RN bridge programs available, the high ratio of applicants compared to available spots, and high competition of pre-requisite course grades all severely impair LPNs from advancing their education despite interest.”

“We also do not have any school in Washington that offers online program. These are the major reasons that limit our capabilities to advance to RN program. Not very many nursing schools have flexibility options, and almost all demand that you attend full-time in-class lessons.”

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Theme Three: Barriers to Entrance

Expired Prerequisites, different prerequisites, lottery entrance

“It will be very important not to take the TEAS test & repeat all or some of the prerequisites.”

“There are virtually no ways to advance educations for LPNs. Prerequisites expire and RN programs are so difficult to get into it's impossible.”

“It's unfortunate that as licensed LPNs we still are required to go back and take prerequisites over again in math & science due to them expiring. This is a huge barrier to return to school.”

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Theme Four: Perceived Disrespect for LPN Experience

LPN experience as nurse not valued

“I understand nursing school needs to be difficult but I feel it's impossible to get your RN while an LPN. There's no credit that we are nurses who are trying to advance our careers.”

“Disturbing how hard it is to get an RN from LPN with all the experience already in the medical field. Others are fully welcome into programs straight from high school. We should have more support in the education area.”

“LPNs should get credit for work experience...We are more knowledgeable than new grad RNs in some cases and not given the due respect.”

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Theme Five: Drastic Consequences of Program Shortages Resulting in Nursing Losses

Frustration leading to LPNs dropping plans to advance education or leaving nursing for different career

"I pretty much felt like WA state didn't care about LPNs here & decided to stop trying to further my education in the nursing field. I am now looking to transition out of nursing entirely."

"For now, it is difficult to work as LPN, not many options available. Online schooling for those of us who would like to continue is almost nonexistent. Because of this a large number of LPNs leave the field to do something else or go to school for a different major."

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Theme Six: Hope for Change

Thankful for survey & hopeful for changes in their opportunities

"I have so much passion for my nursing career. Please help me to continue my education to get into RN school."

"I hope you will develop a successful and affordable LPN to RN or BSN model, I know many excellent LPNs that are working very hard to advance their careers and education in nursing."

"I sincerely hope this survey helps advance LPNs to RNs because this should be a natural progression that is encouraged and fostered through healthcare organizations, colleges and universities as well as the state nursing commission. Thank you for your efforts and outreach."

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Recommendations



- ☑ Design consistent pre-reqs for all nursing programs/consider Holistic Admissions
- ☑ Consider eliminating expiration requirement for science courses
- ☑ Hybrid model to support working students who are often the single income for their family
- ☑ Predictable academic scheduling to limit FTF requirements (lab & clinical experiences)

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Recommendations



- ☑ Research focused on the validity of using standardized tests as entrance criteria for LPNs
- ☑ Investment in adding more local LPN-RN/BSN programs
- ☑ Collaboration of workforce with nursing education
- ☑ Workforce tuition assistance for interested LPNs
- ☑ Predictable work schedules (w/some ability for flexibility when needed)

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Future Research



- ❑ Focus groups with current Practical Nursing students to determine future academic plans
- ❑ Studies of LPN-BSN programs using this data
- ❑ Further research focused on the supports that would mitigate the barriers LPNs face in their quest for academic progression

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Limitations

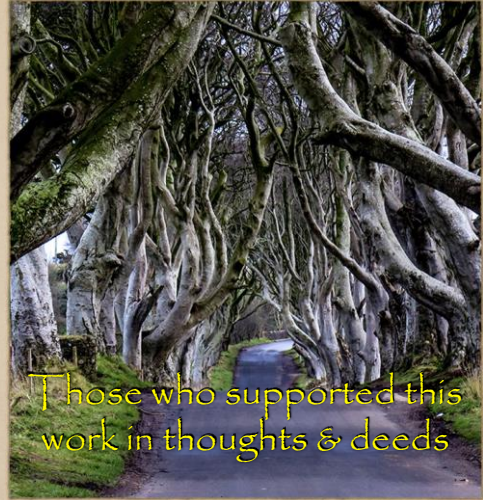
- Survey data inherently carries response bias (those with the strongest opinions are the ones most likely to respond)
- The results cannot be extrapolated to all LPNs since only a small portion of WALPNs responded to the survey
- This study eliminated survey results that were incomplete, thus potentially missing additional information.



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Credits

- LPN Academic Progression Workgroup
 - Dr Mary Baroni
 - Julie Samms, MN
 - Kyra McCoy, MN
- Premera Blue Cross Healthcare
- The LPN survey respondents
- Research Committee members
 - Dr Sharon Fought
 - Dr Gerianne Babbo
 - Dr Billye Sankofa-Waters



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Questions?

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