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It is interesting to note that Nursing in this country cannot be studied without the need for practical training. Whilst the practical training is a necessary component for this degree, it restricts many people who are already working and earning an income within related hospital professions from even thinking of attempting to cross over into nursing. I believe that the practical component within this degree needs to be adjusted to allow interested mature age people already within the medical field to pursue the degree.

It is particularly interesting when one considers that in hospital medical disciplines, there is exists an annual crossing over of professions such as radiographers to Medicine, nurses to Information systems or administration, as well as numerous other types of transfers. The transfer to the nursing profession unfortunately, which would also tend to naturally occur given the opportunity, is a difficult transfer to effect. The main obstacle is the annual block practicals that needs to occur. This currently requires that the student attend the practical full time several times a year.

Staff who are already within professions in the hospital setting are usually of mature age and are more than likely heavily burdened by family financial commitments etc. Their giving up their salaries to pursue their desire to cross professions into nursing and its associated practical block would indeed be a difficult one. However, it is one that should be encouraged by the system because these people are more likely to remain in the hospital setting for many years to come and give nursing a quality of nurse that would be really and truly dedicated.

The transfer to nursing study should be encouraged because it is a transfer by an already committed staff member within the hospital setting. This person is more than likely a mature person who is genuinely in love with the profession having watched it in the hospital for a few years, and they would be probably dedicated and guaranteed to remain in the country because of other family commitments and because they had already traveled anyway. Also, he/she would be a sincere and dedicated student with the aim of getting into the profession as quickly as possible and consequently would apply themselves to the study.

This submission proposes that it would be advantageous to the Australian Nursing profession for the development of a cooperative scheme between Universities and Hospitals to allow for people who are already working within the health field in a hospital, to study Nursing whilst continuing to be paid for work within their current field. The scheme assumes that there are mature age employees within the hospital setting, perhaps scientists, radiographers and others who might desire to cross professions. The scheme would allow for the employee to continue to work in their current job/profession but allow them to enroll in the Nursing degree by coursework or part time study at a local Institution. (Currently, Charles Sturt University is one that offers a Distance education degree in Nursing but only to Enrolled Nurses and people who have completed at least a year of the TAFE courses). Under the proposed scheme, practical nurse training would be permitted by the hospital employing the staff member in blocks at "NORMAL" full pay and with approval

from their current hospital department, say pathology where some support may or may not be necessary for remaining staff due to the nursing block absence requirement for the degree.

This submission raises the possibility that this scheme would be a mechanism to obtain more nurses who are genuinely committed to remaining in Australia unlike many of the the proven younger nurses graduating and travelling overseas almost immediately having completed their studies. More dedicated people already familiar with the hospital system and with a background in other related disciplines within the hospital would be acquired for nursing. This would be advantageous to the Australian Public and the Australian medical system.

This idea was created in my mind by virtue of the fact that my enquiries to allow me to crossover from laboratory science to nursing in 4 to 5 years time was stumped by my family commitments and need to continue to acquire a salary in laboratory science. Also, the requirement of the practical block session would not be permitted by my hospital employer under current staffing arrangements. In particular, I would not have enough leave to allow me to fulfill the University requirements for a practical block. Thus I cannot enter the field of nursing despite the fact that after 24 years in hospital medicine, I believe I have something valuable to give to nursing.

Thank you for the opportunity to put forward this suggestion.

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