

A STUDY OF SOME  
FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCED A SELECTED GROUP  
OF STUDENT PRACTICAL NURSES TO CHOOSE  
A CAREER IN PRACTICAL NURSING

by

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A THESIS

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## PREFACE

This study was a result of the writer's interest in the recruitment, selection, and admission of qualified applicants to the practical nurse programs in Idaho. The demand from the public for better health care and the shortage of professional nurses, have made it necessary for many tasks to be transferred to qualified practical nurses. In Idaho, the need for practical nurses has been felt more than in some states since the schools for educating the professional nurses are limited and the nursing services of the Idaho hospitals, especially the small ones in the remote areas of the state, are dependant upon the practical nurses.

Because of the demand upon the practical nurses in Idaho, the writer feels it important to study the factors influencing men and women in their choice of practical nursing as a career.

It is hoped that the data will be of interest and value to practical nurse educators in the recruitment and selection of practical nurse students.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
	Background of the Problem . . . . .	1
	Statement of the Problem . . . . .	2
	Limitations . . . . .	3
	Assumptions . . . . .	3
	Importance of the Problem . . . . .	3
	Definitions and Abbreviations . . . . .	4
	Sources of Data . . . . .	5
	Methodology . . . . .	5
	Presentation of the Study . . . . .	6
II	REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND RELATED STUDIES . . . .	7
	Historical Resume . . . . .	7
	Review of Related Studies . . . . .	11
III	PROCEDURE AND FINDINGS . . . . .	17
	Participating Programs . . . . .	17
	Procedure . . . . .	19
	Presentation and Interpretation of Data . . . . .	21
IV	SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . .	41
	Summary of the Study . . . . .	41
	Conclusions . . . . .	43
	Recommendations for Further Studies . . . . .	45
	BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	46
	APPENDIX	
A	QUESTIONNAIRE . . . . .	49
B	LETTER FROM THE INVESTIGATOR . . . . .	52
C	COVERING LETTER FROM THE THESIS ADVISER . . . . .	53
D	SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS . . . . .	54



# LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
I	Number of Students Enrolled, Number of Students Completing Questionnaire, Percent of Enrollment Completing Questionnaire in Seven Participating Practical Nurse Programs in Idaho . .	22
II	Age Range Per Program, Number of Students in Distribution of Ages Between 18-55 Years, and Average Age of 66 Students Enrolled in Seven Practical Nurse Programs in Idaho . . . .	23
III	Educational Background of 66 Students Enrolled in Seven Practical Nurse Programs in Idaho . . .	25
IV	The Population of the Towns in Which Seven Idaho Practical Nurse Programs Are Located (according to 1956 estimates) . .	26
V	Distribution of 66 Students Enrolled in Seven Idaho Programs of Practical Nursing According to the Population of Their Home Towns . . .	26
VI	The Number and Percent of Students Who Are Residents or Non Residents of the Towns Where Seven Idaho Practical Nurse Programs Are Located . . . . .	27
VII	Distribution of the 66 Practical Nurse Students' Responses Regarding How Long They Had Been Interested in a Practical Nurse Career . .	28
VIII	Individuals With Whom 66 Students in Seven Idaho Practical Nurse Programs Discussed Their Interest in Practical Nursing and Individuals From Whom the Participants Indicated They Had Received the Most Information Concerning Practical Nursing as a Career . .	30
IX	Sources From Which the 66 Participants in Seven Idaho Practical Nurse Programs Gained the Most Information Concerning a Career in Practical Nursing . .	31
X	Distribution of the Responses Given by 66 Participants in Seven Idaho Practical Nurse Programs Relative to Their Reasons For Choosing a Career in Practical Nursing . . . .	34

# LIST OF TABLES (CONTINUED)

TABLE		PAGE
XI	The Number and Percent of Responses for Each . . . . Type of Previous Nursing Experience Indicated by 66 Students in Seven Idaho Practical Nurse Programs	36
XII	Distribution and Percent of the Responses as . . . . to What Nursing Means to 66 Participants in Seven Idaho Practical Nurse Programs	38
XIII	Distribution of Responses as to Information . . . . That Was Not Clearly Understood or Would Have Been of Help to 66 Students in Seven Idaho Practical Nurse Schools in Deciding to Enter a Practical Nurse Program	40

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the Problem

During the past several years, there has been a growing demand from the public for better health care. There are many indications that the demand for health services will continue to increase. The nursing profession has taken great strides in trying to meet those demands, but an inadequate number of nurses has been apparent since World War II. (17) "Even with the expanding nurse power, it is known that the number of professional nurses does not meet the demands for nursing service today. Many nursing positions remain vacant. Hospital wards continue to close for lack of nurses." (19) There does not appear to be any evidence in the foreseeable future that there will be adequate numbers of professional nurses to meet the need for an acceptable amount of nursing services. It has accordingly become necessary to transfer many of the less complex nursing tasks to persons who would not need the same preparation as the professional nurse.

It is a widely accepted fact that the practical nurse has already taken over many duties that once were the responsibility of the professional nurse and that in the future, she will be doing many duties which now are performed by the professional nurse. (7) The need for expanding the program of practical nursing in all areas of the United States is self-evident. (6)



Although a few practical nurse schools were established early in this century, most have been developed in the past fifteen years. Since 1945, the growth and development of the practical nurse movement has been phenomenal. An estimate of the number of practical nurses graduating from the 48 approved schools in the United States in 1945 was about 500.(8,11) By 1960, there were 667 approved schools of practical nursing in the United States, of which 452 were using Federal Vocational Education Funds.(27) A total of 14,573 practical nurses were graduated from these schools during the 1958-59 school year.(2) By 1959, the number of licensed practical nurses totalled more than 150,000.(3) At the beginning of 1960, the total number of schools training practical nurses in the United States reached 667, an increase of 619 schools in fifteen years.

- There is much in the literature indicating that the licensed practical nurse has been recognized as a member of the health team, but there apparently are only a very few studies written on the recruitment of students for the practical nurse schools or on the reasons these students give for choosing practical nursing as a career.

#### Statement of the Problem

The problem presented in this study is twofold: 1) to determine why the students in the Idaho Practical Nurse Programs selected the field of practical nursing and 2) what factors influenced their choice. It is further proposed to determine: 1) the size of the communities in which the participants reside; 2) the age of the participants; and

3) if the participants believed they received satisfactory information concerning practical nursing before they were admitted to the program.

#### Limitations

The study will include only the information that can be obtained by questionnaire and will be limited to those students enrolled and present at the time the questionnaire was administered in the Idaho practical nurse schools. It is further limited to those schools with which arrangements could be made for administration of the questionnaire between August 15, 1960 and August 26, 1960.

#### Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, it is assumed that: 1) the practical nurse students in Idaho are willing to identify the influences on their choice of careers; 2) the practical nurse students in Idaho are interested in this study and will cooperate in supplying the data requested in the questionnaire; 3) the data obtained by questionnaire is factual and authentic; and 4) the data obtained will have implications for recruitment programs in practical nurse schools.

#### Importance of the Problem

Training of the practical nurse has been in existence since the turn of the century, but the rapid growth of the practical nurse programs has been since 1947.(3) There has been an increased interest in and need for research in practical nursing. In Idaho, no studies

have been done in the area of practical nurse recruitment or choice of practical nursing as a career.

According to the figures in the 1960 edition of Facts About Nursing as of 1958, there were 466 full-time licensed practical nurses employed in Idaho and 124 employed part-time. With very few schools for professional nurses in Idaho, the nursing service of the hospitals in Idaho, especially the small ones in the remote areas of the state, are depending on the practical nurse. With an increasing demand for the services of licensed practical nurses, it will be of value not only to the programs but to the hospitals for a study to be made on recruitment materials and why individuals choose practical nursing as a career. It is hoped that the information obtained will be useful in planning, implementing, and evaluating recruitment programs.

#### Definitions and Abbreviations

For purposes of this study, the following definitions have been accepted:

- A Professional Nurse (RN) is one who has satisfactorily completed a three-to-five year course of study in a state-approved or nationally accredited school of nursing and is eligible to take the state examination to qualify as a registered nurse. The RN gives comprehensive nursing to provide physical and emotional care for the patient; care for his immediate environment; carries out the treatment prescribed by the physician; teaches the patient and his family nursing essentials they must render; and gives general health instruction and supervises auxiliary workers. (17)
- A Graduate Practical Nurse is a person prepared by an approved educational program to share in the care of the sick, in rehabilitation and in prevention of illness, always under the supervision of a physician and/or a professional nurse. (17)



A Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) is one who has met all the requirements of the law (at the time she applied for a license) and received a license to practice nursing in a state which has established standards. The license permits the person to use the initials LPN. An LPN may be (a) a graduate practical nurse, as defined above, or (b) a non-graduate practical nurse who has obtained her license by waiver or experience formula.(17)

The abbreviations R.N. (Registered Nurse) and L.P.N. (Licensed Practical Nurse) will be used throughout this study where feasible. Since the course of study or curriculum designed to prepare the practical nurse student is sometimes referred to as a Practical Nurse Program, and in other instances as a Practical Nurse School, the terms will be used interchangeably throughout this report according to what is the accepted terminology in each situation.

#### Sources of Data

The primary source of data is that obtained from the questionnaire. The secondary sources of data are provided by selected books, periodicals, school brochures, school catalogs, printed recruitment materials, and related studies.

#### Methodology

This study is conducted as a normative survey using a questionnaire to obtain the primary data. The design of the study may be described in a series of steps as follows:

1. Obtain a list of the Practical Nurse Programs in Idaho; make tentative inquiries concerning the need for undertaking a study in Idaho.
2. Establish the purposes of the study, then construct a questionnaire designed to elicit information consistent with the purposes of the study.

3. Submit the questionnaire to ten registered nurses familiar with the scope of practical nursing; obtain their suggestions for revisions.
4. Revise the questionnaire following the suggestions given.
5. Administer the questionnaire to a small group of practical nurse students enrolled in an Oregon Practical Nurse Program and hence would not be participating in the study, to determine whether or not the questions are clearly stated and easily understood.
6. Revise the questionnaire following the suggestions given.
7. Obtain a cover letter from the thesis adviser to accompany the researcher's letter to the instructors of Idaho Practical Nurse Programs, for obtaining an appointment to administer the questionnaire.
8. Set up a schedule of appointments.
9. Administer the questionnaire to the practical nurse students in Idaho.
10. Tabulate the findings of the questionnaire.
11. Describe the findings arithmetically; draw conclusions, and make recommendations for further studies if warranted.

#### Presentation of the Study

This study is divided into four chapters: Chapter I, INTRODUCTION, which indicates the nature of the study, defines the purpose and describes the plan to be used in proceeding. Chapter II, REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND RELATED STUDIES, presents a review of pertinent literature and related studies. Chapter III, PROCEDURE AND FINDINGS, is devoted to an explanation of the procedure used and a presentation of the findings. Chapter IV, SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS, provides a summary of the study with conclusions and recommendations for further study based on the data obtained.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND RELATED STUDIES

#### Historical Resume

The literature on practical nursing has assumed voluminous proportions, particularly in the past two decades. Much that has been written is concerned with the organization of practical nurse programs, the development of curricula, the scope of practical nursing, and the licensure of practical nurses. As background for this study a brief historical resume is presented followed by a review of a few studies related to this study.

Schools for preparing professional nurses had been in existence for about thirty-five years before the beginning of formal training or education for practical nurses although for many years the need for educating the practical nurse had been recognized.(5) "As early as 1877, the place and function of the practical nurse were of concern to those promoting skilled care of the sick."(5) "For the girl, woman, or man who is not qualified for professional nursing or who has passed the age when he or she may enter a professional school of nursing--usually thirty-five--practical nursing offers an interesting and satisfying occupation."(4) There is very little recorded information concerning the earliest beginnings of practical nursing, sometimes also called attendant nursing, in America, although there are some records of hospitals which sent semi-trained nurses into homes to care for the sick under supervision and of doctors who used the untrained workers in the homes of their own private patients.(5)

The first distinction between the practical and professional nurse in this country came with the formal training of the professional nurse in schools of nursing and later with state registration of graduates of such schools. Concomitant to the advancement in the status of the professional nurse, there was often a want of personnel to perform the simple routines and nursing procedures repetitive in nature. Since these procedures were usually assigned to the untrained attendant or practical nurse, it was felt that the practical nurse should be taught, trained, supervised, and licensed to practice. Organized educational programs or schools for practical nurses were then established.(5,19)

There is some disagreement in the literature as to where and when the first practical nurses received formal nursing preparation.

Credit for the early beginning preparations for the practical nurses in the United States is given to the Ballard School of the Young Women's Christian Association in New York City, which, in 1893, organized classes to teach practical nurses how to care for chronic individuals.(28)

Van Matre considers the establishment of later schools with similar courses to have been those at Brattleboro, Vermont, in 1917, and at Boston, Massachusetts, in 1918.(28) Denning, however, states that the first practical nurse student was trained at Brattleboro, Vermont, Mutual Aid Association in 1907.(5) The Household Nursing Association, located originally in Jamaica Plains, Massachusetts, opened a school of attendant nursing in 1918. A short time later the school was moved to Newbury Street in Boston, Massachusetts. In 1958, the name was changed to the "Shepard-Gill School of



Practical Nursing". It continues to function under the auspices of Household Nursing Association on Newbury Street in Boston. The establishment of other schools for practical nurses was slow for many years.(10, 21, 24, 25)

No available statistic show whether during 1935 to 1940 such schools boomed in the United States, but some schools were conducted in Connecticut, several in New York State, one in Detroit, and in 1938, The Family Health Association of Cleveland, Ohio opened a school for "Nursing Attendants", patterned very closely after the school of the Household Nursing Association of Boston.(11)

With the onset of World War II in 1941, there was an impetus toward expanding existing practical nurse programs and the establishment of new ones. Schools of nursing began to help recruit for the practical nurse schools. Candidates who for various reasons, such as age, finances, or academic achievement, could not gain admission to the professional schools of nursing were referred to practical nurse schools. The rapid expansion of practical nurse schools resulted in concern for standards, accreditation of programs, and the promotion of licensing laws. The enactment of licensure protection and approval by state boards of nursing was one of the biggest steps in the advancement of practical nursing schools.(11, 22) Very few states afforded legal status to practical nurses until after 1940.

The years 1940 to 1945 were known as a time of "stock taking" in practical or attendant nursing. During this period, a number of state nurses' associations introduced legislation to revise old acts or create new laws to provide for the licensing of practical nurses. By December 31, 1945, twenty states and one territory, had enacted such laws. Within these twenty-one jurisdictions,

there were forty-eight schools of practical nursing approved by their respective legally authorized accrediting boards, usually the State Board of Nursing.(11) All of the jurisdictions, except the District of Columbia, now license practical nurses in some capacity under a variety of titles.(2, 22)

It was estimated that in 1954, there were 150,000 practical nurses employed in the United States, many of whom had not received any formal training.(3) At that time, 300 practical nurse programs were in existence of which 210 were being conducted within the public school system. About 80 percent of the latter received funds under one of two National Vocational Acts, the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 or the George-Sarden Act of 1946 which provide for the promotion of vocational education in the states. The federal money was available on a state matching basis.(18, 29) In 1959, there were 432 practical nurse programs receiving reimbursement in part from Federal Vocational Education Funds and in 1960, 452 programs out of 667 were receiving partial reimbursement.(26, 27)

Although there continued to be much confusion as to the role of the practical nurse on the health team, the number of schools for educating them increased quite rapidly and by 1957, there were over 400 such schools.(18, 23) "Statistics on practical nursing education show increases in admissions and schools. Federal funds have undoubtedly been an important factor in the extension and improvement of these programs."(1)

In January of 1950, anticipating the passage of a nurse practice act, the Idaho State Board for Vocational Education



initiated a pilot program for practical nurse training at St. Anthony General Hospital in St. Anthony, Idaho. One year later, five students took and passed the licensing examination. Before establishing any school for practical nurses, an advisory committee must be appointed and a survey made of community needs.(15)

The enactment of the Nurse Practice Act by the Idaho State Legislature in 1951 required that all persons giving nursing care must be licensed as an L.P.N. or R.N. This increased the request for programs to thirteen in 1950-51 and continued to increase until the demand reached a peak of nineteen in 1952-53. Since that time the number of programs has leveled off.(15) In August 1960, when the data for this study were collected, there were thirteen practical nurse programs approved to operate within the state of Idaho.(14)

To qualify for licensure, the Idaho graduates of the practical nurse programs must write the national state board test pool examination. The mean scores received by the Idaho students have been above the national mean.(15) In 1958, there were 192 licenses issued to practical nurses for the first time by examination in the state of Idaho.(2)

#### Review of Related Studies

Available for review was, A Study of the Influence of Selected Factors Upon the Decision of Seattle High School Senior Girls Concerning Nursing as a Career;(9) an unpublished thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Science at the University of Washington in 1952, by Mary Elizabeth Flowers.



The purpose of the study was to determine the factors influencing the decision of high school senior girls to either accept or reject nursing as a career.

Data were collected by an open-end questionnaire administered in May 1951 to 845 senior girls which represented about 51 percent of all the girls in the Seattle high schools who were to graduate in June 1951.

Findings showed: 1) eight percent of the senior girls chose a nursing career; 38 percent of those who chose a nursing career made the decision while in grade school or junior high school and 42 percent made their choice while they were sophomores or juniors; 2) nursing ranked highest in prestige, 22.4 percent, with a positive correlation between prestige and the selection of nursing as a vocation; 3) the desire to help others and the wish to enter a service profession ranked highest among the reasons given for choosing a nursing career; 4) more interest in other occupations, don't like to see people suffer were the major reasons given for rejecting nursing as a career; six percent indicated finances as their reason for rejecting nursing and six percent indicated that they had not taken the required subjects for entrance into nursing.

No mention was made about the number of students who had applied to nursing schools or had been accepted by nursing schools. The study does not differentiate practical and professional nursing choices.

A four year study, completed in July 1958 was made at St. John's Hospital School of Nursing in Tulsa, Oklahoma, under the direction of Sister M. Gratiana, Director of Nursing. The report Why Girls

Choose Nursing (12) was available for review only as a mimeographed summary.

The purpose of the study was to obtain data which show the influences which direct young women's interest toward nursing and that would be beneficial in the planning of student recruitment.

The data were collected by a questionnaire administered to 242 nursing students who entered the St. John's Hospital School of Nursing in September of 1954, 1955, 1956, and 1957, and was an activity of the course in Professional Adjustments I, taught by Sister M. Gratiana the Director of Nursing.

Findings of the study showed: 1) books and articles which were indicated by 29 percent of the students, were of the greatest influence toward nursing; 24 percent of the students indicated that books and articles were the second greatest influences and 14 percent checked them as the third greatest influences; mother or relative who was a nurse was indicated by 15 percent of the students as the greatest influence toward nursing; 13 percent indicated that a registered nurse was the greatest influence; 2) student nurses were indicated by 40 percent of the students as the school representative making the greatest impression for nursing; by 27 percent as making the second greatest impression; and by 19 percent as making the third greatest impression; 3) among the reasons given for choosing nursing, the best profession for a life of service was checked by 55 percent; 19 percent checked, a need for nurses in the profession and 18 percent indicated that nursing was useful no matter what one decided to do later; and 4) 10 percent indicated that their first interest in



nursing was aroused during the pre-school years; 31 percent became interested in nursing during grade school; 54 percent became interested while they were in junior or senior high school; four percent soon after graduation from high school; one percent several years after graduation from high school.

The following conclusions were made: 1) the major part of recruitment efforts should be made in the junior and senior high schools; and 2) the student nurses make the best school recruiters.

A third related study was, A Study of Factors Which Influenced a Selected Group of Student Nurses to Choose a Nursing Career and Select a Specific School of Nursing; (20) an unpublished thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Science at the University of Oregon, School of Nursing in 1957, by Marjorie S. O'Connell.

The purpose of the study was to identify the factors which influenced the students in their selection of nursing as a career and their choice of nursing schools.

The data were collected by a questionnaire administered to 316 freshman students in seven Oregon Schools of Nursing during September 1956 including three degree and four diploma schools. This was a 94.6 percent response of the 334 students enrolled in the schools.

The findings showed: 1) 24 percent of the students chose a collegiate school compared to the national average of 14 percent; 2) the sources providing the most information about nursing were friends, career day, reading material, and parents or relatives; 3) the three reasons for choosing a nursing career which were indicated

most frequently were the enjoyment of working with people, the belief that the respondent was best fitted for this career, and the desire to enter a service profession; 4) there was a limited correlation between the reasons given for choosing nursing and what nursing meant to the students; 5) the methods used most frequently to acquire information about nursing schools were catalogs, school visitations, conferences with the director of the school and discussions with student nurses; 6) the two major reasons given for entering a collegiate school were the superior quality of instruction and experience in a collegiate school and the degree would ensure a more rapid promotion in nursing; 7) the reasons indicated most frequently for entering a diploma school were that a diploma school was less expensive than a collegiate school, the time spent in the nursing school was shorter, and the diploma students believed that the collegiate programs prepared nurse specialists; and 8) the reasons given most frequently for having chosen a particular school were that the students believed that it was best suited to their needs and interests, it was recommended by friends and relatives, and the school was sponsored by their church.

In summary, the studies showed similar trends as to why nursing was chosen as a career and the factors which influence that choice. The reasons indicated most frequently in all of the studies were: having a desire to be of service to others and enjoyment derived from working with others. The two studies, which included when interest was first aroused in nursing, showed that the highest percentage was during the junior and senior high school years. One

study included finances as a factor which might influence the choice of careers and was indicated by six percent as being a factor against choosing nursing. One study, however, did include finances as an influencing factor in the choice of a diploma nursing school over a collegiate nursing school. The studies also showed that relatives, friends, and literature ranked highest as influences toward nursing as a career. There did not appear to be evidence that the usual high school Career Day activities had much influence on the student in her choice of nursing as a career.



## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE AND FINDINGS

#### Participating Programs

All practical nurse programs in Idaho are conducted under the auspices of the State Board for Vocational Education, Trade and Industrial Division, in co-operation with the hospitals approved for practical nurse programs by the State Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education. Approval is granted for only one class at a time since the existence of the program may vary from one year to the next depending upon the community need.

Since the programs are all under the direction of Vocational Education, they are similar in many respects. The length of the programs is twelve months; they include a minimum of 500 hours in theoretical instruction and 1200 hours of supervised clinical practice in medical, surgical, obstetric, and pediatric nursing. The educational pre-requisites for admission vary with the applicants' age at the time of entrance. Preference is given to those who are between 18 and 55 years of age; the minimum acceptable age is 17 years. Those students who are admitted at the age of 17 are required to have at least a high school education; applicants between 18 and 25 years of age must have completed two years of high school or the equivalent. A standard score of 35 or above in the General Educational Development Test Series is accepted as equivalent of two years of high school. Applicants who are over 35 years of age

must have completed the eighth grade. All students enrolled in the participating programs at the time of the study were of the white race; however, no racial discrimination is practiced.(14) All participants were women with one exception; one other man student was enrolled, but was not present at the time the questionnaire was administered.

The practical nurse programs in Idaho lead to a certificate from the State Board of Vocational Education and make the students eligible for taking the licensing examination administered by the State Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education. A passing score on the examination entitles the practical nurse to use the title "Licensed Practical Nurse" or "L.P.N." and gives the privilege of practicing as a practical nurse in the state of Idaho.(14)

The programs vary, however, in cost. The amount is determined by each co-operating hospital but is not very great. Most of the hospitals pay a stipend to the students although in some hospitals this does not begin until after a six-week orientation period.(14)

The selection of practical nurse programs to be utilized in this study was based upon a list furnished by the Idaho State Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education. There were 13 approved programs of Practical Nursing in Idaho in 1960; of these seven were included in this study. The remaining six were omitted for various reasons; one program was not operating during 1960, three were not having classes during the time the questionnaire was administered, August 15 to 26, 1960; the other two programs were omitted from the design since they were unable to schedule the administration of the

questionnaire between the designated dates. For the seven programs included, three of the co-operating hospitals are non-sectarian, four are conducted under the auspices of a church, namely Catholic, Episcopal, and Letter-Day Saints.(14)

### Procedure

This study was undertaken for the purpose of determining: 1) why the students in the Idaho practical nurse programs selected the field of practical nursing and 2) what factors influenced their choice. It was further proposed to determine: 1) the size of the communities in which the participants of the study reside, 2) the age of the participants; and 3) if the participants believed they received satisfactory information concerning practical nursing before they were admitted to the program.

The questionnaire was selected as the device for obtaining data because it could be administered by the investigator in person. Although the questionnaire method has many limitations, it was felt that its use in this study was justified in that the individual student would be the best source for the information desired and a greater number could be contacted more efficiently by this tool than would be possible by some other method.

The questionnaire used to obtain the primary data was developed with the assistance of the thesis adviser, registered nurses familiar with the scope of practical nursing and others interested in the study. Each item was analyzed in terms of the objective it was designed to fulfill. The questionnaire was intentionally designed in



simple terms and so constructed as to permit ease of administration.

The preliminary questionnaire was developed and presented to the thesis adviser and ten registered nurses for their evaluation. The questionnaire was then revised to include any suggestions received. The revised questionnaire was presented to the same group for further evaluation and suggestions. A second revision was made and the questionnaire was again presented to the same group for further evaluation and suggestions. The third revision was completed and copies were prepared for a pilot-study consisting of a group of twelve student practical nurses not taking part in the study since they were not enrolled in an Idaho practical nurse program. The questionnaire was edited slightly according to suggestions and comments of the participants in the pilot study. Final revisions were made. The questionnaire is included as Appendix A.

The directors of the practical nurse programs were approached by mail. The nature of the study was described and a request was made for the participation of the students enrolled in the respective practical nurse programs, a copy of which is included as Appendix B. The communication was accompanied by a covering letter from the thesis adviser, a copy of which is included as Appendix C. A return-addressed post card was enclosed.

A schedule of appointments was set up, a copy of which is included as Appendix D.

The questionnaire was administered to 66 practical nurse students in the seven participating schools. In six of the programs, the questionnaire was presented during a regularly scheduled class period

with all the students attending being polled. The students at the seventh program were administered the questionnaire in a special session with seven students attending, representing about 1/6 percent of the class enrollment. The total response represented 89.1 percent of the 74 students enrolled in the seven participating Idaho practical nurse programs during the month of August 1960. The number of students enrolled in the Idaho practical nurse programs during the month of August 1960, could not be determined but according to figures received in April 1960, there were 24 students enrolled in the programs not included in this study. According to these figures, the 66 students included in the study would represent about 67 percent of the Idaho practical nurse students. This sampling was deemed large enough to provide the necessary data and to reflect the opinions of the Idaho practical nurses during 1960.

Each question was tabulated separately on a master tabulation sheet. Percents, unless otherwise indicated, were based on 66, the total number of participants. The results of the tabulation follow.

#### Presentation and Interpretation of Data

To preserve the anonymity of the data, each program was arbitrarily assigned a letter. No other identification of the program will be used throughout this report.

The questionnaire was administered to 89.1 percent of the students enrolled in the seven programs that participated in this study. Actually, 100 percent of the students in six of the programs participated. Table I shows the size of enrollment of each program,



the number of participants and the percent of the enrollment that participated in the study.

TABLE I

NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED, NUMBER OF STUDENTS COMPLETING QUESTIONNAIRE, PERCENT OF ENROLLMENT COMPLETING QUESTIONNAIRE IN SEVEN PARTICIPATING PRACTICAL NURSE PROGRAMS IN IDAHO

Idaho Practical Nurse Programs	Number of Students Enrolled	Number of Students Completing Questionnaire	Percent of Enrollment Completing Questionnaire
A	9	9	100.0
B	15	7	46.6
C	9	9	100.0
D	12	12	100.0
E	6	6	100.0
F	8	8	100.0
G	15	15	100.0
Total	74	66	89.1

Much of the general recruitment literature in nursing suggests that the individual beyond 35 years of age who wants to become a nurse should seek admission to a practical nurse program. In designing the questionnaire it was decided to ascertain if the programs really were attracting candidates in the thirty-five plus age bracket. It was found that 66 participants ranged from 19 to 55 years of age, a span of 36 years. One program had no students below 37 years in age; another had no students older than 27 years of age. It is interesting to note that there were exactly as many participants in the 19 to 35 year bracket as in the 36 to 55 bracket. This may have implications for the recruitment literature which has emphasized the field of

practical nursing as being most appropriate for candidates who are 35 years or more in age. Table II shows the age range per program, the distribution of ages in four brackets between 18 and 55 and the average age of students in each program.

TABLE II

AGE RANGE PER PROGRAM, NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN DISTRIBUTION OF AGES BETWEEN 18-55 YEARS, AND AVERAGE AGE OF 66 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SEVEN PRACTICAL NURSE PROGRAMS IN IDAHO

Program	Distribution of age and Number of Students					
	Age Range	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	Average Age
A	21-55	3	1	1	4	38
B	19-27	6	1	0	0	21
C	19-49	1	2	4	2	39
D	19-50	4	2	3	3	33
E	19-49	2	2	0	2	33
F	37-46	0	0	7	1	42
G	20-49	4	5	5	1	33
Total	19-55	20	13	20	13	34

The data showed that 14 or 21.2 percent of the participating students were unmarried at the time of the study. Of the remaining 52 students, 37 indicated that they were married, 4 widowed, 3 separated, and 8 divorced. The children of the practical nurse students ranged in age from one month to 30 years with the average age being 12.5 years. The number of children belonging to the students varied from one to seven with a total of 125 children represented.

In these programs, there apparently is nothing to deter the married woman with home and family responsibilities from pursuing a course of study which in turn would lead to a means of livelihood.

This factor has implications for recruitment and may be related to the choice of practical nursing as a career.

There are specific policies in Idaho regarding educational prerequisites for admission to practical nurse programs. These have been described in the early part of this chapter. Since applicants in certain age groups need not have as much education as would qualify them for admission to schools designed for preparing professional nurses, this factor may also have implications for recruitment and for the individual's choice of practical nursing as a career.

Table III shows the educational background of the participating students. Of the 66 practical nurse students, 13.6 percent completed only elementary school, 34.7 percent had one to three years high school with 41.1 percent completing four years high school, and 10.6 percent enrolling for one or more years of college. In addition to the education designated in Table III, there were other educational endeavors listed. Two students had attended business college; one had attended some type of vocational school; and two studied professional nursing but did not finish the course of study.



TABLE III

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF 66 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SEVEN PRACTICAL  
NURSE PROGRAMS IN IDAHO

Education Completed	Number	Percent
Elementary School		
8th grade	9	13.6
High School		
1st year	8	12.1
2nd year	6	9.1
3rd year	9	13.6
4th year	27	41.1
College		
1st year	2	3.0
2nd year	3	4.5
3rd year	1	1.5
4th year	1	1.5
Total	66	100.0

Many of the hospitals in Idaho are located in small communities where it is extremely difficult to attract sufficient personnel to provide adequate staffing of the nursing services. Employment opportunities for women are apt to be limited in such communities except for those prepared for a specific function. This factor may influence some individuals to enroll in a practical nurse program. The population of the towns in which the seven participating programs are located is shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV

THE POPULATION OF THE TOWNS IN WHICH SEVEN IDAHO PRACTICAL NURSE PROGRAMS ARE LOCATED (according to 1956 estimates)

Idaho Practical Nurse Programs	Population of the Towns
A	16,185
B	38,000
C	22,500
D	22,500
E	2,648
F	4,523
G	21,000

The participants of this study were residents of various towns throughout the state of Idaho although 44 percent resided in towns with a population of over 10,000; 44 percent were in towns of 1,000 to 10,000 residents and; 12 percent were in towns less than 1,000 in population. Table V shows the distribution of the students relative to the population of their home town.

TABLE V

DISTRIBUTION OF 66 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN SEVEN IDAHO PROGRAMS OF PRACTICAL NURSING ACCORDING TO THE POPULATION OF THEIR HOME TOWNS

Program	Number of Students	Population					
		less than 1,000		1,000 to 10,000		over 10,000	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
A	9	2	22.2	3	33.3	4	44.4
B	7	0	0.0	1	14.3	6	85.7
C	9	2	22.2	2	22.2	5	55.6
D	12	1	8.3	5	41.7	6	50.0
E	6	0	0.0	6	100.0	0	0.0
F	8	0	0.0	7	87.5	1	12.5
G	15	3	20.0	5	33.3	7	46.7
Total	66	8	12.0	29	44.0	29	44.0

It was found that 32 students, or 48.5 percent were residents of the town in which the practical nurse program was located, however, twelve individuals had found it necessary to change residence in order to enter the program. Thirty-four students, or 51.5 percent commuted from their home towns to the town where the practical nurse program was located. The distribution of programs throughout the state is such that they are readily available to many residents even though commuting may be necessary. Availability may be another factor that has influenced the choice of practical nursing as a career.

Table VI shows the number and percent of students in each program who are residents or non-residents of the town where the program is located.

TABLE VI

THE NUMBER AND PERCENT OF STUDENTS WHO ARE RESIDENTS OR NON-RESIDENTS OF THE TOWNS WHERE SEVEN IDAHO PRACTICAL NURSE PROGRAMS ARE LOCATED

Program	Number of Students	Residents		Non-Residents	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
A	9	4	44.4	5	55.6
B	7	7	100.0	0	0.0
C	9	5	55.6	4	44.4
D	12	4	33.3	8	66.7
E	6	4	66.7	2	33.3
F	8	2	25.0	6	75.0
G	15	6	40.0	9	60.0
Total	66	32	48.5	34	51.5



The second section of the questionnaire was concerned with the practical nurse students' interest in practical nursing as a career and the factors influencing their choice of careers. Many factors enter into an individuals' choice of an occupational field. This study makes no attempt to identify more than a few of the factors which might have been influential to those choosing to become practical nurses in seven Idaho programs.

The length of time the students had been interested in entering a practical nurse program is shown in Table VII. Of the 66 participants, five indicated that their interest in a practical nurse program had been for less than one year; 24 stated that they had had an interest in practical nursing for a period of one to two years; 10 indicated that their interest had been for two to four years; and 27 or almost 41 percent indicated that they had had an interest in entering a practical nurse program for over four years. The length of time interested in nursing may be related to many circumstances. The data in Table VII show that only five of the respondents had been interested for a relatively brief time.

TABLE VII

DISTRIBUTION OF THE 66 PRACTICAL NURSE STUDENTS' RESPONSES  
REGARDING HOW LONG THEY HAD BEEN INTERESTED IN A  
PRACTICAL NURSE CAREER

Length of Interest	Number of Students	Percent
less than one year	5	7.6
one to two years	24	36.4
two to four years	10	15.1
over four years	27	40.9

The participants were asked to indicate with whom they had discussed their interest in practical nursing. Possible responses were suggested with space for inserting others. The number of responses was not limited. There was no attempt to determine whether vocational counseling was being sought, advice, or merely an opportunity to verbalize.

Relatives and friends ranked highest among those with whom the practical nurse students discussed their interest in practical nursing as a career with about 74 percent checking relatives and 66.7 percent checking friends. This order did not follow through for the individuals from whom the students received the most information about practical nursing. In this area 59 percent checked a registered nurse other than the practical nurse instructor who was indicated by 45 percent of the participating students. There is very little similarity between those with whom the students discussed their interest and those individuals from whom the students received the most information except for the responses: a practical nurse and a registered nurse.

Individuals with whom the practical nurse student discussed their interest in practical nursing other than those in the suggested list are: hospital administrator, hospital head, head of Practical Nurse Program at Kansas City, Missouri, and Sisters at St. Alphonsus hospital.

The individuals the practical nurse students listed as sources for gaining the most information about practical nursing other than those suggested in the questionnaire included: employment

office, student nurses, hospital administrator, and hospital head.

These findings are shown in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII

INDIVIDUALS WITH WHOM 66 STUDENTS IN SEVEN IDAHO PRACTICAL NURSE PROGRAMS DISCUSSED THEIR INTEREST IN PRACTICAL NURSING AND INDIVIDUALS FROM WHOM THE PARTICIPANTS INDICATED THEY HAD RECEIVED THE MOST INFORMATION CONCERNING PRACTICAL NURSING AS A CAREER\*

Individuals Approached By Participants	Individuals With Whom Interest Was Discussed		Individuals From Whom Information Was Received	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
relatives	49	74.2	9	13.6
friends	40	66.7	17	25.8
a practical nurse	36	54.5	32	48.5
a registered nurse	31	47.0	39	59.1
your family doctor	27	40.9	16	24.2
former school teachers	10	15.2	3	4.5
clergyman**	8	12.1	--	---
practical nurse instructor**	--	---	30	45.4
other	7	10.6	7	10.6

\* the number of responses was not limited

\*\* response not included in both lists

The participants were asked to indicate the sources from which they gained the most information. Several possible responses were suggested with the students having an opportunity to include other responses. The responses were not very high for any one source with newspapers being the highest and indicated by 20 students or 30.3 percent of the participants. Magazine articles were indicated by 13 students; books were checked by 13 students or 19.7 percent of the participants. Nine respondents listed other sources which included: pamphlets for LPN school, hospital, nursing office, and employment agency.



There was no attempt to determine whether all available sources of information were being utilized. Newspapers are not likely to carry any substantial amount of authentic information useful for the recruitment of practical nurse students. It could very well be that news items concerning the opening of a practical nurse program constituted the information obtained by the 20 respondents who checked newspapers as their source. High school career day played a very small part as a means of disseminating information. Radio, television, posters, and movies likewise seemed ineffective, or were not utilized to the optimum. It would appear that in the areas of communications media, many opportunities would be available for promoting practical nursing as a career.

Table IX shows the sources from which the practical nurse students gained the most information about a career in practical nursing with the distribution and percent of the responses checked by the participants of the study.

TABLE IX

SOURCES FROM WHICH THE 66 PARTICIPANTS IN SEVEN IDAHO PRACTICAL NURSE PROGRAMS GAINED THE MOST INFORMATION CONCERNING A CAREER IN PRACTICAL NURSING\*

Sources of Information	Distribution of Responses	
	Number	Percent
radio	3	4.5
television	5	7.6
newspapers	20	30.3
high school career day	4	6.1
magazine articles	13	19.7
posters	3	4.5
books	13	19.7
movies	1	1.5
other	9	13.6

\* the number of responses was not limited

The participants were asked to indicate their reasons for choosing a career in practical nursing. The three reasons indicated most frequently were the satisfaction derived from working with people, the long standing desire to be a nurse, and the desire to provide themselves with a future income and security. About 77 percent of the participants indicated that they enjoyed working with people. Forty-five or 68.2 percent checked that they always had wanted to be a nurse and 31 or 47 percent of the students checked that they wanted a future income and security.

There were other reasons given for the student's choice of practical nursing as a career. The following are quoted verbatim with no attempt at editing and are samples of the other responses given for choosing a career in practical nursing.

To help pave way to go to professional school-money-wise & in experience.

I like doing things for others without them expecting to return something.

I want to attend College to receive my Teaching Certificate in the U.S.A. and needed a job I can do either in the afternoon or at night.

I plan to go on to professional nursing but I wanted to find out if I really likes nursing befor I went into the R.N. Training

had to waite until family had gotten a little older

Worked as a practicl until a license was required

I feel helping others and listening to their problems made my problems take a back seat-I can forget my own-it's the best medicine I've found.

have a nursing home. I feel I will be able to help my patients more, et give them better nursing care.

Wanted to be independent of home and family.  
Wanted to leave unpleasant situation.

To me nursing is a worth while profession & gives you the feeling you are truly helping people & also gives you a feeling of satisfaction & accomplishment

It harmonizes with my religious beliefs. To me nursing is a work of the Lord. I also want to pay back in my way a little of what nurses have done for me the years when I was ill.

Genuinely wished to learn, and realizing the more I learned, the more there is to learn.

due to husband illness and having worked with the public in many positions decided to try something new that I might enjoy more

I have all ways had an unquenched thirst to serve humanity. In this V.N. course I am being educated and getting experience needed to make this cause benifitful to myself & community

Twenty-three students indicated that they had worked as aides and became interested in improving themselves. Thirteen of the participants indicated that their choice of a career was based somewhat on the wages received during the clinical training period of the practical nurse program. Table I shows the distribution of responses to the question "What was your reason for choosing a career in practical nursing?"



TABLE X

DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONSES GIVEN BY 66 PARTICIPANTS IN SEVEN  
IDAHO PRACTICAL NURSE PROGRAMS RELATIVE TO THEIR REASONS FOR  
CHOOSING A CAREER IN PRACTICAL NURSING\*

Reasons for Choosing A Career in Practical Nursing	Distribution of Responses	
	Number	Percent
a. always wanted to be a nurse	45	68.2
b. enjoy working with people	51	77.3
c. have friends and relatives who are nurses	16	24.2
d. wish to enter a service occupation	12	18.2
e. job opportunities are better than in other occupations	10	15.2
f. practical nursing requires less time and money than college or a professional nursing school	13	19.7
g. want a future income and security	31	47.0
h. have worked as an aide and became interested in improving myself	23	34.8
i. live closer to a practical nurse school than to a professional nurse school	4	6.0
j. unable to meet pre-entrance requirements for a professional nurse school	10	15.2
k. have passed the age limits for entrance to a professional nurse school	8	12.1
l. received wages during the clinical training period of the practical nurse program	13	19.7
m. other	19	28.8

\* the number of responses was not limited

One factor which might be influential in choosing to enter a program of practical nursing is previous experience in nursing. The participants were requested to indicate what nursing experience they had had previous to admission to the program. Of the 66 participating students, there were only 8 who did not indicate some type of

previous nursing experience. Thirty-four or 51.5 percent of the participants indicated that they had previously worked as a nurse aide, some in hospitals and others in nursing homes. Four students had been employed in a doctor's office and four students indicated that at one time they had been enrolled as a student in a professional nurse school. The most frequent response, "took care of members of your family", was made by 53 percent of the participants. Twenty-one or almost 32 percent indicated that they had taken care of sick friends. Ten indicated other nursing experience samples of which are quoted verbatim with no attempt at editing.

One of the requirements in order to become a Home economic Teacher in the DDR was a Hospital Practicum.

home nursing course

orderly 1 yr

Worked with School Nurse in high school

worked as a practical nurse before I was married.  
Before the days of licencure.

Table XI shows the nature of previous nursing experience and the number and percent of responses for each type.

TABLE XI

THE NUMBER AND PERCENT OF RESPONSES FOR EACH TYPE OF PREVIOUS  
NURSING EXPERIENCE INDICATED BY 66 STUDENTS IN SEVEN IDAHO  
PRACTICAL NURSE PROGRAMS\*

Previous Nursing Experiences	Distribution of Responses	
	Number	Percent
a. worked as a nurse aide	34	51.5
b. enrolled as a student in a professional nurse school	4	6.1
c. worked in a physician's office	4	6.1
d. took care of members of your family	35	53.0
e. took care of friends	21	31.8
f. other	10	15.2

\* the number of responses was not limited

The eighth question was "Which of the following describes what nursing means to you?" Four choices were listed with provision for an additional comment. Thirty-three or 50 percent of the practical nurse students indicated that nursing to them meant a career which will provide an income and security. About 67 percent of the students felt that nursing meant an opportunity to work with people and almost 26 percent said that nursing was an opportunity to belong to a group of health workers. The response made most frequently was that practical nursing afforded an opportunity to contribute to the care of the sick.

The following statements, quoted verbatim with no attempt at editing, are representative of the other comments given by the participants as to what nursing means to them.

an opportunity to know & understand more about  
the care of the sick



A very gratifying profession

Enjoyment to myself to be able to help other people.

An opportunity to serve my country and my God.

an opportunity to meet more people and make more friends.

An opportunity to learn about how to care for sick so I may raise a healthy family & be able to take care of them when they do get sick. Also my friends & relatives.

I receive great satisfaction from the work I am doing and find no educational stopping point if I wish to specialize. This is very wonderful for a woman who has reached middle age.

an opportunity to advance by education and be of service to others

An answer to a live-long ambition of becoming a nurse One of the most important happenings of my life.

Just being able to lend some assistance-regardless how small-to help my fellow man in some way-A faint smile or eyes lighting up-thrills me.

It's a way of getting a broader out look on life and makes a person bigger, stronger and more understanding of others and their problems.

To increase my knowledge in a field I have always been interested in.

Table XII gives the distribution and percent of the responses as to what nursing means to the practical nurse students participating in this study.

TABLE XII

DISTRIBUTION AND PERCENT OF THE RESPONSES AS TO WHAT NURSING MEANS TO 66 PARTICIPANTS IN SEVEN IDAHO PRACTICAL NURSE PROGRAMS\*

What Nursing Means to the Practical Nurse Student	Distribution of Responses	
	Number	Percent
a. a career which will provide an income and security	33	50.0
b. an opportunity to work with people	40	66.7
c. an opportunity to belong to a group of health workers	17	25.8
d. an opportunity to contribute to the care of the sick	59	89.4
e. other	18	27.3

\* the number of responses was not limited

The final question was "What information would have been of help to you in deciding to enter a practical nurse program?" There were ten suggested responses with space for specifying other information.

The highest response indicated that students would have liked to know more about the types of hospital experience included. Thirty-three students or 50 percent responded to this item. Twenty-four students or 36.4 percent indicated that the information concerning the length of the program was not clear and 34.8 percent checked the cost of tuition as not being completely understood.

The items receiving the least response were: length of vacation time and days off. Each of these two items were indicated by five students or 7.6 percent of the participating students checking each item.

Three other students made comments relative to the information given about the practical nurse program which are quoted verbatim without any effort at editing them.

Was the hospital a Credited one.

The course was set and what ever it required I took it.

I didn't understand the days off and my school hours being on days off if a week day. however that hasn't been too bad unless my work at home begins to pile up then I feel it would be good to stay at home. However I try to overcome this by getting as much help from my family as possible. This could be better explained-I'm most happy too be here though.

Through correspondence with the instructors of the participating programs, it was found that two had printed brochures which were sent to prospective students and one program sent out printed material secured from the Board of Vocational Education on practical nurse programs in Idaho. The remaining four practical nurse programs, although no printed material was available, gave information to their prospective students, as did the other three, either in individual or group conferences. The instructors of the practical nurse programs stated that special recruitment efforts were not made and usually they received more applications than they could accept into the program.

In view of the very marked shortage of prepared nursing personnel throughout the state, it was surprising to elicit such comments from the instructors. The very few professional schools in the state can not begin to provide an adequate number of nurses to meet the health needs of Idaho. The paucity of nursing personnel in Idaho has been



born out in several studies, the most recent of which was done by the Western Council on Higher Education for Nursing in 1959. Idaho falls far below even a minimum recommended standard of the number of nurses per 100,000 population.(13)

Table XIII shows the distribution of the responses of the practical nurse students participating in the study as to the types of information they felt was not clearly understood or would have been of help to them in deciding to enter a practical nurse program.

TABLE XIII

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES AS TO INFORMATION THAT WAS NOT CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD OR WOULD HAVE BEEN OF HELP TO 66 STUDENTS IN SEVEN IDAHO PRACTICAL NURSE SCHOOLS IN DECIDING TO ENTER A PRACTICAL NURSE PROGRAM\*

Items of Information	Distribution of Responses	
	Number	Percent
a. length of program	24	36.4
b. cost of tuition	23	34.8
c. cost of uniforms and books	20	30.3
d. time spent in the classroom	13	19.7
e. time spent in the hospital	14	21.2
f. types of hospital experience	33	50.0
g. length of vacation	5	7.6
h. days off	5	7.6
i. time allowed for illness	15	22.7
j. wages received during the clinical training period	16	24.2
k. other	3	4.5

\* the number of responses was not limited

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary of the Study

This study was made to obtain information from Idaho practical nurse students to determine why they had selected the field of practical nursing and what factors influenced their choice. It was further proposed to determine: the size of the communities in which the participants reside, the age of the participants, and if the participants believed they received satisfactory information concerning practical nursing before they were admitted to the program.

A questionnaire was devised to ascertain the desired information. After being reviewed by professional nurses familiar with the scope of practical nursing, the questionnaire underwent several revisions. The questionnaire was then administered to a group of practical nurse students who were not part of the selected population, to test the clarity of items. Revisions were again made as necessary. The directors of the Idaho practical nurse programs were approached by mail, the nature of the study was described, and a request was made for the participation of the students enrolled in the respective practical nurse programs. This was accompanied by a covering letter from the thesis adviser, Miss Lucile Gregerson. A schedule of appointments was set up to include the seven programs with which arrangements could be made for administration of the questionnaire between August 15 and 26, 1960. The questionnaire was then administered to sixty-

six practical nurse students enrolled in seven Idaho practical nurse programs.

The information obtained from the survey was supplemented by a historical review and a few related studies.

The findings of the data reveal:

1. Fifty-six percent of the sixty-six participating Idaho practical nurse students live in towns with 100 to 10,000 population and that 48.5 percent are residents of the town in which the practical nurse program is situated.
2. Thirty-three or 50 percent of the participants in the Idaho practical nurse programs are 35 years of age or under and 50 percent are over 35 years of age with the average age being 34 years.
3. Forty-one percent of the participating students had completed high school before entering a practical nurse school and about 11 percent indicated that they had had one or more years of college.
4. Thirty-nine or 59.1 percent of the sixty-six students indicated that they had been interested in a practical nurse career for less than three years.
5. About 77 percent of the participants indicated that they chose a career in practical nursing because they enjoyed working with people and 68.2 percent indicated that they had always wanted to be a nurse.
6. The area of previous nursing experience indicated most frequently was taking care of members of the family when they were sick. Almost 52 percent indicated that they had worked as an aide, six percent had attended a professional nurse school, six percent had



worked in a doctor's office and only 12 percent indicated that they had not had any previous nursing experience.

7. About 89 percent of the participants indicated that, to them, nursing meant an opportunity to contribute to the care of the sick. About 67 percent indicated that nursing meant an opportunity to work with people and 50 percent of the participants indicated that a career which will provide an income and security described what nursing meant to them.

8. Responses to the question regarding the pre-entrance information indicated that the participants had not received adequate information regarding practical nursing.

### Conclusions

The findings of this study have led to the following conclusions:

1. The chief reasons for choosing practical nursing as a career as expressed by the participants were: a) an opportunity to work with people; b) to provide themselves with a future income and security; c) a long standing desire to be a nurse; and d) an opportunity to contribute to the care of the sick.

2. The major factor influencing the participants choice of practical nursing as a career was their previous nursing experience.

3. The findings of this study would lead to the conclusion that practical nurse students attend programs located in their place of residence or within easy commuting distance. The location of the program may bear a relationship to the number of recruits.

4. Recruitment materials geared toward practical nursing usually infer that the programs are designed for students 35 years or more in age. The findings of this study, limited though they be, reveal that as many students who are in the 18-35 age bracket enroll as those beyond 35 years of age.

5. The information given to the participants concerning the practical nurse programs was not given in enough detail or was not made clear enough to them in advance of entrance into a practical nurse program.

6. Many areas of mass communication are not being utilized to the optimum in promoting practical nursing as a career.

7. Although this study was not done for purposes of investigating the cost of practical nurse education, the size of enrollment in the participating schools leads to the conclusion that all of the programs are costly.

8. This study was not designed to review nursing needs and resources but certain information received during the study lead to the conclusion that there is inconsistency between the needs as revealed by other studies and the attempts to fulfill those needs. To illustrate: instructors in practical nurse programs indicated that more applications were being submitted than could be considered. It is difficult to reconcile this with the paucity of nursing services throughout the state. It might be concluded that educational ventures are being attempted in situations not large enough to justify programs.

### Recommendations for Further Studies

The following recommendations are made, based upon the findings in this study:

1. A follow-up study of the graduates of the Idaho practical nurse programs might be a useful means of determining if those who complete the programs actually continue functioning in the field of nursing.
2. A cost study might indicate the need for developing a different pattern for preparing practical nurses in Idaho. This recommendation is made in view of the fact that there were only 66 students enrolled in seven schools, with one school having as few as six students.
3. A study of successful recruitment devices should prove to be immeasurable value to the professional nursing schools as well as the practical nurse programs.



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# APPENDIX A

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Your age: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Check if you are: Single        Married        Widowed        Divorced        Separated         
 Do you have children?        How old are they? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What is your address? (town) \_\_\_\_\_ (state) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Was it necessary for you to change your residence in order to enter  
 a Practical Nurse Program? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Circle the highest year you reached in school:  
           1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8            1 2 3 4            1 2 3 4  
           elementary school        high school        college  
 If you had any other education, specify the type: \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
 This questionnaire is being administered to the students in the  
 Practical Nurse Programs in Idaho. There are no right answers and  
 no wrong answers. Please mark an   X   opposite the answer which  
 indicates your answer. Mark more than one answer if appropriate.  
 The responses will be anonymous. Feel free to add any additional  
 comments if you wish. Your cooperation will be of value to all  
 the programs of practical nursing in Idaho and to the future prac-  
 tical nurse students.

1. What is the population of your home town or city?  
    a. less than 100 a. \_\_\_\_\_  
    b. 100 to 1,000 b. \_\_\_\_\_  
    c. 1,000 to 10,000 c. \_\_\_\_\_  
    d. over 10,000 d. \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. How long have you been interested in entering a  
    practical nursing program?  
    a. less than one year a. \_\_\_\_\_  
    b. one to two years b. \_\_\_\_\_  
    c. two to four years c. \_\_\_\_\_  
    d. over four years d. \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. With whom did you discuss your interest in practical  
    nursing?  
    a. relatives a. \_\_\_\_\_  
    b. friends b. \_\_\_\_\_  
    c. a practical nurse c. \_\_\_\_\_  
    d. a registered nurse d. \_\_\_\_\_  
    e. your family doctor e. \_\_\_\_\_  
    f. former school teachers f. \_\_\_\_\_  
    g. clergyman g. \_\_\_\_\_  
    h. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ h. \_\_\_\_\_

4. From whom did you gain information about a career in practical nursing?

- a. relatives
- b. friends
- c. a practical nurse
- d. a registered nurse
- e. your family doctor
- f. former school teachers
- g. practical nurse instructor
- h. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
b. \_\_\_\_\_  
c. \_\_\_\_\_  
d. \_\_\_\_\_  
e. \_\_\_\_\_  
f. \_\_\_\_\_  
g. \_\_\_\_\_  
h. \_\_\_\_\_

5. From what sources did you gain information about a career in practical nursing?

- a. radio
- b. television
- c. newspapers
- d. high school career day
- e. magazine articles
- f. posters
- g. books
- h. movies
- i. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
b. \_\_\_\_\_  
c. \_\_\_\_\_  
d. \_\_\_\_\_  
e. \_\_\_\_\_  
f. \_\_\_\_\_  
g. \_\_\_\_\_  
h. \_\_\_\_\_  
i. \_\_\_\_\_

6. What was your reason for choosing a career in practical nursing?

- a. always wanted to be a nurse
- b. enjoy working with people
- c. have friends and relatives who are nurses
- d. wish to enter a service occupation
- e. job opportunities are better than in other occupations
- f. practical nursing required less time and money than college or a professional nursing school
- g. want a future income and security
- h. have worked as an aide and became interested in improving myself
- i. live closer to a practical nurse school than to a professional nurse school
- j. unable to meet pre-entrance requirements for a professional nurse school
- k. have passed the age limits for entrance to a professional nurse school
- l. receive wages during the clinical training period of the practical nurse program
- m. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
b. \_\_\_\_\_  
c. \_\_\_\_\_  
d. \_\_\_\_\_  
e. \_\_\_\_\_  
f. \_\_\_\_\_  
g. \_\_\_\_\_  
h. \_\_\_\_\_  
i. \_\_\_\_\_  
j. \_\_\_\_\_  
k. \_\_\_\_\_  
l. \_\_\_\_\_  
m. \_\_\_\_\_

7. What previous experience have you had as a nurse?
- a. worked as a nurse aide a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. enrolled as a student in a professional nurse school b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. worked in a physician's office c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. took care of members of your family d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. took care of friends e. \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ f. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Which of the following describes what nursing means to you?
- a. a career which will provide an income and security a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. an opportunity to work with people b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. an opportunity to belong to a group of health workers c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. an opportunity to contribute to the care of the sick d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ e. \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
9. What information would have been of help to you in deciding to enter a practical nurse program?
- a. length of program a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. cost of tuition b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. cost of uniforms and books c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. time spent in the classroom d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. time spent in the hospital e. \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. types of hospital experience f. \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. length of vacation g. \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. days off h. \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. time allowed for illness i. \_\_\_\_\_
  - j. wages received during the clinical training period j. \_\_\_\_\_
  - k. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ k. \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for participating in this study  
N. Marie Smith



## APPENDIX B

Dear Director:

As a graduate student enrolled at the University of Oregon School of Nursing, I am preparing a thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Science degree. The thesis is concerned with the reasons for choosing a career in practical nursing. The data are to be obtained by means of a simple questionnaire which can be completed in about 30 minutes. All practical nursing programs in Idaho are being approached to participate in this study. No program will be identified in the report of the study. It is hoped that the information from the study will prove useful to recruitment committees and to the Idaho practical nursing programs. A copy of the thesis will be placed in the library of the University of Oregon Medical School and will be available for study if you desire.

May I visit your school and administer the questionnaire to your students at a mutually agreed upon time? A post-card is enclosed to facilitate your reply.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

M. Marie Smith

## APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON SCHOOL OF NURSING  
3181 S. W. Sam Jackson Park Road  
Portland 1, Oregon

Dear Director:

Enclosed you will find a communication from M. Marie Smith, who is undertaking, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Science degree, a study of the reasons for choosing a career in practical nursing.

Your school or program is being invited to participate in this study which is being conducted on a state-wide basis. It will involve arranging with Miss Smith a mutually satisfactory time and place for administering a simple questionnaire to your students. We believe the study will reveal data pertinent to the recruitment of students.

We hope your school will be able to participate in this study. Miss Smith and I wish to express our appreciation for your consideration of this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Lucile Gregerson  
Associate Professor  
Teaching and Supervision Programs

LG:lh

Enclosure

## APPENDIX D

## SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS

Program	Day	Date	Time
A	Thursday	August 18, 1960	1:00 p.m.
B	Friday	August 19, 1960	1:30 p.m.
C	Tuesday	August 23, 1960	1:00 p.m.
D	Tuesday	August 23, 1960	2:00 p.m.
E	Wednesday	August 24, 1960	1:30 p.m.
F	Thursday	August 25, 1960	2:00 p.m.
G	Thursday	August 25, 1960	3:00 p.m.



Typed By  
Frances Schmiedeskamp