

Employment Trends and Satisfactions  
of  
1969 - 1970 Graduates of an Associate  
Degree Nursing Program

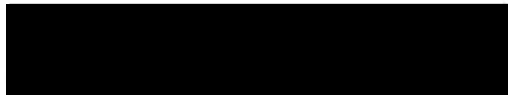
by  
Ann Vetsch, B. S.

A Thesis


Presented to  
The University of Oregon School of Nursing  
and the Graduate Council  
of the University of Oregon Medical School  
in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science

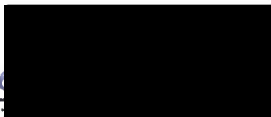
June 9, 1972


APPROVED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
May Rawlinson, PhD., Assistant Professor Nursing  
Thesis Advisor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lucille Gregerson, M.Ed., Associate Professor of Nursing  
First Reader

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Naomi Ballard, M.A., Instructor, Second Reader

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ruth Wells, M.S., Associate Professor, Third Reader

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John M. Brookhart, PhD., Chairman, Graduate Council

This study was supported by a traineeship from the United States Public Health Service Grant Number 2 A11 NU 00035 - 14

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My sincere appreciation is expressed to May Rawlinson and Lucile Gregerson. I am grateful to May Rawlinson, my thesis advisor, for her encouragement and assistance with this project and for her guidance and interest throughout my graduate study. To Lucile Gregerson I am deeply indebted for her critical and supportive guidance during the preparation of this work.

I also wish to thank Naomi Ballard and Ruth Weins, who gave helpful criticism and support throughout this study.

Grateful acknowledgment is also expressed to the librarians at the University of Oregon Medical School for their assistance during the research phase of this study. My sincere thanks are extended to the graduates of the associate degree nursing program, whose interest and cooperation made this study possible. Appreciation is also extended to the United States Government for the grants which supported this study.

Finally, I am grateful to the many individuals who graciously extended courtesies and assistance during the implementation of this study.

a.s.v.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
I	INTRODUCTION	1
	Background of Problem	1
	Statement of Problem	3
	Statement of Purpose	3
	Justification	4
	Limitations	6
	Source of Primary Data	6
	Methodology	8
	Definition of Terms	9
	Presentation of Study	12
II	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	13
	Summary	22
III	REPORT OF STUDY	23
	Design of Study	23
	Personal Data	25
	Experiential Data	29
	Employment in Nursing	35
	Opinions About Nursing	48
	Satisfactions as Related to Employment	50
IV	SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	53
	Summary	53
	Findings	54
	Conclusions	56
	Recommendations for Further Study	57
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	59
	APPENDICES	
	Appendix A    Questionnaire	64
	Index of Satisfaction	68
	Appendix B    Correspondence	71

	<u>PAGE</u>
Appendix C Summary of Data	73
Expressed Opinions by the 1969 Graduates About Job Functions and Responsibilities in Relation to Nursing Program Preparation	74
Expressed Opinions by the 1970 Graduates About Job Functions and Responsibilities in Relation to Nursing Program Preparation	75
Expressed Opinions of Participants of What Goals Have Been Satisfied by Their Nursing Education	76
Expressed Opinions of Participants of What They Like Most About Nursing	77
Expressed Opinions of Participants of What They Like Least About Nursing	79
Expressed Opinions About Recommending Nursing to Others	80
Expressed Opinions About Nursing Plans for the Future	81
Questionnaire 1969	83
Index of Satisfaction 1969	87
Questionnaire 1970	89
Index of Satisfaction 1970	93

## LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>	
1	Number Graduated in Two Classes, Number of Questionnaires Mailed, Number and Percent Return	24
2	Age and Marital Status of 59 Associate Degree Nursing Graduates	27
3	Reasons for Choosing the Associate Degree Nursing Program	29
4	Length of Nursing Experience Since Graduation	30
5	Fields of Nursing Selected as First Employment Experience of Participants	31
6	Hospital Nursing Service Selected by Participants as First Employment Choice	32
7	Factors Determining First Employment Choice of Participants	33
8	Hospital Shifts Regularly Worked by Participants	34
9	Distribution of 59 Associate Degree Nurses According to Year of Graduation and First Employment Position	35
10	Nursing Experience Before Enrollment in a School of Nursing	36
11	Employment During Enrollment in a School of Nursing	37
12	Current Position Held by Participants	38
13	Comparison of First Employment Positions with Present Employment Choice	39
14	Role in Team Nursing Held by Twenty-four Associate Degree Nurses	41

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
15	Occasions of Team Leadership Reported by Ten Associate Degree Nurses	42
16	Preparation Reported by Fifty-nine Associate Degree Nurses for the Role of Team Members and Team Leaders	43
17	Occasions when Twenty-eight Associate Degree Nurses Were in Charge of Unit	44
18	Responses of Fifty-nine Associate Degree Nurses Regarding Adequacy of Present Job Functions and Responsibilities	46
19	Reasons Given by Twenty-five Associate Degree Nurses for Employment Change	47
20	Responses of Fifty-nine Associate Degree Nurses Regarding Goals Satisfied by Their Nursing Education	48



## LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>		<u>Page</u>
1	Comparison of Participants by Age at Time of Study	26
2	Comparison of Satisfactions Relating to Employment	52

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of Problem

The need for nurses had increased steadily through the years and the reported discrepancy between the supply of nurses and the need for nursing services has become increasingly apparent. This has been reflected in what has been termed a "shortage" of nurses, despite an unprecedented high of 640,000 registered nurses, including part-time practitioners, employed in 1967. (3) There are many reasons why the demand for nursing services has boomed: an expanding population, advances in medical technology and public awareness and demand for the benefits of improved medical science are only a few.

The numerical goals that were projected by the Division of Nursing of the Bureau of Health Manpower to meet the nation's anticipated needs was 850,000 nurses by 1970 and 1,000,000 by 1975. (36) However, of more serious concern both to nurses and the people they serve is the quality of nursing service rendered today. There are now more employed nurses than ever before, yet the quality of nursing care continues to deteriorate. (5) It has also become apparent that quality of performance will not be improved by merely in-

creasing the number of nursing personnel.

There has been a growing realization that the functions and activities of nurses are changing and becoming more extensive and complex. Therefore, the associate degree nursing program was initiated to equip graduates for those functions which lie in the technical area of nursing, those functions commonly associated with the registered nurse. (21)

In 1952, the undertaking of a Cooperative Research Project in Junior and Community College Education for Nursing at Teachers College, Columbia University gave rise to the first Associate Degree Nursing Program. (17) The Associate Degree Nursing Program is designed within the framework of technical education, to prepare the semi-professional or technical nurse. The program is a two-year, college-level curriculum in which general education and nursing education are combined. The associate degree graduates are prepared to perform many of the nursing functions associated with the registered nurse.

The satisfactory performance of the associate degree nurse has already been recognized. (21) It is, however, the opinion of many that for these graduates to take their place in the nursing profession and to make a maximum contribution toward meeting the needs of people for nursing care, they should be utilized in harmony with their educational preparation.

### Statement of Problem

The associate degree nursing program prepares a specific type of worker, the technical worker in nursing, for functions commonly associated with the registered nurse.

The associate degree program in nursing emphasizes direct care to patients. It excludes, by intent, any preparation for managerial or administrative tasks. (23) Thus the graduates of these programs are prepared to give direct care effectively and assumed to be challenged by this kind of assignment, and to receive job satisfaction from so doing. (23)

Is the associate degree nurse performing the functions for which she has been prepared? If so, does she find bedside care or patient care challenging and satisfying? If not, does she then assume managerial or administrative functions? Is this then satisfying to her?

### Statement of Purpose

The nurses who are prepared in associate degree nursing programs are qualified, by virtue of their academic preparation for the technical, semi-professional, level of nursing practice. If these workers are to take their place in the profession of nursing and make their maximum contribution toward meeting the goals of society in their stated needs for nursing care, they should be utilized in accord with their educational preparation.

In view of the anticipated continued increase in the

number of associate degree nursing graduates and the urgent need to use nurses effectively, it would seem essential that information be obtained to ascertain whether the skills of these nursing technicians are being used properly.

The purpose of this study is to:

1. determine the position choices of the 1969 and 1970 graduates of an associate degree nursing program.
2. discover the relationship between levels of practice and/or performance of nursing functions with achievement of satisfaction.
3. detect what the graduates desire in terms of nursing functions. Do they prefer those associated with management and administration, rather than the technical functions for which they have been prepared?

#### Justification

It has been said that an efficient and economic worker is one who works at top capacity much of the time. An individual working at a lesser capacity is likely to be ineffective, dissatisfied and bored, and to leave the position in a short time. Conversely an individual expected to perform tasks for which he is not prepared will often perform inadequately, make mistakes, experience frustrations and leave the position in a short time or perform so poorly that he will be terminated. (8)

Levine states, "recent research has turned up some evidence that a numerical ratio, such as hours of care per patient, does not provide a satisfactory standard for a hospital to use as a guide for staffing and utilization". (13)

The Surgeon General's Consultant Group on Nursing also main-

tains there is a wide spread inefficient use of nursing personnel and points out a "serious wastage of nursing skills". (36) The number of nurses employed cannot be used as a measure of the quality of care provided.

The graduates from the Associate Degree Nursing Program are qualified by virtue of their program preparation for the technical level of nursing practice. Those nurses should be utilized in accordance with their educational preparation if they are to make their maximum contribution toward meeting the needs of society for nursing care.

It seems only advantageous that with the increasing growth of the numbers of the associate degree nurses and the urgent need to use nursing personnel effectively, that information be obtained to ascertain the levels of practice in which they are participating.

This information should be helpful to:

1. Nurse educators in evaluating their programs as well as screening applicants admitted.
2. Directors of nursing services and associate degree nurses to arrive at a working relationship that will mutually meet the goals and expectations for practice of nursing.
3. Students enrolled in an associate degree nursing program to understand more fully the philosophy and purpose of their program.

### Limitations

This study was limited to data obtained by questionnaires and satisfaction index sent to the graduating classes of 1969 and 1970, of an associate degree nursing program. The study was further limited to those graduates whose current addresses were available in the state board of nursing files and those who held current licensure.

### Source of Primary Data

The data collecting device chosen for this study was a mailed questionnaire and satisfaction index. The design for the questionnaire was based on a follow up - questionnaires sent to the graduates of a selected community college; (34) one used by Alice Welk McDonald in her study on post-graduation activities of baccalaureate degree nurses from the University of Oregon School of Nursing; (15) and the one used by Betty Forest in her study of utilization of associate nursing graduates in general hospitals. (5)

The original questionnaire designed for this study was revised after it was administered to a group of fifteen employed registered nurses. Although the population did not meet the criteria of "recent graduate", the members held an associate degree in nursing and all had experienced a first employment choice as a registered nurse.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Items in the first part related to personal characteristics, nursing



experience and first employment status of the graduates. These questions were included to obtain background information for descriptive purposes.

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of a check list seeking information about current employment and levels of functioning.

The satisfaction index which completed the questionnaire was designed to elicit degree of satisfaction in relation to present employment, or if not presently employed, the last position held as a nurse. (See Appendix A, Questionnaire and Index of Satisfaction)

A rating scale of one through six was provided for the respondents to rate their degree of satisfaction to the questions regarding the following areas:

1. employment
2. nursing education in preparation for assuming the  
role
3. execution of nursing skills
4. fund of nursing knowledge
5. ability to make decisions on the job
6. financial remuneration

When interpreting these data, the total degrees of satisfaction for each question were added separately, and the mean calculated. The calculated mean was placed on a chart so that comparisons of satisfactions could be obtained from each class of participants. In order that comparisons from



the baccalaureate nursing graduates and the associate degree nursing graduates could be ascertained the results of Alice Welk McDonald's index of satisfaction were also included.

Secondary data were derived from a review of the literature.

### Methodology

This study was undertaken for the purposes previously described. Data were obtained by a mailed questionnaire and satisfaction index directed toward and sent to the 1969 and 1970 graduating classes from a selected community college. Permission to conduct the study was granted by the Director of the School of Nursing.

The design of the tool was based on the questionnaire used in previous studies. (15) The final format of the questionnaire was developed after pretesting with a number of graduates (n - 15) of associate degree nursing programs employed in an accredited general hospital.(Appendix A)

The questionnaire and satisfaction index was mailed to the entire population of the classes of 1969 and 1970. The addresses were obtained from the State Board of Nursing files. An explanatory cover letter to accompany the questionnaire and index was written and endorsed by the thesis advisor. (Appendix B) The cover letter with endorsement, questionnaire, satisfaction index and self-addressed stamped envelope were sent to 72 graduates. A code was devised to assure

confidentiality of all responses. One month from the time of mailing was allowed for the returns.

The responses to the structured questions on the questionnaires were assigned a numerical code, then transcribed to tabulation sheets and tabulated individually. Frequency counts and percentages were computed for each item. A content analysis was made of the responses to the open-ended questions, and codes were developed for categorizing the responses.

The data were examined and separated into component parts to describe the findings arithmetically, graphically, and in written chronology. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations made for further study.

#### Definition of Terms

For purposes of this study the terms direct nursing care, functions and nursing technician are used within the frame of reference herein described:

A. Direct Nursing Care:

Those activities performed by the nurse in the presence of or at the bedside of the patient. (17)

B. Functions: professional versus technical nurse

The functions of the professional nurse have been characterized by McManus as: [1] identification of the nursing problem; [2] decision upon a course of nursing action; [3] development, with the assistance of others on the nursing

health teams, of a plan of nursing care...including therapeutic, preventive and rehabilitative measures, and for that treatment for which the physician has delegated responsibility; [4] direction of the nursing plan and performance of those aspects that require her skill and judgment; and [5] continuous evaluation and revision of the plan. (27) Lambertson states that these are also the functions of the nursing team leader. Preparation for these functions is obtained in a professional program leading to the baccalaureate degree. (10)

In contrast to these broad functions, the functions of the nursing technician have been identified by Montag as [1] assisting in the planning of nursing care for patient; [2] giving general nursing care with supervision; and [3] assisting in the evaluation of the nursing care given. (24) These also can be said to be functions of a nursing team member. Preparation for these functions is obtained in a technical program leading to the associate degree.

C. Nursing Technician:

One who assists and works in support of the professional nurse in the planning, the implementation, and the evaluation of nursing care. Under the general direction of the professional nurse, and often as a member of the nursing team, the nursing technician carries out techniques that are essential in the direct nursing care of patients. The performance of these tasks requires a theoretical knowledge of

applied scientific principles and nursing skill in the application of this knowledge to the immediate nursing care needs of patients. The nursing technician is prepared for these semi-professional activities in an associate degree nursing program. (13, 28)

D. Roles:

1. Role of the Nurse-manager: The job of the nurse-manager includes the responsibility for assigning the directing the work of auxiliary workers and may also include supervision of staff nurses. She may be a team leader giving patient care. This classification includes individuals who perform the functions of the head nurse. (24)

2. Role of the Functional nurse: The functional nurse's job primarily involves giving medications or treatments. She may or may not give some "direct patient care". The most extreme form of the functional nurse is the staff nurse with a single function, such as giving intravenous injections in all departments of the hospital. Like the bedside nurse, she is not responsible for assigning or directing the work of auxiliary personnel. She may be a member of a team if the conception of team nursing used includes one nurse's giving all the medications or treatments. (24)

3. Role of the Bedside nurse: The job of the nurse primarily involves giving "direct patient care" to a group of patients. This is usually described in nursing practice as giving total nursing care with the exception of medica-

tions or treatments, or both. In case assignment, which is a form of bedside nurse assignment, the staff nurse gives total nursing care for her patients, including medications and treatments. The responsibility for the assignment and direction of practical nurses and aides who may be working with her rests with the head nurse or team leader. When team nursing is being used, the bedside nurse is a member of the nursing team. (24)

#### Presentation of Study

This study is presented in Four Chapters. Chapter I is concerned with the preliminary procedures that were necessary to identify the problem, state the purpose and collect the data. Chapter II presents a review of literature and related studies. Chapter III is concerned with the instruments used in collecting the data for the study, a description of the procedures followed and the interpretation of the findings. Chapter IV provides a summary of the study with conclusions and recommendations for further study.

## CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The community college is said to be one of the fastest-growing collegiate enterprises in America today. Its major purpose is to meet the community's needs for essential services. It is within this type of institution that the associate degree program in nursing was developed. (25) The program represented a change in the way nurses are prepared; the education of nurses became a new responsibility for junior-community colleges.

The beginning of the associate degree nursing program was no "historical accident". It was the first program for preparing personnel for nursing to have been initiated under the auspices of a research grant. The Division of Nursing Education at Teachers College was the recipient of \$110,000 grant from Mrs. Mary Nelson Rockefeller. (1, 17, 27)

The purpose of the research was based on Montag's proposals, the education of the semi-professional, or technical, worker in nursing within the framework of technical education, (18) under a program so designed that individuals prepared in it could carry out some of those functions commonly associated with the registered nurse. The product of the program, the "bedside" or "patient-side" nurse, would

therefore be qualified to give direct nursing care to patients. (21)

Early in 1952 plans were undertaken for the project that was to be known as the Cooperative Research Project in Junior and Community College Education in Nursing. (17) The project program consisted of eight pilot schools organized under like philosophy and having certain common characteristics. (26) It lasted for a period of five years, 1952 to 1957. At the close of the project Montag said that

Among the things that we have learned is that it is possible for a college to operate a program of this type, the program is attractive to students, and it does produce a nurse who will become competent in a very short time. I think any educator in the country will tell you that educational programs do not prepare experts; they prepare people to become experts. We believe that the report of our project will show that the graduates of junior college programs participating in the project have the ability to become expert bedside nurses. (18)

The report of this project included the following conclusions

1. Nurses able to carry on the functions commonly associated with the registered nurse can be prepared in the new type nursing program conducted by the junior community college.
2. When nursing service understands and accepts the concept of a graduate as a beginning practitioner and not a finished product, the graduate of the junior community college nursing program is oriented more realistically and absorbed more quickly into the nursing service. (17)

Since that time there has been rapid expansion and increase in the numbers of associate degree nursing programs located primarily in junior or community colleges or in the lower division of senior colleges. At present there are over 400 programs and more being developed. (3) Increasingly large numbers are graduating from associate degree nursing programs. In 1968, fifteen percent of all the graduates from schools of nursing came from these programs. (3)

It appears that the inclusion of a nursing program within the community college is to meet the needs of the community for essential nursing service and the preparation of the student as a citizen and a worker in a specific field. (17) Associate degree nursing programs continue to attract students with widely differing characteristics. Recent high school graduates form the bulk of the students. Between fifteen and twenty percent of the students are married; twenty-one percent have children; five percent of the students are male in contrast to one and a half percent in all other kinds of nursing programs. (23) The speculation that a nursing program of this type in the community college would tap a new reservoir of students seems to be supported. Studies have shown that choice of a specific school of nursing depends largely upon: [1] proximity of the school to the student's residence; [2] contact by the student with graduates of the school; [3] cost; [4] length of the program. (2, 32) Emerson's study showed that seventy-three percent



of the respondents indicated that the program length influenced their choice. (4) The students studied by Newman indicated "high tuition" as the greatest influencing factor for their decision not to enter one of the other nursing programs. (3) The pilot studies reported by Mildred Montag also indicated low cost as an added attraction. (18)

The associate degree program in nursing when viewed from the vantage point of history may well have made its greatest contribution by serving as a catalytic agent to the nursing profession in its identification of levels of preparation for nursing practice. It would appear that it has brought to the forefront the wide range of nursing functions that exist within nursing. At one end of the continuum are those complex functions that require a strong theoretical base. A high degree of skill and judgment based upon sound and varied knowledge is necessary for the performance of these functions and require a professional level of education. (19) Located at the other end of the continuum are the technical or semi-professional functions. These functions, too, require a theoretical base, but the base is narrower since the functions are carried out in essentially structured or routine situations. Judgment is also required for performance, but within prescribed limits and under the supervision of individuals with professional preparation. The performance of these functions requires preparation that is essentially technical in nature. (23) Somewhere along

the continuum there are certain functions that come together in their operations. (22) There is acceptance that nursing functions can be considered as being on a continuum. The next step is to acknowledge that these functions can be differentiated sufficiently to make possible different programs for the preparation of individuals to perform these functions. (23)

Sister Charles Marie has maintained that it is no longer possible for the whole of nursing to be performed by one person, if this ever was possible. (6) Lambertsen has stated that the "differentiation of functions inherent in the nursing occupation requires different levels of preparation". (10) For different levels of workers in nursing it seems only appropriate that they be utilized according to performance ability so quality nursing care can be enhanced. (7) Since this has been found to be advantageous in other fields it seems only logical that the nursing team be the method of uniting the professional nurse and the nursing technician to maximize their contributions and derive the greatest amount of satisfaction from giving nursing care to patients. (19) The professional nurse is prepared to be the leader of the team, and the nursing technician is qualified to be a member of the team. (10)

There has been much discussion concerning the ability of associate degree nurses to do nursing. Only a few studies have been written concerning the utilization of such gradu-

ates in relation to their preparation. One of the most comprehensive studies of all is the Cooperative Research Project in Junior and Community College Education in Nursing.

(17) This study, as reviewed earlier, illustrates that the associate degree nurses were satisfactorily prepared for practice as registered nurses. The list of nursing behaviors included in the evaluation instrument provided useful information concerning the functions for which those nurses were prepared. The report suggests that a degree of discrepancy existed between the preparation of nurses in the pilot programs and current nursing practice. The data brought this out by stating that some of the pilot program graduates performed managerial or supervisory functions for which they had not been prepared.

A study by Lewis was reported in the American Journal of Nursing, May 1964. Lewis' findings on the associate degree nursing graduates were based on conferences with directors and faculty in associate degree nursing programs, nursing service directors and a few of the graduates themselves. She describes the graduates as being enthusiastic, eager to learn and strong in providing individual patient care as well as in the ability to form satisfying relationships with patients. Most of the associate degree nurses were holding staff nurse positions and therefore performing the functions for which their education had prepared them. (14)

In 1959 Gips reported on An Evaluation of Graduates of

the Associate Degree Program. Her study included the first three classes from Rutgers University. This study demonstrates that the graduates performed satisfactorily in the staff nurse position. The most consistent finding was satisfying relationship with patients. The lack of executive ability was the most frequently mentioned criticism made by supervisors. (8) It would appear that the supervisors' expectations were inconsistent with the objectives of associate degree nursing programs.

Oshin reported in RN on the "Associate Degree Nurse at Work". It was found that the comments concerning bedside nursing preparation were generally adequate. The associate degree nurses stated that the need for supervision was essential. Those who assumed charge positions felt that they lacked the preparation and experience to handle the position adequately. Relations with doctors, emergency room positions, ward management and all other leadership situations were listed by the graduates as functions for which they had not received preparation. (33)

Queens College conducted a three year study on their associate degree nursing graduates. The findings stated that as staff nurses, the graduates performed satisfactorily and met their program objectives. A function for which their program had prepared them, giving direct nursing care to patients was found to be a satisfying experience. The only criticism to be found was with those aspects of their

employment that required them to perform administrative or managerial functions for which they had not receive preparation. (29)

Forty-five associate degree programs studied in 1959 provided the National League for Nursing Research and Studies Service and the National League for Nursing Evaluative Service with data for A Report on the Associate Degree Program. Twenty-one of the twenty-six schools that responded reported that sixty-three percent of their graduates held staff nurse positions; eight percent were in leadership positions such as that of a head nurse, public health nurse, or office nurse; five percent were full-time baccalaureate students. It would appear that the majority of graduates were holding positions on the level for which they were prepared. (25)

Legg's report, A Follow-up Study of Ninety-one Graduates of an Associate Degree Program in Nursing 1959 - 1963 sought answers to: 1. How do you feel about your preparation for the job(s) you have had in nursing? 2. How might your educational program be improved? 3. What are the outstanding features and weaknesses of your program? 4. What positions have you held since graduation? 5. How many have furthered their education? Findings indicated that the graduates found their preparation adequate. Sixty-seven percent had suggestions as to how their educational program might have been improved. The majority of the suggestions were the need for more responsibility and leadership experi-

ence and more practical experience. The outstanding features cited by the graduates concerning their program were length of program, college life with a well rounded education and understanding attitudes of the instructors. The weaknesses were primarily concerned with the lack of practical and leadership experience. Seventy-five percent of the respondents reported initial employment as staff nurses. Twenty-one percent sought to further their education either in nursing or a field other than nursing. (12)

In a recent doctoral study Forest investigated the utilization of graduates of associate degree nursing programs in New York City. Her findings indicate that eighty percent of the graduates employed were in staff nurse positions and that of those ninety percent spend more than half their time in the technical functions of nursing. The majority also performed other functions, including managerial, clerical, cleaning and medical-technical for which their programs did not prepare them. She recommended that continued efforts be made to employ those graduates for the functions their programs prepared them to perform so that they might work at the top level of their ability. (5)

McDonald conducted a study on the employment choice of 1969 and 1970 graduates of the University of Oregon School of Nursing. The study included such questions as why the participants choose this particular field of nursing and what satisfactions they derived from their employment. The

findings of this study indicated that the majority of the graduates sought employment in the hospital for their first work experience and the majority held a position of staff nurse. Need for further experience was the reason most given for making this choice. The respondents were satisfied with themselves as related to their employment as a professional nurse. The only criticism about nursing were the paper work, hours, under-staffing, and structured hospital setting. The criticism concerned with curriculum centered around the areas of clinical practice and basic science foundations. (15)

#### Summary

The development of associate degree programs was the result of research carried out under the Cooperative Research Project in Junior and Community College Education for Nursing. The Associate Degree Nursing Program is a two-year college program located mainly in the community junior college which is designed to prepare the semi-professional or technical nurse. The graduates of the associate degree nursing programs are prepared to function at the bedside, performing some of those functions commonly associated with the registered nurse. The majority of the research studies on associate degree nurses show a relatively high percent being employed as staff nurses which coincides with their academic qualifications.

## CHAPTER III

### REPORT OF STUDY

#### Design of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the position choices of the 1969 and 1970 graduates of an associate degree nursing program, to discover the relationship between levels of practice with achievement of satisfaction and to detect what the graduate desires in terms of nursing functions. It sought to answer the following questions.

1. Is the associate degree graduate functioning in the role of bedside nurse for which she has been prepared?
2. Does the graduate find bedside nursing care challenging and satisfying?
3. Is the associate degree graduate assuming administrative or managerial functions?
4. Is the role of nurse-manager satisfying to the associate degree graduate?

The data collecting tool was a questionnaire which included a satisfaction index. It was mailed on June 26, 1971 to all graduates of the 1969 and 1970 associate degree programs of a selected community college with the following exceptions: [1] those whose addresses were not known, [2] those students who were not licensed. As a result, 32 questionnaires were sent to the class of 1969 and 40 were sent



to the class of 1970. August 1971 was the arbitrarily designated closing date for the returns.

A total of 59 (82 percent) returned completed questionnaires. This represented 90 percent return from the class of 1969 and a 75 percent from the class of 1970.

Each questionnaire was tabulated separately and the appropriate tally made. Unless otherwise indicated all percentages were based on the total number returned from each class, 29 from the class of 1969 and 30 from the class of 1970. The class of 1969 graduated 33 students, of this number one student remained unlicensed. In the class of 1970 43 graduated and of this number two remained unlicensed and one left no forwarding address. Table 1 shows the results of the returned questionnaires.

TABLE 1

Number Graduated in Two Classes, Number of Questionnaires Mailed, Number and Percent Return

Year of Graduation	Number Graduated	Number of Questionnaires Mailed	Number	Percent Return
1969	33	32	29	90
1970	43	40	30	75
Total	76	72	59	82

The first section of this chapter will discuss the results of the study that are concerned with personal data and experimental data. The remainder of the chapter will show

results that are pertinent to employment in nursing and opinions about nursing.

### Personal Data

The main reason for obtaining biographical data was to elicit descriptive information concerning the population under study.

#### Age, Sex and Marital Status

The first item sought the age of the respondents. It was found that the range was 21 to 60 years with 33 years as the mean and 23 years as the mode. A comparison with McDonald's study showed that her participants had a range of 21 to 49 years with a mean of 24.4 years and a mode of 23. This would indicate that the associate degree nurses are older than the baccalaureate nursing graduates. However, the participants were relatively young, more than 50 percent (35) being under 30 years of age. The relative youthfulness of the respondents can probably be accounted for by the fact that all of them had completed their nursing program within a 24 month period preceding the collection of the data. Lande reports in a 1967 national survey of associate degree nursing programs that nearly half of all reported students were less than 20 years old and an addition of 28 percent were 20 and 24 years of age. The remainder were 25 years or older, the highest portion being in their thirties. Seven percent were 40 years or older. (11) Refer to

figure 1 for the age of the participants.

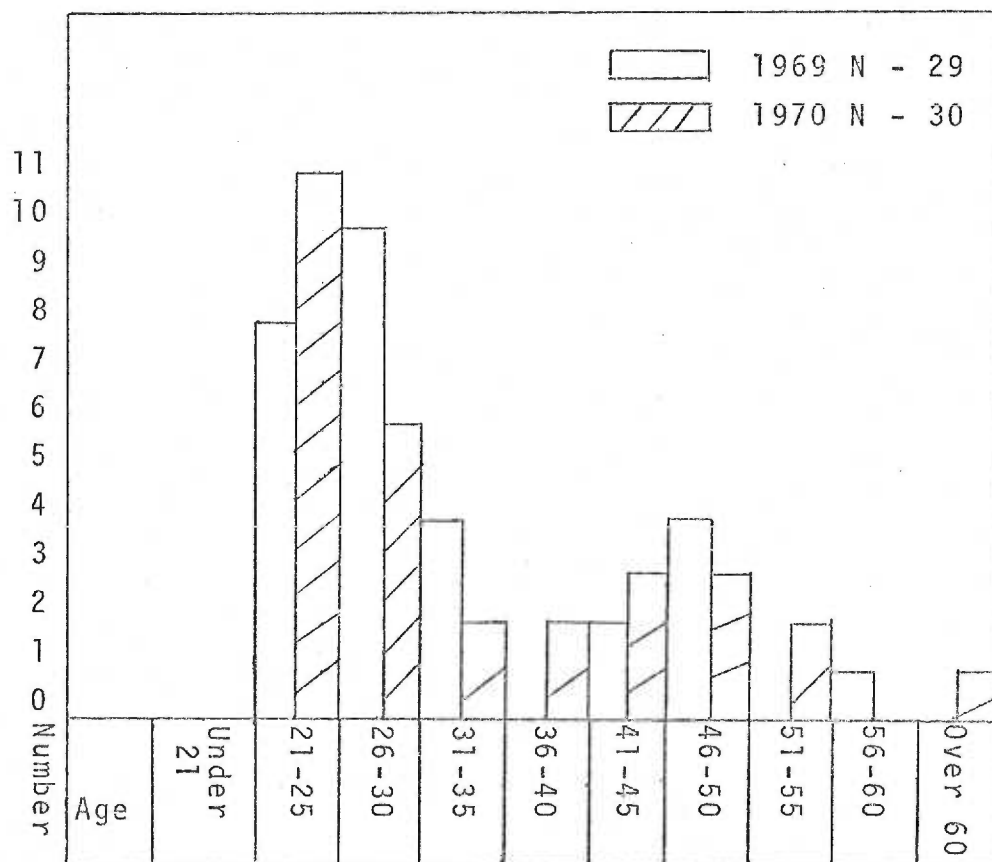


Figure 1. Comparison of Participants by Age at Time of Study

Two (3.4 percent) of the 59 respondents were males. Because of the small number these data cannot be correlated with other studies or national statistics.

Of the 59 respondents 18 (30 percent) were single. Thirty-three (56 percent) were married. This concurs with the national report that nursing is increasingly a field of married women and less of single women, while the proportions of widowed, divorced and separated women remain about the same.

In schools of nursing a 1966 study revealed the single-married percentages as 40.2 to 49.7. (11)

A Report on Associate Degree Nursing Programs in Nursing, published in 1961 by the National League for Nursing stated that while the great majority of students enter these programs directly from high school a substantial number are over 35 years of age. Most of those in the somewhat older age group are married, many have families. Men have been admitted in somewhat larger numbers than has been true of other nursing programs. (25)

TABLE 2

Age and Marital Status of 59

Associate Degree Nursing Graduates

Number of Graduates by Age and Marital Status				
Age	Single	Married	Separated, Divorced or Widowed	Total
Under 21	0	0	0	0
21 - 25	9	10	0	19
26 - 30	7	6	3	16
31 - 35	0	4	2	6
36 - 40	0	1	1	2
41 - 45	1	4	0	5
46 - 50	1	6	0	7
51 - 55	0	1	1	2
56 - 60	0	1	0	1
Over 61	0	0	1	1
Total	18	33	8	59

### Previous College Experience

More than one-half of the respondents had previous college experience. The length of time spent in college ranged from three terms to four years. The majority had spent at least one year in college. Areas of interest ranged from general studies to a masters in education. Four of the graduates stated that they had had one year in pre-nursing.

In order to ascertain what attracts certain individuals to an associate degree nursing program, regardless of previous college experience, the respondents were asked to specify the most important reason for their decision to enroll in an associate degree nursing program. Taking all responses into consideration, finances seemed to be the most important reason for choice of nursing program. This parallels Newman's and Montag's studies. (30, 24)

The chief reasons for choosing the Associate Degree Nursing Program reported by the National League for Nursing were its location in a college, its length and its easy accessibility. (26) Laura Emerson's study showed that 73 percent of the respondents indicated that the length of the program influenced their choice. (4) Other studies have shown that choice of a specific school of nursing depends largely upon: [1] proximity of the school to the students residence; [2] contact by the student with graduates of the school; [3] cost; [4] length of the program. (2, 32)

The findings of this study regarding reasons for

enrolling in an associate degree program are shown in table 3.

TABLE 3

## Reasons for Choosing the Associate Degree Nursing Program

Category of Responses	Number of Responses in category*
Finances	25
Length of Program	11
Professional Improvement	11
Convenience	7
Acceptance of Age	3
Background of Education	3
Advised	1

\*Several respondents listed more than one reason

The following are a sample of verbatim responses.

"It fits well into my personal life".

"I am able to be at home with my family".

"Because of my age it was the most expedient program".

"It is the only way I can get recognition and status. As an L.P.N. this was not so".

#### Experiential Data

This section of the questionnaire was designed to determine time lag between graduation and employment, fields of nursing that attract recent associate degree graduates and factors which determine that choice. (See Questions 7-14 of Questionnaire, Appendix A)

More than three-fourths (23) of the 1969 graduation class entered employment immediately after graduation. Seventeen percent (5) procured employment in approximately one year. Three percent (1) had only been employed for three weeks at the time of data collection. Employment trends were similar for the 1970 graduation class. See table 4 for results.

TABLE 4  
Length of Nursing Experience Since Graduation

Length of Experience	Class of 1969		Class of 1970	
	N	%	N	%
Under 6 mo.	1	3	1	3
6 - 12 mo.	-	-	11	37
13 - 18 mo.	5	17	18	60
19 - 24 mo.	-	-	-	-
25 - 30 mo.	23	79	-	-
Total	29	100	30	100

The respondents in this study were employed in a variety of health agencies. More than one-half chose hospital nursing for first employment. These data corroborate the findings of Lande's study which showed that nearly three-fourths of the group studied were employed in offices or agencies, nursing homes, and as private duty nurses. Some functioned in other health occupation areas or elsewhere. (11) These findings also parallel McDonald's study with the exception that the baccalaureate degree graduates selected a

wider variety of settings in which to work than did the associate degree nurses. This would appear to be reasonable because of their additional preparation. Refer to table 5 for the findings of this study.

TABLE 5  
Fields of Nursing Selected as  
First Employment Experience of Participants

	Class of 1969 (N-29)	Class of 1970 (N-30)
Hospital Nursing	26	27
Public Health Nursing	-	-
Office Nursing	-	-
Field Other Than Nursing	-	-
Other		
Nursing Homes	2	2
Industrial Nursing	1	-
Blood Bank	-	1

Those who chose hospital nursing for their first experience could be found in practically every type of service namely, general medical and surgical, pediatric, obstetric, orthopedic, psychiatric, as well as specialized units as recovery room, emergency room, operating room, and intensive coronary care units.

Medical and surgical nursing combined accounted for the choice of 48 percent of the 1969 class and 53 percent of the 1970 class. Table 6 illustrates similar choices in other



nursing areas between the two classes.

TABLE 6  
Hospital Nursing Services Selected by  
Participants as First Employment Choice

	1969 (N-29)	1970 (N-30)
Medical nursing	5	6
Surgical nursing	9	10
Pediatric nursing	1	4
Obstetric nursing	3	1
Psychiatric nursing	1	2
Orthopedic nursing	4	7
Tuberculosis nursing	0	0
Recovery room	0	1
Emergency room	3	3
Intensive care	1	1
Operating room	0	3
Other		
Post cardiac ward	1	1
Intravenous therapy	2	0
Delivery and labor room	1	0
Float nurse	1	1
Industrial nursing	1	1
Isolation	1	0
Coronary care	1	0
Inhalation therapy	1	0

\* Some respondents indicated more than one area

Personal preference was the reason given most often as the primary factor determining choice of a particular field of nursing. Those motivated by need for experience inferred that the respondents recognized that they were beginning practitioners in nursing service. These factors are shown on table 7.

TABLE 7

## Factors Determining First Employment Choice of Participants

Category of Factor	No. of Responses in Category*
Desire to work specific service	22
Needed experience	14
No choice - assigned to service	8
Previous employment	6
Other responses	
Close to home	3
Availability of shift and staff positions	2 1
Warm reception	1
Pay differential	1
Hours	1
Travel	1
Orientation program	1
Relatives work in that service	1
No answer	3

\*Several respondents listed more than one reason

Consistent with studies by McDonald (15) and others new graduates began their experience in the hospital by working any one of three shifts. One-half worked on the day shift; the other on the evening or night hours of duty. The new graduate probably had experience in working only day shift as a student. Any experience on other shifts was obtained while working as a student assistant. The majority of the respondents were employed full time. Table 8 shows these data.

TABLE 8  
Hospital Shifts Regularly Worked  
by Participants

	1969 (N-29)		1970 (N-30)
Day Shift	15	Day Shift	15
Rotating Shift	-	Rotating Shift	1
Evening Shift	8	Evening Shift	8
Night Shift	6	Night Shift	6
Full Time	22	Full Time	21
Part Time	1	Part Time	2
No Answer	6	No Answer	7

The majority held first level staff nurse positions as initial employment. This follows the objective of the school that the "patient side" nurse is qualified to give direct nursing care to patients. Thirty-six (61 percent) of the 59 respondents were in this category. Twenty-three (39 percent) were performing leadership roles. Data are shown on table 9.

TABLE 9

Distribution of 59 Associate Degree Nurses According to  
Year of Graduation and First Employment Position

First Employment Position	Year of Graduation			
	1969 (N-29)		1970 (N-30)	
	N	%	N	%
Staff Nurse	19	66	17	57
Team Leader	1	3	6	20
Charge Nurse	6	22	6	20
Head Nurse	1	3	-	-
Supervisor	-	-	1	3
Other				
Inhalation Therapy	1	3	-	-
Industrial Nursing	1	3	-	-

#### Employment in Nursing

This section of the questionnaire sought to describe the type of nursing experience the respondents had prior to their college education, during their college years and after graduation. (See Appendix A, Items 15, 16, 17) The questions regarding prior nursing experience and auxiliary work experience during the school years were included to explore the possibility of previous nursing experience influencing position choices. Questions concerning employment change and satisfaction of nursing goals were considered to

discover the relationship between levels of practice with achievement of satisfaction.

In the 1969 class ten had no prior nursing experience whereas 19 did have prior nursing experience ranging from one to eight years with the majority working as aides or licensed practical nurses. Thirteen of the respondents worked during their years as a student nurse; five of them had no prior nursing experience. The 1970 graduates were similar in positions and length of experience. Twelve had no nursing experience prior to enrollment in school; 18 had had experience ranging from 8 months to 15 years. The majority worked as aides or licensed practical nurses. Thirteen of the respondents worked during their years as a student nurse, two of them had no prior nursing experience. Data are shown on tables 10 and 11.

TABLE 10  
Nursing Experience Before Enrollment in a  
School of Nursing

Levels of Nursing Practice	1969 (N-29)	1970 (N-30)
Aide	10	8
LPN	5	6
Other	4	4
None	10	12
Total	29	30

TABLE 11  
Employment During Enrollment in a  
School of Nursing

Levels of Nursing Practice	1969 (N-29)	1970 (N-30)
Aide	10	8
LPN	2	2
Other	1	3
None	16	14
No Answer	0	3
Total	29	30

More than half of the 1969 and 1970 graduates had nursing experience prior to employment. This may have some bearing on their current position choices. Of the 35 graduates who held positions of leadership all but nine had nursing experience prior to enrollment into school. Findings of this study relating to present employment showed that the majority are employed in the hospital setting. There was slight unemployment in both graduating classes.

TABLE 12  
Current Position Held by Participants

Position	1969 (N-29)	1970 (N-30)
Staff nurse	9	8
Team leader	6	7
Charge nurse	2	5
Head nurse	4	2
Supervisor	0	0
Other		
Clinical nurse	1	
Nurse practitioner	1	1
Office nurse	1	
Industrial nurse	1	
Multnomah county health agency		1
College health		1
Nursing home administrator	1	
Director of nurses		1
Director of inhalation therapy	1	
Unemployed	2	4
Total	29	30

\* Terms used by respondents.

Responses to items 12 and 17 (Appendix A) contrasting the first position with the present are shown in table 13.



TABLE 13  
 Comparison of First Employment Positions  
 with Present Employment Choice

Position	1969 (N-29)		1970 (N-30)	
	First Employ- ment	24 mo. Later	First Employ- ment	12 mo. Later
Staff Nurse	19	9	17	8
Team Leader	1	6	6	7
Charge Nurse	6	2	6	5
Head Nurse	1	4	-	2
Supervisor	-	-	1	-
Other*				
Inhalation Therapy	1			
Clinical Nurse		1		
Nurse Practitioner		1		1
Office Nurse		1		
Industrial Nurse	1	1		
Multnomah County Health Agency				1
College Health				1
Nursing Home Administrator		1		
Director of Nurses				1
Dr. of Inhalation Therapy		1		
Unemployed		2		4
Total	29	29	30	30

\* Terms used by respondents

The review of the literature revealed that nursing technicians are prepared to be members rather than leaders of a nursing team. It therefore seemed desirable to discover whether the graduates in this study were in fact acting as team members or as team leaders. (See Appendix A, items 18, 19, 20, 21, 22)

There was much inconsistency in the responses regarding



employment in leadership roles. When questioned regarding present employment twelve of the 1969 and fourteen of the 1970 group indicated functioning in the capacity of charge nurse, team leader or head nurse. Although there were 17 staff nurses in the two groups, none apparently regarded herself as a member of a nursing team, but thirty respondents said team nursing was practiced where they worked. When queried regarding membership on the nursing team, eight of the 1969 group said they were team leaders; five were sometimes leaders and sometimes members. In the next part of the item, it was found that five were team leaders daily and seven others so functioned for varying lengths of time. For the 1970 class there were like inconsistencies. Six said they were team leaders; five others were sometimes a member, sometimes a leader; six functioned as leaders daily, eleven for various times. These discrepancies of responses could well be due to misinterpretation of the questionnaire items or to misinterpretation of the nature of team membership and leadership roles. In either instance the accuracy of responses to other parts of the questionnaire is subject to further scrutiny.

A tabulation of responses has been made to item 18a disregarding the discrepancies derived from items 17 and 18b. See table 14.

TABLE 14

## Role in Team Nursing

Held by Twenty-four Associate Degree Nurses

Position on Team	Class of 1969	Class of 1970	Total
Member	0	0	0
Leader	8	6	14
Sometimes a Leader and Sometimes a Member	5	5	10

The replies to the question concerning conditions under which respondents acted as team leaders revealed that ten of those who checked themselves as leader of the nursing team also checked the daily column. Three said they functioned daily except when short of staff then they assumed the role of medicine and treatment nurse. One gave no response. One of the respondents stated that when she worked 11-7 shift there is only one team. On days she leads one of the teams under a floor supervisor. This respondent was probably equating team leadership on nights with charge nurse duties. Four of the ten respondents who said they were sometimes a member sometimes a leader of the nursing team checked multiple responses to the question about the occasions when they functioned in this role. Table 15 summarizes the replies.

TABLE 15  
 Occasions of Team Leadership  
 Reported by Ten Associate Degree Nurses

Occasion	Number of Respondents*
Alternating with another Staff Nurse	8
On Team Leader's day or days off	4
During Team Leader's vacation	3
Daily	1
When Rotating on evenings or night duty	1

\* Four of the respondents checked multiple responses.

The participants were asked if specific instructions were given on how to be a member of the nursing team and a leader of the nursing team. Fifty-two stated that they were prepared as team members, three replied in the negative. As for leadership preparation, 34 said they had preparation, 20 answered negatively. Nine gave no responses. Since all were from the same nursing program lack of agreement by three who answered negatively to preparation for team membership may indicate that the question was misunderstood or they viewed team membership differently than their classmates. The difference in responses to leadership preparation may indicate the above or that the 1970 class was prepared differently than the 1969 group.

The respondents were asked to add comments concerning their preparation of team leadership. Twenty-eight of those who answered in the affirmative as to preparation of team

leadership responded. Twenty-one of the comments indicated that the preparation was minimal both in specific instruction and experience. (See Table 16) The following are representative verbatim responses:

"We were shown briefly how to be a team leader. However, we were given more instruction in direct patient care".

"We were given a book to read - some, not all students, had 1 - 2 days clinical experience".

"Brief, clinical, classroom and textbook exposure".

"Two textbooks and experience were offered".

"Verbal instructions only. No clinical practice".

"We had classtime and actual time or experience as students doing team leadership".

"Team leading was taught and practiced".

"We were instructed in team leadership and allowed to function as leaders during our student nurse days in the hospital".

TABLE 16

Preparation Reported by Fifty-nine Associate Degree Nurses for the Role of Team Members and Team Leaders

	Team Member	Team Leader
Preparation Received	52	34
Preparation not Received	3	20
No Response	4	5
Total	59	59

The participants were asked if and when they were in charge of their units. Multiple answers were given by fifty-two respondents. It is difficult to present a meaningful analysis of the responses, but several observations can be made. Of the fifty-two responses, ten checked "not at all", six checked "part of a day", seven checked "head nurse's day off", six checked "head nurse's vacation" and twenty-nine checked "other". It appears that seventeen were in complete charge of their units and thirty-five for brief periods of time. Table 17 summarizes the participants' reports on the occasions when they were in charge of their respective units.

TABLE 17  
Occasions when Twenty-eight Associate Degree Nurses  
were in Charge of Unit

Occasion	Number of Responses*
Not at all	10
Part of a day	6
Head nurse's day off	8
Head nurse's vacation	5
Other	
Daily	17
When sent to another ward	1
Acting charge nurse	3
Alternate with another nurse	2
If regular personnel fail to come	4
Evenings or nights	2

\*Nineteen checked multiple responses

When asked if their nursing programs had prepared them to take charge of a unit, five responded yes and fifty-two



no. Two gave no answer. Thus, with the few exceptions cited, it is apparent that the participants recognized that they had not been prepared for the duties of a charge nurse or head nurse.

There was an attempt to discover if any areas in the nursing program helped the respondents with present job functions and responsibilities. Since multiple responses were given it was difficult to present a meaningful analysis of the comments. However, there were comments regarding the adequacy or inadequacy of the program. Only 15 expressed themselves as being adequately prepared. This may be interpreted as a reflection on the program, the recency of graduation, the demands of employment beyond the scope of their preparation or other factors. It would take further study to identify the reasons. The majority of the graduates who stated that they were given none or inadequate preparation for their present job functions listed past-experience or on-the-job training as the basis for their preparation for effective practice. Individual comments are in Appendix C. Table 18 shows the responses.

TABLE 18

Responses of Fifty-nine Associate Degree Nurses Regarding  
Adequacy of Present Job Functions and Responsibilities

	1969 (N-29)	1970 (N-30)	Total
Adequate Preparation	7	8	15
Inadequate Preparation	18	13	31
No Response	4	9	13
Total	29	30	59

Twenty-five participants had changed employment. The most frequent reasons given were dissatisfaction, relocation and promotion. Some of the reasons for dissatisfaction are quoted verbatim:

"Too much overtime required".  
 (Changed from staff nursing in a hospital to a staff nurse in a clinic).

"Hate hospitals, too demanding of my time".  
 (Changed from staff nursing in a hospital to summer camp for three months, then to staff nurse in a college infirmary).

"Head nurse---lack of organization and discontinuance of a total care program".  
 (Changed from staff nurse position to team leader position).

"Condition peculiar to a teaching hospital not compatible with my conception of medical care".  
 (Changed from staff nurse position to team leader position).

"Very bored with non-nursing job".  
 (Changed from charge nurse position to private duty nursing).

"Unsatisfied with working conditions".  
 (Changed from staff nurse position to leave of absence).

TABLE 19  
Reasons Given by Twenty-five Associate Degree Nurses  
for Employment Change

Reasons	No. of Responses
Dissatisfaction	6
Moved - relocated	5
Promotion	4
Interest in new position	2
Needed experience	2
Wanted patient care	2
Family reasons	1
Unqualified	1
Pregnant	1
No reason given	1
Total	25

It would appear from the data in Table 20 that the majority of graduates are at a level of nursing which is fulfilling to them. The two most outstanding goals that had been satisfied by their educational program were: [1] The ability to function as a registered nurse and [2] Self-satisfaction, that is, doing something worthwhile. A third goal that comes close to the above was personal accomplishment.



TABLE 20

Responses of Fifty-nine Associate Degree Nurses  
Regarding Goals Satisfied by their Nursing Education

Category of Goals	Number of Responses*
Ability to function as a registered nurse	16
Self-satisfaction	15
Personal accomplishment	10
Financial stability	10
Increase in knowledge	7
Chance to use knowledge and experience	6
Ability to increase quality of patient care	4
Independence	2
Steady employment with advancement	2
Finding out that nursing is not for me	1
No goals satisfied	1
No response	6

\*Participants gave more than one answer

#### Opinions About Nursing

This section of the questionnaire was designed to elicit opinions of the participants regarding their nursing experience. (See questions 26, 27, 28, 29 Appendix A) Question 29 was included here as the nurse's possible solution to her opinions about nursing.

The majority gave "helping others and being of service" as the main reason for liking nursing. The dislikes most often commented on were paper work, inadequate staffing, and the inhumanitarian attitude of nurses toward others. Some of these opinions were also noted by the baccalaureate graduates in McDonald's study. (15)

The responses given to the question regarding recommen-

ding nursing to others were favorable and realistic. The majority considered nursing to be a worthwhile profession. From reading the responses to what is least liked in nursing and in recommending nursing to others a feeling of acquired reality seems to have invaded the idealism of the new graduate. A representative sampling of the participants' likes, dislikes, and comments regarding what they would recommend about the nursing profession to others can be found in Appendix C.

#### Nursing Plans for the Future

Regardless of how they expressed themselves about their nursing preparation or nursing experience the majority had formulated some plans about their future in nursing. The responses fell mainly into two categories: Plans for further education through formal studies and plans for self-improvement professionally through employment and various avenues of informal educational opportunities. It was of interest to note that several wanted to advance in or toward a specialty area of nursing such as, obstetrics, emergency room, intensive and coronary care units.

These comments seem to infer that the associate degree nurse recognized that she is a beginning practitioner and that her program gave her only the basis for coping with possible situations in which she might find herself. Conversely, she will with experience learn on any specific assignment to discharge the responsibilities of that assign-

ment, and that she, too, must be an example of Newman's dictum that growth is an essential sign of life. (28)

#### Satisfactions as Related to Employment

The index of satisfaction (Appendix A) was designed to rate the degree of satisfaction that new graduates had with their employment, their nursing education, their execution of nursing skills, their fund of nursing knowledge, their ability to make decisions on the job and their financial remunerations. The participants in this study were newly employed recent graduates of an associate degree nursing program. As might be expected, the associate degree nursing graduate, upon first employment is a beginning practitioner not as ready to cope with the emergencies and pressures that an experienced staff nurse practices on a busy hospital ward.

In analyzing the satisfaction index both classes were pretty well satisfied with their status as registered nurses. The class of 1969 showed greater satisfaction only in the area of nursing education. The classes were equivalent concerning the areas of employment and execution of nursing skills. The class of 1970 was more satisfied in the areas of fund of nursing knowledge, decision making ability and financial remuneration. The class of 1970 showed a "very satisfied" index regarding their choice of decision making ability. As indicated by the class of 1970 the largest contrast found on the index was between their degree of satis-

faction with nursing education and decision making ability.

The participants were asked to rate their degree of satisfaction on a rating scale of one through six. One represented being very satisfied, and six represented being very dissatisfied.

When interpreting these data the total degrees of satisfaction for each question were added separately, and the mean calculated. The calculated mean was placed on a chart in order that comparisons of satisfaction could be obtained from each class of participants. Differences in length of nursing experience between the two classes could have influenced over all degree of satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction. The findings are shown on figure 2.

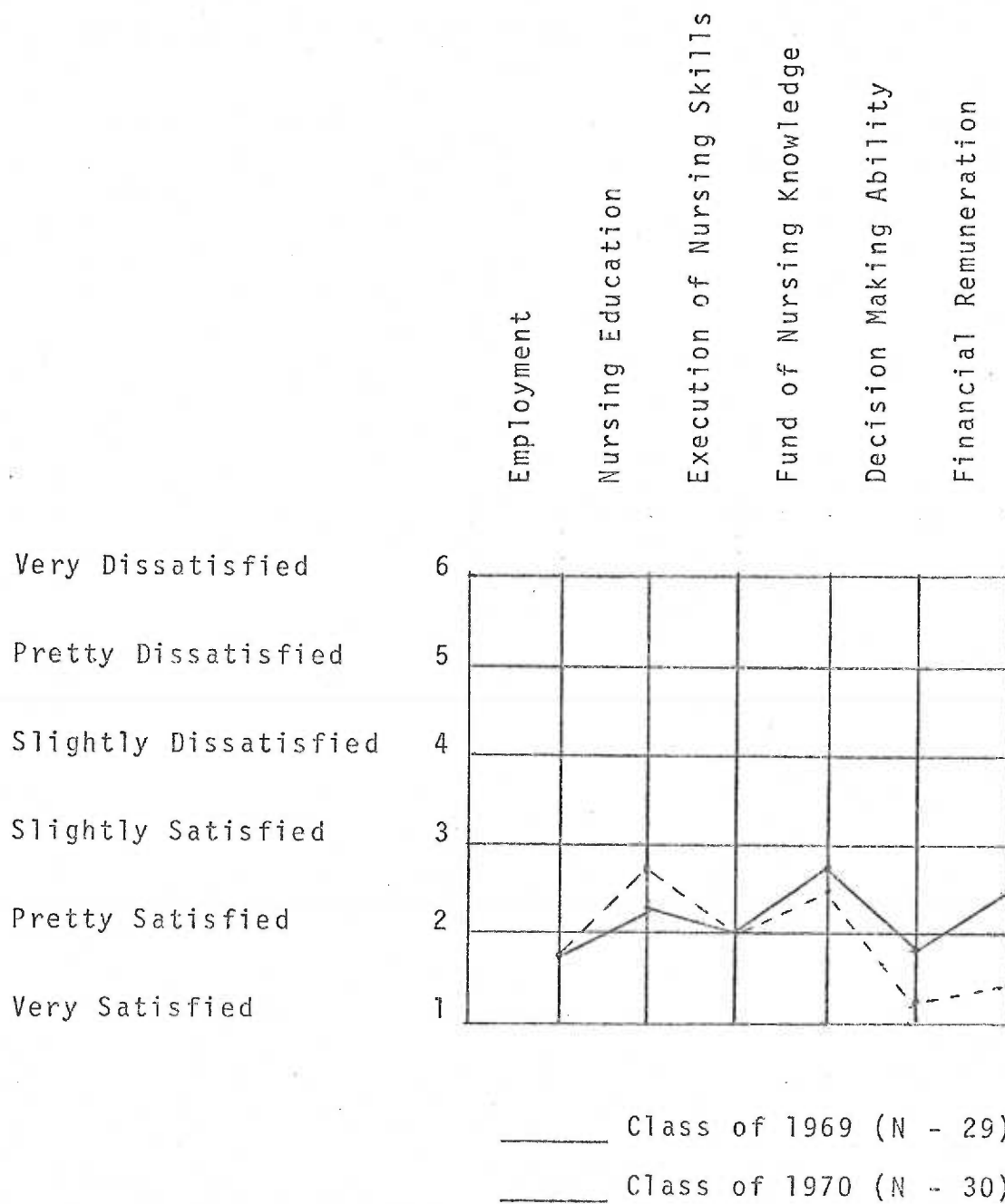


Figure 2. Comparison of Satisfactions Relating to Employment

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to obtain information from the graduates of an associate degree nursing program in order [1] to determine their choice of position after graduation, [2] to discover the relationship between levels of practice with achievement of satisfaction and [3] to detect what the graduate desires in terms of nursing functions.

An Associate Degree Nursing Program was selected, permission was received from its director, and a questionnaire and satisfaction index was mailed to the graduates of the 1969 and 1970 classes.

The questionnaire was divided into several areas: Personal data, Experiential data, Employment in nursing, Opinions about nursing and Satisfaction as related to employment.

Fifty-nine participants responded to the questionnaire. This was an over-all 82 percent return.

The results of this study were presented in Chapter III. Additional details of the study are listed in Appendix C.

### Findings

The findings of this study are summarized as follows:

1. The majority of new graduates sought employment in the hospital for their first work experience. Personal preference, the need for experience and assignment to service were the reasons most often given for making this choice.
2. As a first work experience the position of staff nurse was the first held by the majority of those working in the hospital.
3. The respondent worked all three shifts, either on a regular or rotating basis.
4. More than one-half of the participants had had previous college experience. Three-fourths had participated in a nursing activity prior to their enrollment in the school of nursing and almost one-half worked as student assistants while enrolled.
5. Finances was the most important reason given for choosing the associate degree nursing program. Shortness of the program and professional improvement were also ranked relatively high.
6. Twenty-six of the graduates who are currently employed are practicing on some level of nursing leadership, as team leaders, charge nurses or head nurses. Seventeen are practicing as staff nurses and six are unemployed.
7. Slightly less than one-half had changed employment.

Dissatisfaction, relocation and promotion were the most frequent reasons given for change.

8. Almost one-hundred percent of the participants reported that they had been prepared to be members of the nursing team.
9. About one-half of the graduates reported that they had preparation in team membership. They also reported that this preparation was minimal both in specific instruction and practice.
10. More than three-fourths of the graduates were in charge of their units at some time. The participants indicated that they had not been prepared for this activity.
11. The majority expressed that they were given inadequate preparation during their nursing program for their present job functions and responsibilities.
12. The reason most frequently given for liking nursing was that of being of service to others.
13. The responses given regarding what was most disliked about nursing were paper work, inadequate staffing, and poor attitudes among the nursing staff.
14. Regardless of their dislikes, the respondents were satisfied with themselves as related to their employment as nurses, some to a greater degree of satisfaction than others.
15. The participants would recommend nursing to others. The recommendation most often given by the participants to



those anticipating becoming a nurse is that they acquire some nursing experience prior to their enrollment in a school of nursing.

16. The participants who had future plans in nursing saw themselves continuing formal preparation for a baccalaureate degree, moving into the specialty areas, and acquiring in-depth knowledge and skills in their present job.

### Conclusions

Certain conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this study and may be generalized only insofar as they hold true for the respondents.

1. From the finding that more than one-half of the graduates were employed in leadership positions, it may be concluded that the graduates were performing functions other than the technical functions of nursing for which their program had prepared them. It may also be concluded on the basis of the findings that they believed they were not prepared to perform these functions.
2. The majority who were in leadership positions reported that they were leaders of the nursing team and/or in charge of the unit daily or on certain occasions. This finding, along with the fact that the associate degree nursing program does not propose to prepare students for this function leads to the conclusion that the objective

of the associate degree nursing program is not being considered in employment practices.

3. More than three-fourths of the graduates had prior experience to employment. This fact may lead to the conclusion that past nursing experience influences position choice by the graduates.
4. Due to the fact that a large number of the graduates were promoted into positions of leadership may lead to the conclusion that not all nursing service personnel are well informed of the objective of the associate degree nursing program.

#### Recommendation for Further Study

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. A study be done to determine if first level staff nursing positions are available in hospital settings for the proper utilization of the associate degree nurses.
2. A study be done to determine the exact reasons why associate degree nurses are performing activities other than those for which they have been educationally prepared.
3. A study be done to determine hospital needs regarding staffing in the light of quality nursing care in order to ascertain if nursing programs are

preparing nurses adequately to fill those needs.

4. A cost-analysis study be done to determine if an all registered nurse staff is less expensive for a hospital to maintain than a mixed staff of professional, technical and auxiliary personnel.
5. A follow-up study be done within the hospital setting to determine the specific functions that the associate degree nurse is actually performing.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Buckel, Marvin J. F. Principles of Administration in Junior and Community College Education for Nursing. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1956.
2. Creighton, Sister Bridget. Analysis of Factors which Influenced 360 Students in Their Choice of a Nursing Program. (Unpublished Thesis). Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C. 1952.
3. Facts About Nursing. American Nurses' Association, 1968 ed. New York, the Association, 1968.
4. Emerson, Laura. The Reasons Given by 56 Nursing Students for Choosing the Associate Degree Nursing Program at Clark College. (Unpublished Thesis). University of Oregon School of Nursing, June, 1965.
5. Forest, Betty. "The Utilization of Associate Degree Nursing Graduates in General Hospitals". Doctor of Education Report. Teachers College, Columbia University, New York. 1965.
6. Frank, Sister Charles Marie. "The Effect of Diversity of Preparation of Nursing Personnel on the Quality of Patient Care." International Nursing Review 10:49, July/Aug. 1963.
7. Gleaser, Edmond J. Jr. "Facing up to Basic Issues in the Junior College Field".. Keynote Address at Third Annual Work Conference of the Center for Community and Junior College Administration, Teachers College, Columbia University. New York. June 1961.
8. Gips, Claudin D. "An Evaluation of Graduates of An Associate Degree Program." Nursing Outlook. 7:701-702, Dec. 1959.
9. Lambertson, Eleanor C. Education for Nursing Leadership. Philadelphia. Lippincott Book Company, Inc., Philadelphia. 1957.
10. Lambertson, Eleanor C. "Hospital Schools of Nursing in 1984: Two Forecasts." Hospitals. 38:63-64 Feb. 16, 1964.

11. Lande, Sylvia. A National Survey of Associate Degree Nursing Programs. National League for Nursing. New York. 1967.
12. Legg, Lucy. A Follow-up Study of 91 Graduates of an Associate Degree Program in Nursing 1959-1963. (Unpublished Thesis). University of Oregon School of Nursing, June 1966.
13. Levine, Eugene. "Some Answers to the Nurse Shortage." Nursing Outlook. 6:12:30. March 1964.
14. Lewis, Edith P. "The Associate Degree Program". American Journal of Nursing. 64:5:78-81. May 1964.
15. McDonald, Alice Welk. Employment Trends and Satisfaction of Recent Graduates of a Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Programs. (Unpublished Thesis). University of Oregon School of Nursing, 1971.
16. McManus, Louise R. "Assumptions of the Functions of Nursing", Regional Planning for Nursing and Nursing Education. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York. 1950.
17. Montag, Mildred L. Community College Education for Nurses. McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, London, Toronto. 1959.
18. Montag, Mildred L. "Five Years of Experimentation: Some Lessons We've Learned". In Second National Conference on Junior-Community College Education for Nursing. National League for Nursing, New York, 1957.
19. Montag, Mildred L. "Logic of Associate Degree Nursing Programs in Nursing". Nursing Science. 19:2:191, June 1964.
20. Montag, Mildred L. "Reflection on the Past 20 Years and a Look into the 1970's and 80's." National League for Nursing 1970 - Associate Degree Education - Current Issues, 1970. National League for Nursing, New York, 1970.
21. Montag, Mildred L. "Technical Education in Nursing?" American Journal of Nursing. 5:63:101. May 1963.
22. Montag, Mildred L. "The Associate Degree Nursing Curriculum--Its Philosophy and Purpose." Address given at the Work Conference on Curriculum in Associate Degree Nursing Programs, Teachers College, Columbia University. New York, June 8, 1964.

23. Montag, Mildred L. "Utilization of Graduates of Associate Degree Nursing Programs." The Journal of Nursing Education. 5:2:6. April 1966.
24. Montag, Mildred L. The Education of Nursing Technicians. G. P. Putnam and Sons. New York. 1951.
25. National League for Nursing. Report on Associate Degree Nursing Programs in Nursing. New York. 1961.
26. National League for Nursing. Characteristics of College-Controlled Programs in Nurse Education Leading to an Associate Degree. Department of Diploma and Associate Degree Programs. New York, 1960.
27. National League for Nursing. Nursing Education in Junior and Community Colleges. American Association of Junior Colleges Cooperative Research Project, Columbia University, New York, 1956.
28. National League for Nursing. Criteria for the Evaluation of Educational Programs in Nursing Leading to an Associate Degree. The League. New York. 1967.
29. New York City, Queens College. Employer Expectation vs. Staff Nurse Performance: A Comparison of Graduates of Three Types of Basic Nursing Programs. Final Report, Sections 1-4. The College, New York, 1961-1962.
30. Newman, Leah C. Motivational Factors which Influenced 34 Freshman Students in Their Choice of the Associate Degree Nursing Program in Portland Community College. (Unpublished Thesis.) University of Oregon School of Nursing. June, 1966.
31. Nursing Educators, Today, Tomorrow, The Day After That -- Proceedings. Western Council on Higher Education for Nursing, March, 1960.
32. O'Connell, Marjorie S. A Study of Factors which Influenced a Selected Group of Student Nurses to Choose a Nursing Career and Select a Specific School of Nursing. (Unpublished Thesis.) University of Oregon School of Nursing. June, 1957.
33. Oshin, Edith S. "Associate Degree Nurses at Work." R.N. 4:29:106. 1964.

34. Portland, Oregon, Portland Community College. A Six Month Follow-Up on Associate Degree Nursing Graduates from Portland Community College. Portland Community College, Portland, Oregon. 1968.
35. Ordway, Tead and Henry Metcalf. Personnel Administration: Its Principles and Practices. McGraw-Hill. New York. 1933.
36. U. S. Surgeon General's Consultant Group on Nursing. Toward Quality In Nursing: Needs and Goals. U. S. Public Health Service Publication. No. 992. The Service, Washington, D. C., 1963.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
QUESTIONNAIRE  
SATISFACTION INDEX



11. What was the FIRST SHIFT that you regularly worked?

- a)  day  evening  night  rotating  
 b)  part-time  full-time

12. What was the FIRST REGULAR POSITION that you held?

- staff nurse  supervisor  
 charge nurse  head nurse  
 team leader  other, please specify

13. How soon after employment did you hold this position?

wk  mo  yr

14. What was the bed capacity of the institution in which you first worked?

50-100  250-400  over 600  
 100-250  400-600

15. Did you have any experience in nursing PRIOR to enrollment in the school of nursing?

yes  no If yes, please complete the following:

Type of institution:

Type of position:

Length of time:

16. Did you work as an auxiliary hospital helper DURING your years as a student nurse?

yes  no If yes, please complete the following:

Type of institution:

Type of position:

Length of experience:

17. Are you presently engaged in nursing?

yes  no If yes, in what position?

- staff nurse  supervisor  
 charge nurse  head nurse  
 team leader  other, please specify



23. Have you changed employment since graduation?  
\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no If yes please complete  
Type of former position:  
Length of service:  
Reasons for changing:
24. What is the bed capacity of the institution in which  
you now work?  
\_\_\_\_50-100                      \_\_\_\_250-400                      \_\_\_\_over 600  
\_\_\_\_100-250                      \_\_\_\_400-600
25. What goals have been satisfied by your nursing education?
26. What do you LIKE MOST about nursing? Please explain
27. What do you LIKE LEAST about nursing? Please explain
28. What would you tell a member of your family if that  
member wanted to become a nurse?
29. What are your nursing plans for the future?

## INDEX OF SATISFACTION

Please answer each of the following questions by putting a check (x) next to the answer which tells how you feel in relation to your present position as a nurse, or if not presently employed, the last position you held as a nurse.

1. How satisfied are you with your employment?
  1. Very Satisfied
  2. Pretty Satisfied
  3. Slightly Satisfied
  4. Slightly Dissatisfied
  5. Pretty Dissatisfied
  6. Very Dissatisfied
  
2. How satisfied are you with your nursing education in preparation for assuming the nurse role?
  1. Very Satisfied
  2. Pretty Satisfied
  3. Slightly Satisfied
  4. Slightly Dissatisfied
  5. Pretty Dissatisfied
  6. Very Dissatisfied
  
3. How satisfied are you with your execution of nursing skills?
  1. Very Satisfied
  2. Pretty Satisfied
  3. Slightly Satisfied
  4. Slightly Dissatisfied
  5. Pretty Dissatisfied
  6. Very Dissatisfied
  
4. How satisfied are you with your fund of nursing knowledge?
  1. Very Satisfied
  2. Pretty Satisfied
  3. Slightly Satisfied
  4. Slightly Dissatisfied
  5. Pretty Dissatisfied
  6. Very Dissatisfied

5. How satisfied are you with your ability to make decisions on your job?

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Pretty Satisfied
- 3. Slightly Satisfied
- 4. Slightly Dissatisfied
- 5. Pretty Dissatisfied
- 6. Very Dissatisfied

6. How satisfied are you with your financial remuneration?

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Pretty Satisfied
- 3. Slightly Satisfied
- 4. Slightly Dissatisfied
- 5. Pretty Dissatisfied
- 6. Very Dissatisfied



APPENDIX B  
CORRESPONDENCE

June 26, 1971

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

A study of the 1969 - 1970 graduates of the associate degree nursing program from \_\_\_\_\_ is being conducted in the greater metropolitan area of Portland, Oregon. The purpose of the study is to find out what positions you are holding or have held in the field of nursing and what relationship it bears to job satisfaction.

It is anticipated that this information will be useful to those concerned with the education and employment of associate degree nursing graduates. Your cooperation in this study will be sincerely appreciated.

There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. The value of this study will be enhanced if you answer the questions as directed and if you answer all the questions.

Please do not put your name on this questionnaire. The information you give will be considered confidential. You may feel free to answer the questions as completely and as sincerely as possible.

Please follow the directions carefully. The majority of the questions can be answered by placing a check mark in the appropriate space. In those instances where you are requested to write out your answer, please be brief and specific. Please use the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope.

At the completion of the study a report will be placed  
in the University of Oregon Medical School Library.

Your help has been appreciated,

Ann Vetsch  
Graduate Student  
3245 S. E. Division  
Portland, Oregon

APPENDIX C

SUMMARY OF DATA

Expressed Opinions by the 1969 Graduates  
About Present Job Functions and Responsibilities  
In Relation to Nursing Program Preparation

Responses by Staff Nurses:

"For the most part what I do on the job I was taught in school. However, even though we are technically 'bedside' nurses, I feel we should have learned more about team leading and charge nursing."

"I feel that our nursing program prepared us adequately to be bedside nurses. However, there could have been more emphasis on medications and an outlined pharmacology course."

"I feel I was prepared poorly for all nursing functions, let alone the specialty area in which I now function well."

Responses by Team Leaders:

"I have received the basic training for giving nursing care but did not receive the preparation for the responsibilities I hold now as assistant head nurse."

"Nursing program gave me only a basis for learning to handle my present job."

"Simply that I am in a position of leadership and was not prepared for it. However, through experience I feel that I now can do a good job."

"Very little emphasis was placed on being a team leader and the specific duties and responsibilities to other members of the team. Thank heavens my co-workers were very understanding and patient."

Responses by Charge Nurses:

"I don't feel I had any direct preparation in training to be an assistant head nurse. Learning to give good thorough care and take responsibility along with good personal relations seems to be the most important criteria for my job."

"I'm charge nurse in the emergency room. In school we had a two day rotation in that department. Although the functions and responsibilities are much different from the bedside nursing we trained for, I have the basics."

Responses by Head Nurses:

"The basic nursing was a necessity but further education is necessary before an administrative position can be assumed, as these areas of study were only touched upon briefly, if at all."

Expressed Opinions by the 1970 Graduates

About Present Job Functions and Responsibilities

In Relation to Nursing Program Preparation

Responses by Staff Nurses:

"I feel without previous experience my training lacked opportunity for adequate experience before employment."

"My nursing program gave me basics, this has enabled me to learn the specifics that apply in my present position."

"Preparation seems adequate and satisfactory."

Responses by Team Leaders:

"Preparation was inadequate, particularly in clinical experience. I feel a year's internship would be desirable after graduation."

"ADNP should offer more experience in team leading and in leadership roles. The program centers on bedside nursing which is an excellent preparation for a well functioning patient-centered nursing care."

"Very little instruction - educational practice in regard to present charge position."

Responses by Charge Nurses:

"A lot of my experience and knowledge I got after school while working on the job."

"If it hadn't been for prior experience in emergency room under an excellent charge nurse, I don't feel I would have been ready for this type of position. My nursing program never prepared me for this type of experience."

"Working nights changes the perspective of some answers a great deal. Preparation was most of the time adequate but experience gained in past year invaluable."

"I feel we were adequately trained in the basics of nursing. By rotating our clinical experience through various hospitals it developed our ability to adopt to new routines a very valuable asset."

#### Responses by Head Nurses:

"My present job functions and responsibilities are in no way related to the preparation received in the nursing program. Additional training and experience has prepared me for my present position."

"I do not believe I could have functioned in my present capacity had I not had previous experience."

#### Expressed Opinions of Participants

#### of What Goals Have Been Satisfied by Their Nursing Education

"Personal satisfaction and sense of worth. Good income."

"I have become a registered nurse."

"I feel I have been serving humanity. I have been filling my need to serve and help people. My salary is better."

"Job satisfaction and position as charge nurse."

"I believe that I give good patient care and have real feelings for the employees below me."

"To receive my RN was the greatest. To know that at my age I could pass all subjects, work rotations, pass state boards first time around. I feel that I am a more productive person now."

"Increased independence; financially and personally. Personal fulfillment in doing something worthwhile, meaningful care for people, increased skill and confidence."

"At this point I am still able to get as much pay as a four year graduate with same length of experience. I am able to function as a useful member of the health team."

"The fact that I feel it has prepared me to be a good RN."

"By being an RN my judgmental and decisions are recognized. Enjoy teaching, as a team leader most. My nursing education has given me the opportunity in small ways to improve the quality of patient care in areas that I work."

"Personally I feel that I do something worthwhile which not only gives me satisfaction but is a challenging profession. I also enjoy the mobility that my profession gives me and the assurance of a job almost anywhere."

"I have a satisfying profession which I am proud of. My income adds considerably to my husband's and my total income so that we can do many things and have many more things than we could have had otherwise."

"Being with people and caring for them when they need help. Helping people who are very sick back to better health or if they are terminally ill supporting them and their families to make their last days as happy and peaceful as possible."

"As I see it ADN education brought me to only one level and that was to gain an RN."

#### Expressed Opinions of Participants of What They

#### Like Most About Nursing

A representative sampling of responses to question 26 are as follows, quoted verbatim with no attempt at editing:

"Changing. Almost endless job possibilities - not a static thing. Challenging."



"The being close to people - to help other people in their time of need. Feeling needed and useful and being capable to help when the need presents itself."

"I feel that I have a talent, or the ability to calm people down during an emergency situation and prior to surgery. Enjoy the fast pace of an emergency room. Helping people."

"Pediatrics, working with children. Money. Status as an R.N. Being recognized as someone with authority and helping others."

"Patient contact; fulfillment of a long time dream, leadership position."

"Caring for patients. I appreciate the opportunity to show loving concern for patients while attending to their basic needs."

"Bedside nursing combined with supportive and meaningful inter-personal relationships with patients and their families."

"Contact with patients, and being able to do total patient care. Also that I'm in a position to help write or decide in the care or treatment given to the patients. Being in a teaching hospital gives nurses more responsibility and the chance to learn new things."

"One can be used to one's fullest extent, emotionally, spiritually, and physically, continually using all knowledge and wisdom acquired. One can continue to grow and improve with opportunity to be used at one's fullest potential."

"The close personal contact with patients and people. The chance and challenge of facing a new experience. The ability to care for people in a time of need."

"Everything. I like to work and be involved with patients."

"Direct patient care. I enjoy and feel effective communicating with patients especially in the area of teaching."

"Dealing with many different types of people."

Expressed Opinions of Participants of What They  
Like Least About Nursing

A representative sampling of responses to question 27 are as follows, quoted verbatim with no attempt at editing:

"Probably working with insufficient or inadequate staff at times. It creates a hardship on patients, other staff members and charge nurses."

"Routine paper work."

"The attitude of some nurses with regards to nursing care. They seem to see how little they can do and do not seem to realize people have personality changes when ill."

"Being unsure about things I haven't been trained for; bird respirator, blood gases, etc."

"Being an ADN. There are many prejudices for us to overcome before we will be able to advance according to personal ability rather than educational background."

"Time consuming problem of charting."

"Inability to spend more time with patients because of under-staffing."

"Being a boss. I find it hard to tell people to do things even though the request is important to a patient's welfare. I also find it difficult to correct or criticize people's work, even though I feel there is a valid need."

"The endless paperwork that consumes too much time."

"The dictatorial attitudes of nurses who have worked for years. The politics that goes on for shift of importance. During my first nursing experience I was taught the patient was the most important not the nurse. What I observed in a short time is how important the nurse is in comparison to the patient."

"The old caste system that prevails in many institutions."

"The pressure placed upon nurses in hospitals due to poor staffing and the increasingly less contact with the patient and more desk work."

"The hours."

"Emptying bedpans and other scut work, I guess."

#### Expressed Opinions About Recommending Nursing to Others

"I would encourage her to do so, for in almost every way, nursing is a wonderful profession. I would however, advise her to enter a degree program if this were possible."

"If the member were a very young person I would encourage her to get a degree if she really wanted nursing as a profession. If time and money were a factor I would suggest ADN."

"If you want to work with others in a common goal of helping others, it is a most rewarding and satisfying profession. It is also a most taxing experience spiritually, emotionally and physically."

"Work in a hospital and see what it's about."

"A worthwhile rewarding profession which aids in adapting to every life situations."

"I would encourage them. I would recommend that they try working in the hospital first whether it be as a nurses aide or as a candy striper. This would let them see what goes on and would give valuable experience if the person did want to continue in nursing."

"Be prepared to be flexible and adaptive. Be prepared to give of yourself."

"If a young person a four year degree. It widens job possibilities."

"Be kind, gentle and listen. Use the golden rule. Take a job in the hospital before going to school and see if you really like to help people, then go to school. Treat each person as an individual and not an insurance policy."

"Be a damn good one and more power to you. There is nothing like it if it fulfills your needs as an individual."

"Think about it carefully. Work a while as an aide to be very sure. It's an expensive 'dream bubble' to burst on uncertainty."

"It's hard work but very satisfying."

"I would encourage a member of my family to try nursing if they were interested. I would stress an individual to know the advantages and disadvantages of each program before choosing any program."

"Yes you should but, if possible get into a school with a BS degree and good clinical experience."

"There is only one way to find out try working in a hospital as an aide or as voluntary help."

#### Expressed Opinions About Nursing Plans for the Future

"To go into some other areas of nursing to gain a broader understanding of nursing in general. No plan for further formal education at this time."

"Eventually receive a B.S. after attaining more hospital experience."

"To continue on surgical floor."

"Possibly to go back to college for a degree."

"Keep working as charge nurse, possibly go back to school for a B.S. degree in years to come."

"I hope to work at my present place of employment indefinitely as I really like it."

"B.S. degree in nursing or psychology."

"I plan to return to college and get my degree. I'd like to get into public health."

"Part time work in a hospital until I raise my children to school ages; then full time work."

"I want to take a post-graduate course in emergency nursing. I am happy with the job I have now and plan to continue with it, improving my skills and judgment wherever possible."

"To continue to read magazines and books to keep up with changes in nursing. To take courses to help me advance in my knowledge of nursing."

"More education so that I will be better prepared to initiate a new concept of nursing care that is postulated for the young mentally ill patients."

"To continue for a degree and hopefully enter a master program at Stanford. I have applied for September 1972 fall term."

"Specializing into nurse midwifery."

"To further my education which I am now doing towards my BS degree; but to stay with the direct patient care."

"Continue in my present employment. Continuing in personal study and taking advantage of inservice education."

"Hope to continue to work in CCU and go back to school. I will probably get out of nursing for a breather though."

Class of 1969

N = 29

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Personal Data

1. Age: (check one)

<u>0</u> under 21	<u>4</u> 31-35	<u>4</u> 46-50	<u>0</u> over 60
<u>8</u> 21-25	<u>0</u> 36-40	<u>0</u> 51-55	
<u>10</u> 26-30	<u>2</u> 41-45	<u>1</u> 56-60	

2. Sex: 27 Female 2 Male

3. Marital Status:

7 Single 18 Married 4 Separated, Divorced, Widowed

4. College education other than Associate Degree Program

19 yes 9 no 1 N/A5. What was the ONE most important reason for your decision to go into the Associate Degree Program?6. What year did you graduate? 29 1969 0 1970Experience

7. Length of nursing experience since graduation

\_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months

8. In what health agency were you FIRST EMPLOYED as a new graduate?

<u>26</u> hospital	<u>6</u> field other than nursing
<u>0</u> public health	<u>3</u> other, please specify
<u>0</u> office or clinic	

9. If your FIRST EMPLOYMENT was hospital nursing, in what type of service were you engaged?

<u>5</u> medical	<u>1</u> psychiatry	<u>3</u> emergency room
<u>9</u> surgical	<u>0</u> tuberculosis	<u>1</u> intensive care
<u>1</u> pediatrics	<u>4</u> orthopedics	<u>0</u> operating room
<u>3</u> obstetrics	<u>0</u> recovery room	<u>9</u> other, pls specify

10. What factors influenced your decision to choose this to choose this type of service as your first employment?
11. What was the FIRST SHIFT that you regularly worked?  
 a) 15 day 8 evening 6 night 0 rotating  
 b) 1 part-time 22 full-time N/A = 6
12. What was the FIRST REGULAR POSITION that you held?  
19 staff nurse 0 supervisor  
6 charge nurse 1 head nurse  
1 team leader 2 other, please specify
13. How soon after employment did you hold this position?  
         wk          mo          yr
14. What was the bed capacity of the institution in which you first worked?  
3 50-100 12 250-400 0 over 600  
7 100-250 5 400-600 2 N/A
15. Did you have any experience in nursing PRIOR to enrollment in the school of nursing?  
19 yes 10 no If yes, please complete the following:  
 Type of institution:  
 Type of position:  
 Length of time:
16. Did you work as an auxiliary hospital helper DURING your years as a student nurse?  
13 yes 16 no If yes, please complete the following:  
 Type of institution:  
 Type of position:  
 Length of experience:

17. Are you presently engaged in nursing?

27 yes    2 no    If yes, in what position?

9 staff nurse

0 supervisor

2 charge nurse

4 head nurse

6 team leader

6 other, please specify

18. Is team nursing practiced in the unit in which you work?

15 yes    \_\_\_\_\_ no

(If you checked charge nurse, supervisor and/or head nurse in number 17 go on to number 19)

If yes,

a. Are you: (check one)

1. 0 a member of the nursing team?

2. 8 a leader of the nursing team?

3. 5 sometimes a member, sometimes a leader of the nursing team?

b. When are you a leader of the nursing team?

(check all that apply)

1. 0 not at all

2. 1 on team leader's day or days off

3. 0 during team leader's vacation

4. 4 alternating with another staff nurse

5. 5 daily

6. 2 other: please specify

19. In your nursing program, were specific instructions given in how to be:

a. a member of the nursing team? 25 yes 2 no 2 N/A

b. a leader of the nursing team? 11 yes 15 no 3 N/A

If (b) was checked, briefly explain

20. When are you in charge of your unit? (check all that apply)

a. 6 not at all

b. 4 for part of a day

c. 3 on head nurse's day or days off

d. 3 on head nurse's vacation

e. 15 other (please specify)

21. In your nursing program, were specific instructions given in how to be in charge of a unit?

2 yes    26 no    1 N/A    If yes, please explain.



22. Make comments concerning your present job functions and responsibilities in relation to the preparation you received in your nursing program.
23. Have you changed employment since graduation?  
16 yes 12 no 1 N/A If yes please complete  
Type of former position:  
Length of service:  
Reasons for changing:
24. What is the bed capacity of the institution in which you now work?
- |                  |                  |                   |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <u>2</u> 50-100  | <u>1</u> 250-400 | <u>1</u> over 600 |
| <u>4</u> 100-250 | <u>3</u> 400-600 |                   |
25. What goals have been satisfied by your nursing education?
26. What do you LIKE MOST about nursing? Please explain.
27. What do you LIKE LEAST about nursing? Please explain.
28. What would you tell a member of your family if that member wanted to become a nurse?
29. What are your nursing plans for the future?

## INDEX OF SATISFACTION

Please answer each of the following questions by putting a check (x) next to the answer which tells how you feel in relation to your present position as a nurse, or if not presently employed, the last position you held as a nurse.

1. How satisfied are you with your employment? 40 N=29

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Pretty Satisfied
- 3. Slightly Satisfied
- 4. Slightly Dissatisfied MEAN 1.6
- 5. Pretty Dissatisfied
- 6. Very Dissatisfied

2. How satisfied are you with your nursing education in preparation for assuming the nurse role? 76

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Pretty Satisfied
- 3. Slightly Satisfied
- 4. Slightly Dissatisfied MEAN 2.1
- 5. Pretty Dissatisfied
- 6. Very Dissatisfied

3. How satisfied are you with your execution of nursing skills? 51

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Pretty Satisfied
- 3. Slightly Satisfied
- 4. Slightly Dissatisfied MEAN 2.0
- 5. Pretty Dissatisfied
- 6. Very Dissatisfied

4. How satisfied are you with your fund of nursing knowledge? 64

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Pretty Satisfied
- 3. Slightly Satisfied
- 4. Slightly Dissatisfied MEAN 2.6
- 5. Pretty Dissatisfied
- 6. Very Dissatisfied

5. How satisfied are you with your ability to make decisions on your job? 41

- 1. Very Satisfied
  - 2. Pretty Satisfied
  - 3. Slightly Satisfied
  - 4. Slightly Dissatisfied
  - 5. Pretty Dissatisfied
  - 6. Very Dissatisfied
- MEAN 1.6

6. How satisfied are you with your financial remuneration? 53

- 1. Very Satisfied
  - 2. Pretty Satisfied
  - 3. Slightly Satisfied
  - 4. Slightly Dissatisfied
  - 5. Pretty Dissatisfied
  - 6. Very Dissatisfied
- MEAN 2.1

Class of 1970

N = 30

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Personal Data

1. Age: (check one)

<u>0</u> under 21	<u>2</u> 31-35	<u>3</u> 46-50	<u>1</u> over 60
<u>11</u> 21-25	<u>2</u> 36-40	<u>2</u> 51-55	
<u>6</u> 26-30	<u>3</u> 41-45	<u>0</u> 56-60	

2. Sex: 30 Female 0 Male

3. Marital Status:

11 Single 18 Married 4 Separated, Divorced, Widowed1 N/A

4. College education other than Associate Degree Program

14 yes 12 no 4 N/A5. What was the ONE most important reason for your decision to go into the Associate Degree Program?6. What year did you graduate?      1969 30 1970Experience

7. Length of nursing experience since graduation

           years            months8. In what health agency were you FIRST EMPLOYED as a new graduate?

<u>27</u> hospital	<u>0</u> field other than nursing
<u>0</u> public health	<u>3</u> other, please specify
<u>0</u> office or clinic	

9. If your FIRST EMPLOYMENT was hospital nursing, in what type of service were you engaged?

<u>4</u> medical	<u>2</u> psychiatry	<u>3</u> emergency room
<u>5</u> surgical	<u>0</u> tuberculosis	<u>1</u> intensive care
<u>4</u> pediatrics	<u>4</u> orthopedics	<u>2</u> operating room
<u>1</u> obstetrics	<u>1</u> recovery room	<u>2</u> other, pls specify

1 N/A

10. What factors influenced your decision to choose this type of service as your first employment?

11. What was the FIRST SHIFT that you regularly worked?

a) 15 day 8 evening 6 night 1 rotating

b) 2 part-time 21 full-time 7 N/A

12. What was the FIRST REGULAR POSITION that you held?

17 staff nurse 1 supervisor

6 charge nurse 0 head nurse

6 team leader 0 other, please specify

13. How soon after employment did you hold this position?

          
wk

          
mo

          
yr

14. What was the bed capacity of the institution in which you first worked?

2 50-100

9 250-400

0 over 600

12 100-250

6 400-600

1 N/A

15. Did you have any experience in nursing PRIOR to enrollment in the school of nursing?

13 yes

14 no

If yes, please complete the following:

Type of institution    Type of position    Length of time

16. Did you work as an auxiliary hospital helper DURING your years as a student nurse?

13 yes 14 no 3 N/A

If yes, please complete the following:

Type of institution:

Type of position:

Length of experience:

17. Are you presently engaged in nursing?

26 yes      4 no      If yes, in what position?

8 staff nurse                      0 supervisor  
5 charge nurse                    2 head nurse  
7 team leader                      4 other, please specify

18. Is team nursing practiced in the unit in which you work? 15 yes           no  
 (If you checked charge nurse, supervisor and/or head nurse in number 17 go on to number 19)

If yes,

- a. Are you: (check one)
1. 0 a member of the nursing team?
  2. 6 a leader of the nursing team?
  3. 5 sometimes a member, sometimes a leader of the nursing team?
- b. When are you a leader of the nursing team? (check all that apply)
1. 0 not at all
  2. 3 on team leader's day or days off
  3. 3 during team leader's vacation
  4. 5 alternating with another staff nurse
  5. 6 daily
  6. 0 other: please specify

19. In your nursing program, were specific instructions given in how to be:

- a. a member of the nursing team? 27 yes    1 no    2 N/A  
 b. a leader of the nursing team? 23 yes    5 no    2 N/A

If (b) was checked yes, briefly explain.

20. When are you in charge of your unit? (check all that apply)

- a. 4 not at all
- b. 2 for part of a day
- c. 4 on head nurse's day or days off
- d. 3 on head nurse's vacation
- e. 14 other (please specify)

21. In your nursing program, were specific instructions given in how to be in charge of a unit? 3 yes    26 no  
 1 N/A      If yes, please explain.

22. Make comments concerning your present job functions and responsibilities in relation to the preparation you received in your nursing program.
23. Have you changed employment since graduation?  
9 yes    19 no    2 N/A    If yes please complete  
 Type of former position  
 Length of service  
 Reasons for changing
24. What is the bed capacity of the institution in which you now work?  
2 50-100    2 250-400    1 over 600  
2 100-250    1 400-600
25. What goals have been satisfied by your nursing education?
26. What do you LIKE MOST about nursing? Please explain.
27. What do you LIKE LEAST about nursing? Please explain.
28. What would you tell a member of your family if that member wanted to become a nurse?
29. What are your nursing plans for the future?

## INDEX OF SATISFACTION

Please answer each of the following questions by putting a check (x) next to the answer which tells how you feel in relation to your present position as a nurse, or if not presently employed, the last position you held as a nurse.

1. How satisfied are you with your employment? 48 N=30

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Pretty Satisfied
- 3. Slightly Satisfied
- 4. Slightly Dissatisfied MEAN 1.6
- 5. Pretty Dissatisfied
- 6. Very Dissatisfied

2. How satisfied are you with your nursing education in preparation for assuming the nurse role? 80

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Pretty Satisfied
- 3. Slightly Satisfied
- 4. Slightly Dissatisfied MEAN 2.7
- 5. Pretty Dissatisfied
- 6. Very Dissatisfied

3. How satisfied are you with your execution of nursing skills? 58

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Pretty Satisfied
- 3. Slightly Satisfied
- 4. Slightly Dissatisfied MEAN 2.0
- 5. Pretty Dissatisfied
- 6. Very Dissatisfied

4. How satisfied are you with your fund of nursing knowledge? 70

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Pretty Satisfied
- 3. Slightly Satisfied
- 4. Slightly Dissatisfied MEAN 2.4
- 5. Pretty Dissatisfied
- 6. Very Dissatisfied



5. How satisfied are you with your ability to make decisions on your job? 58

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Pretty Satisfied
- 3. Slightly Satisfied
- 4. Slightly Dissatisfied      MEAN 1.1
- 5. Pretty Dissatisfied
- 6. Very Dissatisfied

6. How satisfied are you with your financial remuneration? 38

- 1. Very Satisfied
- 2. Pretty Satisfied
- 3. Slightly Satisfied
- 4. Slightly Dissatisfied      MEAN 1.3
- 5. Pretty Dissatisfied
- 6. Very Dissatisfied

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

ANN VETSCH

For the MASTER OF SCIENCE in NURSING EDUCATION

Date of receiving this degree: June 9, 1972

Title: EMPLOYMENT TRENDS AND SATISFACTIONS OF 1969 - 1970  
GRADUATES OF AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE NURSING PROGRAM

Approved:

May Rawlinson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Nursing  
(Thesis Advisor)

The purpose of this study was to [1] determine the position choices of the 1969 and 1970 graduates of an associate degree nursing program, [2] discover the relationship between levels of practice and/or performance of nursing functions with achievement of satisfaction and [3] detect what the graduates desire in terms of nursing functions. The study included such questions as: was the associate degree graduate functioning in the role of bedside nurse, and did she find bedside nursing satisfying, or was she

assuming administrative functions, and was this role then satisfying to her.

This study sought to answer the proposed questions by collecting and examining data obtained by a mailed questionnaire and satisfaction index. The questionnaire and satisfaction index were mailed to the classes of 1969 and 1970 with the exceptions of those graduates whose current addresses were not available in the State Board of Nursing files and those who did not hold current licensure. (N - 72) A code was devised to assure confidentiality of all responses. The questionnaires were treated anonymously.

A total of 59, or 82 percent returned completed questionnaires. This represented a 90 percent return from the class of 1969 and a 75 percent from the class of 1970.

### Findings

The findings were summarized as follows:

1. The majority of new graduates sought employment in the hospital for their first work experience. Personal preference, the need for experience and assignment to service were the reasons most often given for making this choice.
2. As a first work experience the position of staff nurse was the preference held by the majority of those working in the hospital.

3. The respondents worked all three shifts, either on a regular or rotating basis.
4. More than one-half of the participants had had previous college experience. Three-fourths had participated in a nursing activity prior to their enrollment in the school of nursing and almost one-half worked as student assistants while enrolled.
5. Finances was the most important reason given for choosing the associate degree nursing program. Shortness of the program and professional improvement were also ranked relatively high.
6. Twenty-six who are currently employed are practicing on some level of nursing leadership, as team leaders, charge nurses or head nurses. Seventeen are practicing as staff nurses and six are unemployed.
7. Slightly less than one-half had changed employment. Dissatisfaction, relocation and promotion were the most frequent reasons given for change.
8. Almost one hundred percent of the participants reported that they had been prepared to be members of the nursing team.
9. About one-half of the graduates reported that they had preparation in team membership. They also reported that this preparation was minimal both in specific instruction and practice.

10. More than three-fourths of the graduates were in charge of their units at some time. The participants indicated that they had not been prepared for this activity.
11. The majority expressed that they were given inadequate preparation during their nursing program for their present job functions and responsibilities.
12. The reason most frequently given for liking nursing was being of service to others.
13. The responses given regarding what was most disliked about nursing were paper work, inadequate staffing, and poor attitudes among the nursing staff.
14. Regardless of their dislikes, the respondents were satisfied with themselves as related to their employment as nurses, some to a greater degree of satisfaction than others.
15. The participants would recommend nursing to others. The recommendation most often given by the participants to those anticipating becoming a nurse is that they acquire some nursing experience prior to their enrollment in a school of nursing.
16. The participants who had future plans in nursing saw themselves continuing formal preparation for a baccalaureate degree, moving into the specialty

areas, and acquiring in-depth knowledge and skills in their present job.

### Conclusions

Certain conclusions were drawn from the findings of this study and were to be generalized only insofar as they held true for the respondents.

1. From the finding that more than one-half of the graduates were employed in leadership positions, it was concluded that the graduates were performing functions other than the technical functions of nursing for which their program had prepared them. It was also concluded on the basis of the findings that they believed they were not prepared to perform these functions.
2. The majority who were in leadership positions reported that they were leaders of the nursing team and/or in charge of the unit daily or on certain occasions. This finding, along with the fact that the associate degree nursing program does not propose to prepare students for this function led to the conclusion that the objective of the associate degree nursing program is not being considered in employment practices.
3. More than three-fourths of the graduates had prior

experience to employment. This fact led to the conclusion that past nursing experience influences position choice by the graduates.

4. Due to the fact that a large number of the graduates were promoted into positions of leadership led to the conclusion that not all nursing service personnel are well informed of the objective of the associate degree nursing program.

#### Recommendation for Further Study

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. A study be done to determine if first level staff nursing positions are available in hospital settings for the proper utilization of the associate degree nurses.
2. A study be done to determine the exact reasons why associate degree nurses are performing activities other than those for which they have been educationally prepared.
3. A study be done to determine hospital needs regarding staffing in the light of quality nursing care in order to ascertain if nursing programs are preparing nurses adequately to fill those needs.
4. A cost-analysis study be done to determine if an

registered nurse staff is less expensive for a hospital to maintain than a mixed staff of professional, technical and auxiliary personnel.

5. A follow-up study be done within the hospital setting to determine the specific functions that the associate degree nurse is actually performing.



are expressed by ketonemia and an increased excretion of glucose, water and chlorides, and alterations, either up or down, of blood glucose level. All seem to agree that these changes are more notable, more frequent, and more important in the juvenile and adolescent diabetic, and in the labile, "brittle" diabetic (who is usually, but not always a young person). (13)

#### Attitudes and Reactions Produced by the Disease

After consideration of the effect of stress on diabetes mellitus, the attitudes and reactions produced by the disease are reviewed.

Palmer discussed the uniqueness of diabetes mellitus among chronic incurable diseases. He explained that there is no disease other than diabetes which requires daily self-administration of hypodermic medication and holds some threat of disaster if this ritual is not

observed. The threat of disaster is further enhanced by the institution of daily urine testing in which the patient confronts himself with evidence of any defection from self-control. In addition, the success or failure of diabetic control is largely dependent upon participation of the patient in treatment, and his use of discerning judgment in unusual situations not specifically covered by the physician's instruction. (14)

Kennedy discussed the effect of diabetes mellitus on the juvenile

diabetic explaining that he must balance on a "fence", and not fall

from one side to the other. The problems involved in this balancing