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# School Counselor Perceptions & Practices Advising Male High School Students Regarding a Career in Nursing

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# Background

Only 9.4% of RNs in the US are males, an increase of 2.8% since 2013<sup>1</sup>

One strategy to recruit more males into nursing is to encourage high school students to pursue a career in nursing.

There are approximately 118,000 public school counselors in the U.S.<sup>2</sup>

High school counselors facilitate the exploration of career options,<sup>3</sup> but personal perceptions and biases may influence them.

# Review of Literature

Male participants reported nursing was not presented as a career option<sup>4, 5, 6</sup>

School counselors had a low perception of nursing as a career choice, but did not differentiate between male and female students<sup>7, 8, 9</sup>

A high percentage of nursing students had been discouraged from entering nursing<sup>10</sup>

Some school counselors viewed nursing as a career more suitable for females<sup>11</sup>

Many male nursing students reported negative experiences with school counselors, with some discouraging them from studying nursing<sup>10, 12, 13, 14, 15</sup>



# Purpose

To better understand high school counselors' perceptions and practices of counseling male high school students to pursue a career in nursing.

# Methodology – Mixed Methods Study

IRB approval was obtained from  
Southern Adventist University and  
Duke University

Inclusion criteria: 21+ years of age and  
employed as a school counselor in the  
United States

Phase I – Quantitative Survey with  
Open-Ended Questions

Phase II – Qualitative Interviews



# Phase I-Qualtrics Survey Instruments

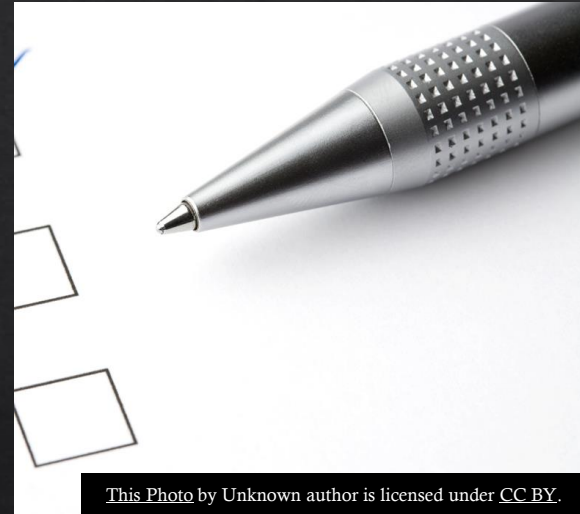
Demographics section

Nursing Attitudes and Perceptions –  
School Counselor (NAP-SC) instrument

Two open-ended questions

What strategies do school counselors use  
to encourage male high  
school students interested in nursing?

What additional information and  
resources would assist school  
counselors in encouraging male students  
to consider nursing as a career?





# Phase I - Data Analysis

Statistical analysis using IBM SPSS 28

Descriptive statistics to describe the sample

Inferential statistics to identify differences in NAP-SC scores within the sample based on demographic characteristics

Post-hoc internal consistency tested with Cronbach Alpha

Content analysis used to look for themes to the two open-ended questions on the survey



# Phase I - Sampling Procedure

Recruitment: June 2022-February 2023

American School Counselor Association  
(ASCA) database (n = 947)

Flyer shared to multiple Facebook group pages  
(~60K total members)

Posted on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram

Seventh-day Adventist high schools (n = 181)

Association of Christian Schools International  
(n = 602)

48 state educational associations and two school  
districts within 9 regions of the United States



# Phase I Results - Summary

80 survey responses received

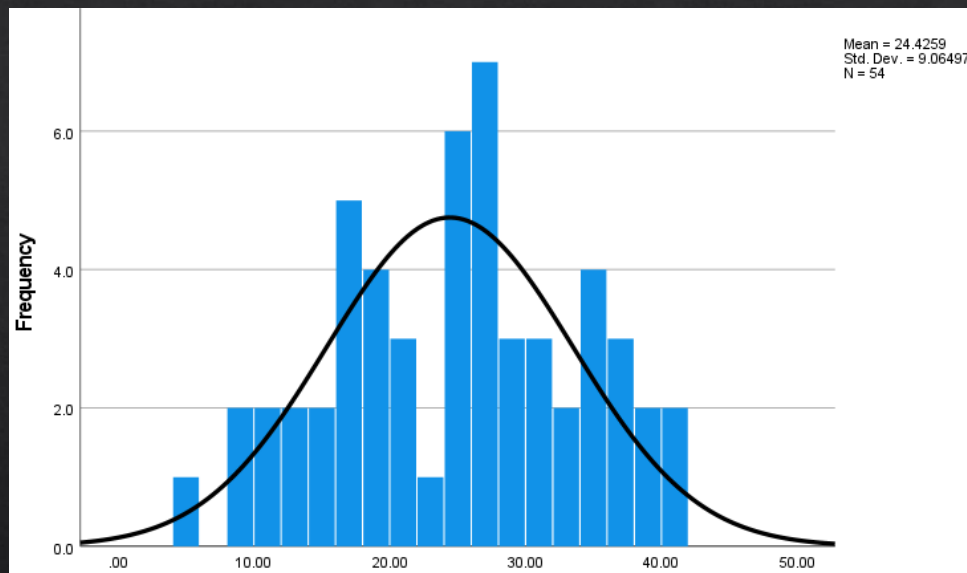
19 removed due to lack of data

7 removed due to incomplete NAP-SC scales

61 included in demographic analysis

54 included in inferential analysis

NAP-SC scores approximated the NDC and had internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.879$ ).



# Phase I Results - Demographic Characteristics

The majority of participants were:

White (n = 49, 80%)

Ciswomen (n = 54, 89%)

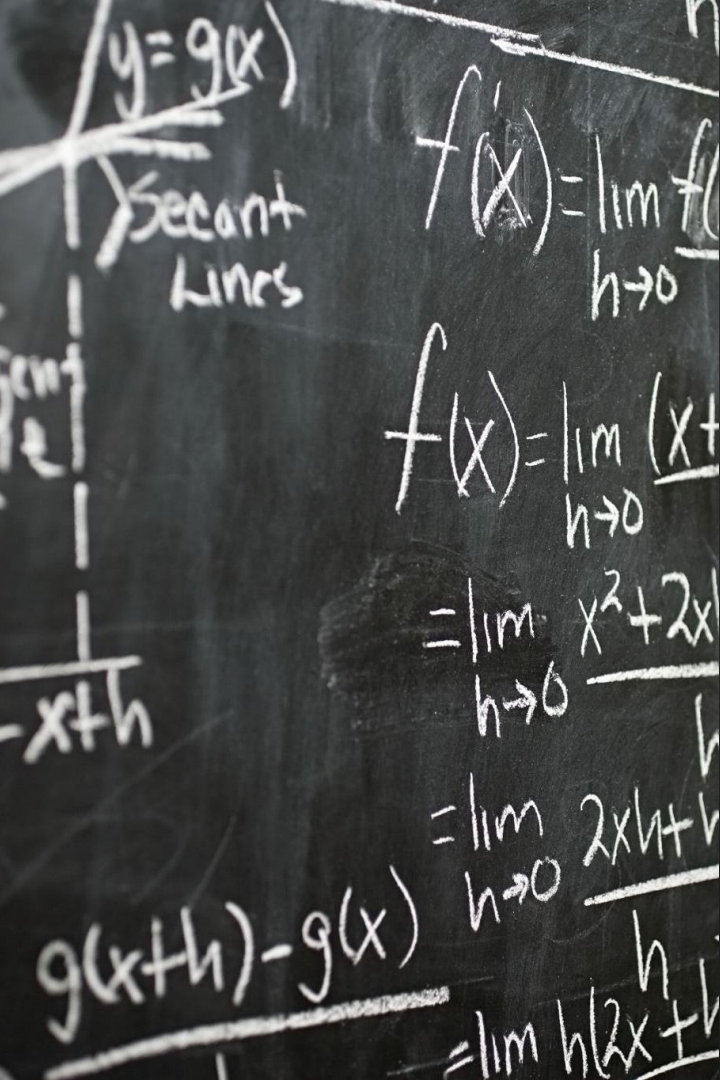
Aged 31-60 years (n = 48, 79%)

Worked in the South Atlantic or East North Central regions of the US (n = 31, 51%)

Employed at private, religiously affiliated schools (n = 41, 67%)

Had 15 or fewer years' experience as a school counselor (n = 40, 66%)

Held a master's degree (n = 38, 62%)





# Phase I Results – Inferential Analysis

The Mean NAP-SC score was +24.4, indicating a positive attitude/perception toward male nurses

No statistically significant differences in NAP-SC scores based on age range, employment setting (public vs. private), religious affiliation, and years of experience

NAP-SC scores were lower in male ( $n = 6$ ) than female ( $n = 48$ ) participants

Male school counselors had a *lower* NAP-SC score and were *less likely* to encourage male high school students to pursue nursing





# Phase I – Results – Open-Ended Questions

## Strategies Used to Encourage

- Facilitating communication
  - Listening, asking questions, encouraging, affirming, connecting, and using experiential story-sharing from nurses, nursing students, and friends
- Providing information
  - About careers, colleges, scholarships, admission process, opportunities, and benefits
- Preparing for nursing school
  - Advising courses and strategies in high school to prepare for college



# Phase I – Results – Open-Ended Questions

## Needed Information & Resources

- Improved visibility
  - Male nurses at career fairs, as classroom guests, and job shadowing
- Improved information about nursing
  - Nursing profession, career opportunities and advantages, and stories from male nurses
- Improved information from schools of nursing
  - Accurate and easy-to-navigate websites and brochures with relevant information about nursing school and the profession



# Phase II – Sampling Procedure & Interview Protocol

Participants in Phase I were offered an opportunity to interview in Phase II

Interviews recorded (Zoom) using semi-structured interview protocol of focusing on:

- differences in the advisement of male or female students regarding a career in nursing
- barriers that school counselors had identified for male students who expressed interest in a career in nursing
- resources the counselors currently used or thought they needed to advise students wanting to enter nursing
- counselors' personal experiences with and perceptions of males in nursing

## Phase II – Data Analysis

Zoom transcripts were created  
and reviewed for accuracy



Inductive content analysis  
completed by SI using  
NVivo12



Categories created based on  
the interview protocol question  
themes

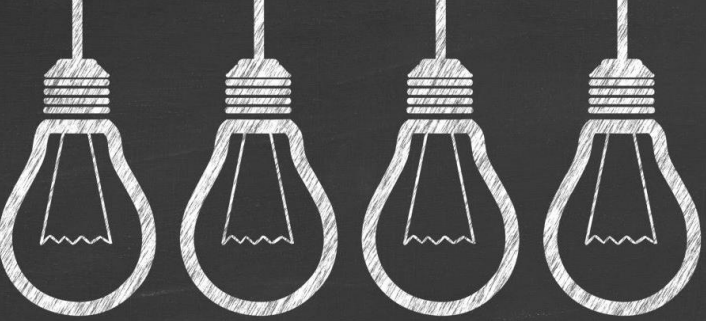


Codes created using keywords  
from interviews



Final codes and categories  
reviewed and confirmed by PI





## Phase II - Results

Demographics:

n = 9 (1 male, 8 female), private school employment (8), with 2 to 30 years of experience

Category 1: Personal perceptions and experiences

Category 2: Advising Practices

Category 3: Methods to Improve Recruitment and Resources Needed

# Category I: Personal Perceptions and Experiences

Participants reported personal experiences with male nurses

Participants spoke positively about nursing as a career path for males

Recognition that unconscious bias could still exist

## Category 2: Advising Practices

Overwhelmingly  
encouraging!

Information shared  
included nursing school  
information, advanced  
practice nursing, lifestyle  
benefits, and encouraged  
shadowing opportunities

Strong family support was  
present for males who  
expressed interest in  
nursing

Frequent misperception  
that medical school is for  
males, nursing school is  
for females

Female students identified  
interest in nursing earlier  
than males; males showed  
greater interest in  
advanced practice options

## Category 3: Methods to Improve Recruitment and Resources Needed

Greater visibility of male nurses (online, in print, and in-person) and access to male nurses for shadowing and career fairs

Recruitment materials should focus on addressing misconceptions, emphasizing flexible schedules, describing career options, and highlighting salary

Capture male high school students' attention using social media to help them connect to male nurses

Counselors directed students toward other professions' national organizations; however, *none of them knew about AAMN*



# Discussion of Findings

School counselors had a positive perception of men in nursing and supported males in nursing and males pursuing a career in nursing, similar to one study<sup>17</sup>.

This differed from the experiences of male nursing students and nurses.<sup>4, 5, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15</sup>

Counselors who were members of ASCA found it more desirable to recommend nursing to male students, which aligns with ASCA's ethical standards.<sup>19</sup>

Participants described specific ways they advised male students about a nursing career, which is inconsistent with other studies in the literature.<sup>7, 8</sup>

School counselors need more access to information about career opportunities in nursing for males.



# Limitations

Low response rate during Phase I,  
despite expanded recruitment efforts

Convenience sample

Hawthorne effect possible

Lack of sample diversity

## Recommendations for Future Practice

Colleges and universities should revise their websites and recruiting materials for easier access to relevant information to help students know more about a career in nursing.

School counselors need greater access to:

- Accurate information about the opportunities for men in nursing
- Male nurses for questions, career fairs, and job shadowing

**You can help by scanning the QR code and joining the AAMN Nurse Network Database!**



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