

# Men In Nursing: An Exploratory Study

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to explore the men's lived experiences in nursing. The researchers conducted qualitative research within the areas of Silang, Cavite. **Methods:** The data gathering happened among identified working male nurses aged 24 to 52 years old and who have experience in the clinical setting. For the data collection, the researchers constructed a set of interview questions to help obtain the data needed for the study. **Findings:** The findings of the survey revealed themes such as (1) Physical Capabilities, (2) Preference of Care, (3) Person Discrimination, (4) Male Uniqueness, (5) Nursing Trends, and (6) Prejudice. **Value:** In conclusion, the study's findings showed a *significant* need for men in nursing due to the physical demands. In addition, the results showed that patients may still have their *preference of care*, which is female nurses, and they believe it causes less discomfort. Lastly, the research study concludes that there has been *no discrimination* within the working field of nursing. Both genders are well accepted and treated fairly in the professional field.

**Keywords:** Preference, discrimination, uniqueness

## Introduction

In society, nursing is often considered a women-driven profession due to the stigmatization that women are more caring than men; however, based on history, back in the day, men were the driving forces of the whole nursing entity. A downward trend in men employed in nursing started when wars broke out, and countries needed men to enlist (Kearns & Mahon, 2021). Nursing today has continuously improved its system and field and proved its significant role in providing quality care. According to Inscol (2016), nursing has become a more collaborative workplace for men and women. People commonly think that women dominate the nursing profession and that men are increasingly capable of performing the same tasks as women in nursing care. However, despite their competitive skills, male nurses have remained a minority in nursing for the past 40 years, according to statistics.

Prejudices that the nursing profession is "feminine" have limited the public's knowledge about male nurses' caring behaviors (Morales et al., 2022). The researchers aim to increase the public and patients' awareness of the role of male nurses in the healthcare delivery system, thereby promoting acceptance of gender diversity in the nursing profession for all. This study will explore the lived experiences of male nurses, show positive images of male nurses, and reduce some of the public's rejection of male nurses. Over time, patients will no longer view male nurses through a gender lens.

Gradually, patients will openly accept male nurses, and they can flourish in nursing. Professional socialization of male nurses can be achieved over time by establishing role models and public awareness of male nurses' roles in the healthcare system.

The study aimed to explore male nurses' lived experiences, which the researchers achieved by answering the question below. The researchers asked follow-up questions to gain more profound and more specific answers from the participants: What are the lived experiences encountered by the male nurses?

This study covered the unique experiences of male nurses, specifically the phenomenological experiences in their nursing practice. The researchers gathered the data using one-on-one interviews, has been interpreted and analyzed in this study. The informants were chosen based on specific criteria, which included being male nurse and having at least a year of experience in the field. The study's population target focused on Filipino male nurses who are presently employed. If emotional support is needed, the researchers have prepared a psychometrician on standby as it is the available psychological support. The researchers will also recommend informants to a psychologist for further consultations.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

The researchers used a qualitative approach utilizing a phenomenological research design in this study. Researchers use qualitative research in studies describing variables through words instead of numbers. Using this research in intervention studies is a strategic way of fully understanding its target or focused individual. The researchers analyzed and interpreted data thematically. In this study, the researchers distinguished the phenomenon that male nurses encounter during their years of experience in clinical settings.

The participants' participation in sharing their unique experiences will contribute to the study's results. It is concluded that it is preferable to utilize the phenomenological approach to further study and derive the factors that may affect male nurses in delivering their nursing services. The study used purposive sampling, specifically the snowballing method, to choose the participants. The participants were male nurses with experience in the professional field. The information provided were provided for the researchers to identify their participant's general background as a male nurse. Code numbers were derived from the date and order when the informants were interviewed. This is to secure their identity and privacy as the researchers disclose certain background information about the informants.

### ***Data Gathering Tool***

To acquire the exact information needed, the researchers conducted an in-person one-on-one interview with each participant to accommodate their availability. This interview will focus on one question and include several follow-up questions to summarize the data gathered. Through this type of data gathering, the researchers will ask the participants about their experiences, in this case, the unique experiences as male nurses.

**Table 1**  
*Demographic Profile of the Participants*

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Hospital Department</b>
080923001	20 years	41	Clinical Instructor/ Medical Surgery Unit
080923002	14 years	52	Intensive Care Unit/ Emergency Room
082123001	6 years	43	Emergency Room
082123002	1 year and 6 months	26	Out-Patient Department/ Operating Room
082523001	1 year	24	Emergency Room
082923001	1 year	24	Emergency Room

*Note: Special number codes were formulated to keep the participants' real names.*

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

In this study, the researchers went through a systematic process to gather data properly. For this study, the researchers considered the following course of action:

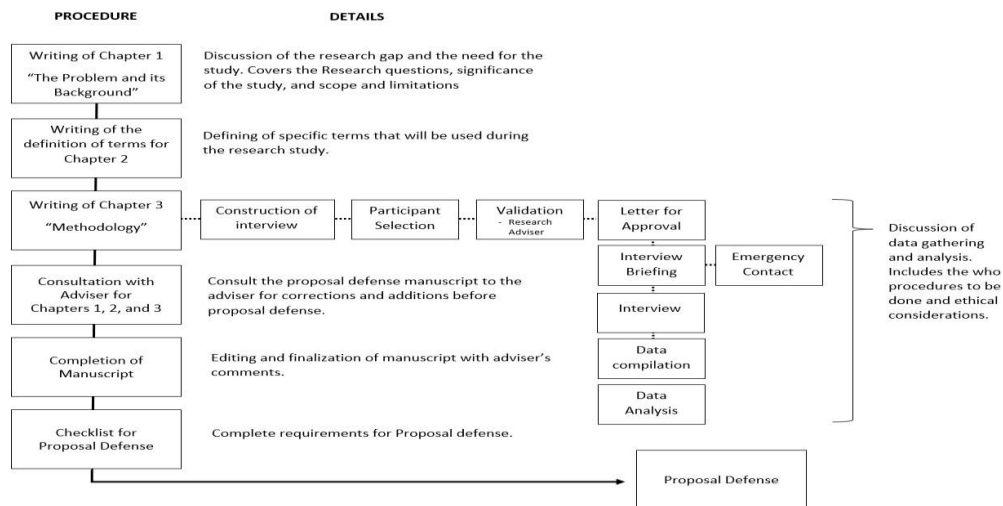
1. The researchers created a set of questions for the interview. These questions are self-constructed.
2. The adviser validated the guide questions, which is necessary for the participants to understand them better during the interview. After being validated, the questions were printed and ready for the interview.
3. After the validation process, the researchers constructed a letter of approval for the research office to implement the data gathering. This was for the researchers to be able to interview the participants with the approval and consent to conduct the study. Before conducting the interview, the researchers had a pilot study to validate the interview-structured questions.
4. The researchers selected the participants based on the study's qualifications.
5. Before interviewing the participants, the researchers assured them that they were comfortable and ready to answer. This included informing them of the Data Privacy Act and that their information would be kept confidential. A briefing also took place prior the interview.
6. A contact of a psychologist was provided during the interview if needed.
7. Throughout the conversation, the interview was video recorded. The researchers carefully observed nonverbal cues, such as behaviors and reactions, during the interview. The researchers kept these records confidential to maintain their privacy. The researcher also asked questions during the one-on-one interview that were not part of the constructed ones to make the participants comfortable talking and expressing their thoughts. Throughout the interview, both the researchers and the interviewee communicated through a conversational interview. The guide question for the interview:
  - a. What are the lived experiences of the Male nurses?
8. Finally, the researchers will compile all of the recordings and transcribe them.
9. After the first compilation of the gathered data, the researchers will perform triangulation,

followed by members checking to reevaluate the researchers' interpretations with the participant.

10. Thematic analysis provides a systematic flow of "coding" the gathered data through interviews. The researchers will be synthesizing and analyzing will be done during this process. The researchers will categorize and observe the participants' responses carefully to maintain the accuracy of the participant's thoughts or opinions.

The following are the stages of the data analysis to be used after gathering the data, as expounded by Braun and Clarke (2006):

- i. Data Familiarization. Collection and transcription of data, several cycles of re-reading to highlight the informants' provided insights that could count as a theme.
- ii. Review of themes. After highlighting insights, the researchers will categorize them according to their similarities and analyze all these themes.
- iii. Production of conclusion. After highlighting insights, the researchers will categorize them according to their similarities and analyze all these themes.



**Figure 1**

*Flow Chart of Research Procedures*

### **Ethical Consideration**

The considerations below must be applied while gathering data and throughout the research process.

**Privacy & Anonymity.** The researchers must put the personal information of the participants of paramount importance. The informants' privacy on personal information and found in confidential matters shared are taken into strict consideration.

**Informed Consent.** The researchers prepared a consent form before interviewing the participants. This form formally informs the participants of what will be discussed and the

main goal of the study. It also tells the participants that their participation will not cause them harm.

### **Analysis of Data**

This study will analyze the data gathered through thematic analysis. Through this process, the researchers can gather common responses. This process gathers obtained reactions and opinions by categorizing each answer according to its similarities. All gathered data were analyzed carefully. According to Braun & Clarke (2019), thematic analysis is a process of determining and analyzing themes using data collected during research. This analysis helps the researcher organize and define the data set in more detail.

#### ***Data Analysis Model***

The researchers will use Colaizzi's Phenomenological Descriptive Method Data Analysis Model to guide their analysis in which meaningful themes of qualitative data will be examined. It is divided into seven steps: (1) Familiarization, (2) Identifying Significant statements, (3) Formulating meanings, (4) Clustering themes, (5) Developing description, (6) Fundamental structure, and lastly Verification.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### ***General Information of the Participants***

This study's participants are entirely male, assuring gender uniformity. These men are of Filipino descent and have graduated from the Adventist University of the Philippines. This broad age group, spanning 24 to 52 years, provides the study with a wide range of life experiences and perspectives. Furthermore, these participants live and work in the region of Barangay Puting Kahoy. During the one-to-one interview, most participants said it was good to reminisce about their careers as nurses.

#### ***Lived Experiences of Men in Nursing***

To determine the following experiences, the researchers selected participants who were registered male nurses. To acquire answers to the questions, the researchers asked follow-up questions to the interviewee to further understand the questions and be able to answer them specifically. The researcher gave the participants time to reminisce and expound more details about the answer.

#### ***Physical Capability***

**Table 2***Interview Statements for Physical Capability*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Supporting Author</b>
Physical Capability	<i>“Typical jobs over all other heavy lifting areas, for example, transferring patients or changing oxygen, as usually as you put on our task, from males. Being a male, it's just being able to have the strength to help more.”</i>	Al-Masaeed et al., (2021) found that male nurses reported a higher incidence of work-related injuries, such as back strains and needlestick injuries. These injuries can lead to physical discomfort, stress, and subsequent job dissatisfaction among male nurses

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	<i>“typical jobs over all other heavy lifting areas, for example of transferring patients or changing oxygen for example, as usually as you put on our task, from males.”</i>	Men in nursing were frequently asked to assist female nurses with the physically demanding tasks, and they were frequently given the arduous procedures to complete in the unit (Lyu et al., 2022).

Most of the individuals involved in the study shared those male nurses can perform their jobs efficiently as they do not have any physical limitations. Men's physical capabilities can offer significant benefits in certain situations within healthcare institutions (Halcomb, 2012).

Men's physical abilities can be highly beneficial in various healthcare settings. For instance, in psychiatry, their strength allows them to provide safe and reliable nursing assistance to patients, guaranteeing their protection and overall welfare. Likewise, men's robust physicality in orthopedics enables them to effortlessly transport patients and handle heavy medical equipment, significantly improving operations' efficiency and smoothness (Halcomb, 2012).

A participant emphasized that male nurses are in demand for CPR as they have more work endurance. The main qualities recognized were the ability to sustain work without getting tired quickly and accomplish a significant amount of work throughout the day (Zamanzadeh et al., 2023).

Consistently, society regards men as stronger and more capable of performing physical

tasks than their female nursing contemporaries. As a result, men in nursing were frequently asked to assist female nurses with physically demanding tasks and given arduous procedures to complete in the unit (Lyu et al., 2022).

***Preference of Care***

In the same way that women may prefer female nurses, it is not uncommon for men to prefer male nurses to attend to their healthcare needs. The presence of a male nurse creates a sense of ease and comfort, especially when discussing personal matters. For male patients, having procedures such as catheter placements performed by a male nurse can significantly reduce feelings of embarrassment and unease. Male nurses are more comfortable with the same gender.

***Preference of Care***

**Table 3**

*Interview Statements for Preference of Care*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Supporting Author</b>
Preference of Care	<i>“So I would do the same thing with my students, I would orient them that if there will be patients with us, it will be our female patients that doesn't like male student nurses that I will not assign you to student nurses...since Filipinos are very modest people, I tend to observe not giving male students with female patients, I would tend to observe that not necessarily female-dominated.”</i>	To preserve privacy and patient pleasure, nurses of the same gender as the patient were chosen for intimate treatments. Additionally, procedures that call for close physical contact can make both the nurse and the patient feel uncomfortable, uneasy, anxious, and afraid (Asante et al., 2023).

The participants emphasized honoring patient preferences when assigning male nurses to female patients. This reveals an adherence to cultural sensitivity, acknowledging the importance of modesty among Filipinos. Additionally, procedures that call for close physical contact can make the nurse, and the patient feel uncomfortable, uneasy, anxious, and afraid (Asante et al., 2023). The participants also discussed the significance of complying with patient requests, mainly when patients clearly state that they prefer a same-gender nurse. Kwame and Petrucka (2021) emphasized the importance of open communication with patients to reduce worries when there are no other options.

Participants also talked about the difficulties faced by male nurses because of gender-related limitations and preferences. When it comes to procedures like ECG and catheterization, these constraints are obvious when male nurses are paired with female patients. Many men had encountered instances where female patients had declined to provide care services. Moreover, this occurs when nursing care given to a patient is in a private portion of the body, such as the breast or perineal location (Mao et al., 2021).

## Person Discrimination/Acceptance

The following narratives focus on the views of male nurses and their experiences in a female-dominated workplace, emphasizing the general climate of inclusivity and equality. Most informants claim they haven't received any criticism. They all say they get along well with the people they work with and are usually treated equally. They did not see themselves as outcasts in a profession where women were the majority.

## Person Discrimination/Acceptance

**Table 4**

*Interview Statements for Person Discrimination/Acceptance*

Theme	Statements	Supporting Author
Person Discrimination/Acceptance	<i>"I had never experienced anything like I said, since I was mostly exposed to a government hospital. I have never experienced any discrimination of being a male nurse."</i>	The findings from qualitative interviews conducted with employees, clients, and customers shed light on the positive reception of men in occupations that are predominantly dominated by women (Moskos, 2019).

Many other male nurses agreed, emphasizing that their gender had nothing to do with how they treat their patients within healthcare institutions. Based on the findings of Moskos (2019) from qualitative interviews conducted with employees, clients, and customers shed light on the positive reception of men in occupations that women predominantly dominate. Participants often pointed out equality and friendliness among nursing personnel, regardless of gender, in their workplaces. The results of previous research conducted by Svoboda and Gedzyk-Nieman (2019) provide evidence that men working in the nursing field are acknowledged for their efforts, indirectly influencing the attitudes of patients and female coworkers.



## Male Uniqueness

**Table 5**

*Interview Statements for Male Uniqueness*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Supporting Author</b>
Male Uniqueness	<i>“Male nurses as more emotionally stable than female nurses and can handle stressful situations without displaying obvious emotions.”</i>	Male nurses perceived themselves as exhibiting less emotion in care settings compared to female nurses, and they indicated expressing emotions differently from their female colleagues. However, they also contended that male nurses do express emotions.  (Martinez-Morato et al., 2021).

Prosen (2022) observed that male participants frequently predicted themselves in jobs requiring management, leadership, and technical skills within healthcare settings. The study by Martinez-Morato et al. (2021) supports the view that male nurses are emotionally stable. The study also shows that male nurses acknowledge that they express emotions differently than female nurses and that care settings often observe them showing less emotion.

### **Nursing Trend**

In this theme, the researchers explored the reasons why men choose to become nurses even though the profession is typically seen as dominated by women. Through interviews, the researchers learned more about the factors affecting their decision to pursue this career. These reasons include familial influences, peer encouragement, and financial considerations.

**Table 6***Interview Statements for Nursing Trend*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Supporting Author</b>
Nursing Trend	<i>“This is my father's choice.”</i>	Additional factors influencing male nursing students' choice of profession were linked to guidance and endorsements received from family members, friends, and acquaintances already familiar with nursing. Several participants underscored the significance of parental and peer guidance, indicating a perception of this guidance as highly significant in their decision-making process (Shudifat et al., 2023)

These results are consistent with those of Shudifat et al. (2023), which highlight the importance of guidance and encouragement from peers and family in the decision-making processes of male nursing students. This statement points out how critical financial incentives are as motivation for wanting a nursing career (Terry et al., 2020). The influence of societal trends by expressing a sense of sameness. Literature backs up this idea of societal influence; Kluczyńska (2017) talks about how social and cultural factors affect men's decisions to become nurses.

**Prejudism**

In this study area, the researchers aimed to explore the prejudices male nurses face within hospital environments. The findings indicated that male nurses were commonly perceived as lacking masculinity.

**Table 7***Interview Statements for Prejudism*

Theme	Statements	Supporting Author
Prejudism	<i>“stigma na being a nurse makes you less masculine.”</i>	Historically, nursing has been a field largely dominated by women. Yet, the growing inclusion of male nurses in healthcare has yielded numerous benefits. The presence of male nurses adds a valuable layer of diversity to the profession, promoting cultural understanding and improving care for a diverse range of patients (Stanford, 2020).

As stated by participant 082523001, there was a stigma attached to being a nurse, particularly for males, as it was perceived to diminish masculinity.

According to Stanford (2020), the presence of male nurses has resulted in favorable changes to the nursing setting. The increased number of male nurses adds a valuable layer of diversity to the nursing profession by eliminating misconceptions and promoting mutual respect, which improves patient care.

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations based on the study's results, supported by the data gathered through their answers.

### Summary of Findings

This research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of male nurses in the formerly female-dominated profession of nursing. The data collected through interviews and thematic analysis resulted in several themes that were observed and obtained from the informants.

Most informants realized that there had been a significant demand for Physical assistance. Men are seen as more capable of physical requirements such as Cardiopulmonary resuscitation, hanging Intravenous fluids, and transferring patients. As supported by authors, the physical prowess possessed by men is advantageous in specialized areas and cases in the healthcare system.

As to the preference of care, male and female patients prefer female nurses as they tend to feel more comfortable with them. Several authors stated that there is a divided preference among patients. Various scenarios happen in the clinical setting wherein patients tend to have specific preferences for whom these patients want to receive care..

Lastly, the informants have agreed that there is no discrimination between male and female nurses. The nursing profession sees both genders as needed and qualified. Thus, the nursing practice and profession accept both genders.

## **Conclusion**

The participants of this study experienced various personal encounters within their different departments in the professional area. Based on the findings of this study, it concluded that male nurses have a significant role in the nursing field. Since nursing demands emotional and physical support, the researchers believe that men in nursing fill the gap in the physical capability that most female nurses cannot perform or need assistance from men. The study also settles with the result that though the nursing profession is still predominantly led by female nurses, male nurses do not feel or have felt any discrimination in their academics or professional fields. The prejudice of nursing, only being female work, is slowly regressing as the number of male nurses in nursing is starting to increase. Generally, the informants agree that although both males and females can perform the nursing responsibilities, there is still a preferred care that patients may want to receive during their admission to the hospital.

## **Recommendations**

The results of this research have developed the following recommendations:

**Nursing Research.** Further research is a must to discover other factors that can be studied. The researchers suggest adding more population to gain more and various experiences. Consider the departments of the hospitals where male nurses are more needed. Bracket an age range to explore the difference between the older and younger generations of male nurses. Explore the potentiality of men in leadership roles rather than in bedside care. In line with the gender aspect, future researchers may also explore the area of the LGBT community of nurses and lived experiences. Lastly, the researchers see an opportunity for the study to be more beneficial if used in quantitative research to see and measure the statistical interpretation of Men in Nursing.

**Nursing Education.** The field of nursing education may further discover the roots of nursing from the perspective of male nurses in the past. Additional studies should be conducted regarding men in nursing to strengthen the inspiration of male student nurses and give them an icon of their own with which they can be motivated. Empower the male nursing students by valuing them by highlighting the "can do's" of male nurses, which the female nurses cannot do without the presence of male nurses. Encourage more men to take up nursing, as physical demands are also increasing in the nursing profession.

**Nursing Practice.** Identify the specific skills of male nurses and where they excel the most. Explore the other departments where physical capability enables male nurses to practice and offer their physical abilities. Observe the departments where male nurses are less likely to be needed and not placed in areas where they are not preferred to prevent male nurses from being stagnant caregivers. Let the male nurses discover where they can be more beneficial regarding skills.

**Male Nurses.** The researchers recommend that male nurses continue enhancing their competencies as nurses by attending certified seminars and master's and doctoral degrees. These will help them expand their capabilities not only physically but intellectually as well. As scientific knowledge is increasing, male nurses must also be able to cope with the changes and become the quality nurses they can be.

**Community.** The study carries the burden of bringing awareness to the public that the nursing profession is starting to remove the stigma of nursing as a female profession. The researchers recommend that the public will soon accept the change and see what capabilities male nurses can offer to the community. Welcome the new idea that men in nursing are equally qualified as female nurses. Nursing today may not already be a gender-based or biased profession.

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