

Specialist District Nurse Students' practice and learning experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic: A Phenomenological study

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Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted on the delivery of nursing care across a range of environments. Whilst much attention focused on the strain on hospitals, community staff were required to adapt to the unique challenges posed by the pandemic. Specialist Practice Community District Nursing (SPCDN) students faced significant challenges as they were placed on the frontline, additional to managing the theoretical aspects of an educational programme. This provided an opportunity to learn from their experiences at a time when COVID-19 was continuing to significantly impact on nursing care delivery in the community.

Aim of the study

This study aimed to explore SPCDN students practice and learning experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

A Descriptive Phenomenological approach was adopted to explore the experiences of students from six community health-care organisations enrolled on a Specialist Practice Community Programme in one Higher Education Institute in Northwest England. Nine participants were telephone-interviewed about their experiences using a semi-structured interview guide. Data was analysed using Colaizzi's seven step method to identify formulated meanings and themes.

Results

Five themes were identified following the interviews including; student wellbeing, service requirements, clinical experiences, academic experiences and new ways of working.

Conclusions and implications

The findings of the study present the challenges that SPCDN students confronted during this unique time, whilst offering greater insight into the vital role of community nursing during the Covid-19 pandemic. Understanding the implications of COVID-19 on the community nursing workforce is vital to ensure staff wellbeing, retention and care quality.