



# Interdisciplinary Practice North of Sixty: Issues for Research

Future of Rural Peoples: Pre-Conference

New Models, New Values

Saskatoon, SK

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# The Study: The Nature of Nursing Practice in Rural and Remote Canada

## Aim:

- to examine and articulate the nature of registered nursing practice in primary care, acute care, community health, continuing care (home care) and long term care settings within rural and remote Canada



# The Study Components

- Survey (“North of 60” subset)
- Registered Nurses Data Base (RNDB)
- Narrative Study
- Documentary Analysis

[www.ruralnursing.unbc.ca](http://www.ruralnursing.unbc.ca)



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# Funding Partners

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- **Saskatchewan Economic and Cooperative Development**
- **Provincial and Territorial Nurses Associations**
- **Government of Nunavut**
- **Canadian Institute for Health Information**



# THE SURVEY TEAM – North of 60



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# Survey Method

- Mailed questionnaire with persistent follow-up  
(Dillman's Tailored Design Method)
  - Sample (N = 3933)
    - [1] random sample of registered nurses (RNs) living in rural areas in all Canadian provinces
    - [2] total population of RNs who work in outpost settings or the northern territories\*
- \* North of 60 subset (n = 526)

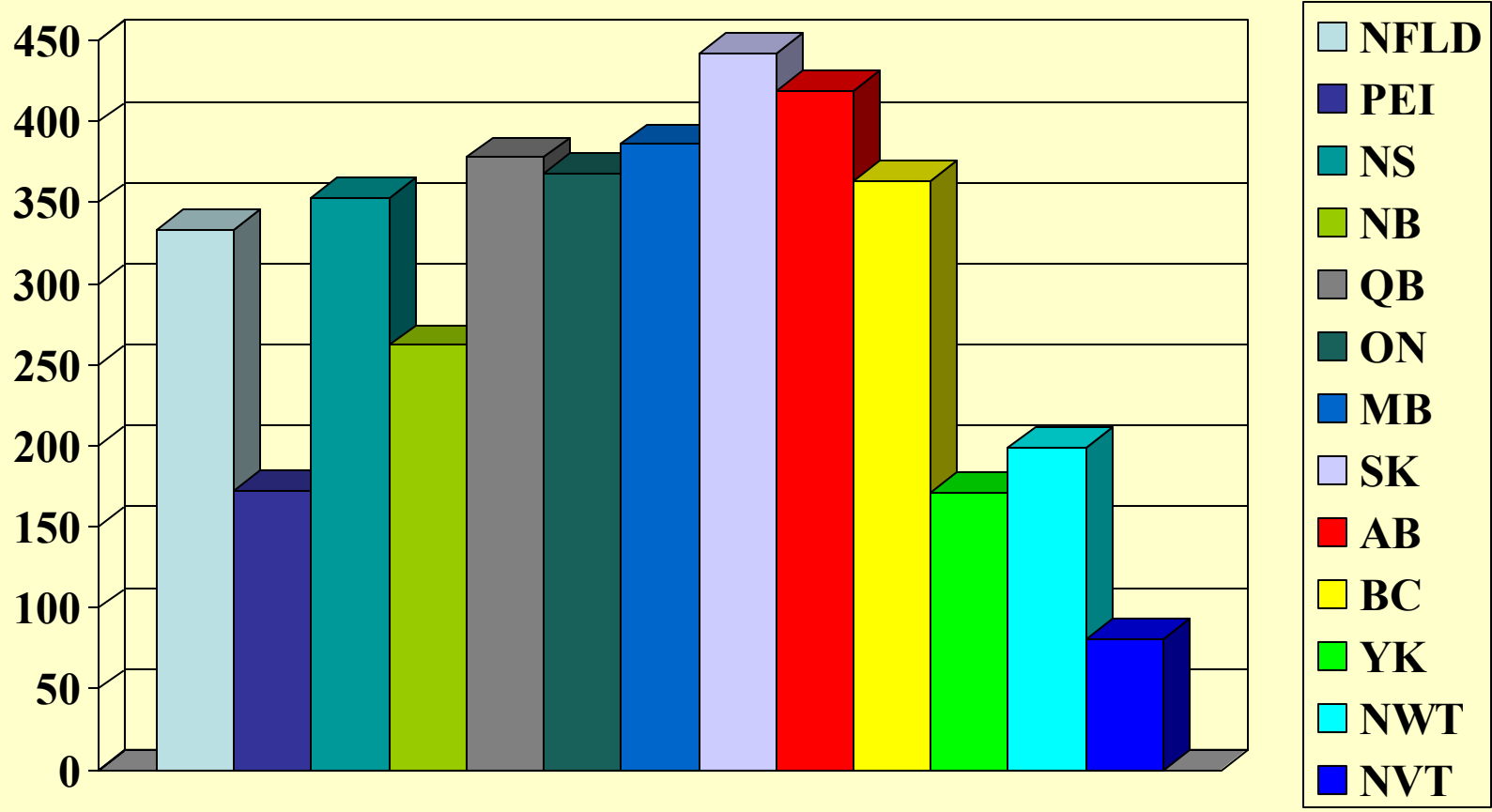




## Response Rate for Survey = 68%

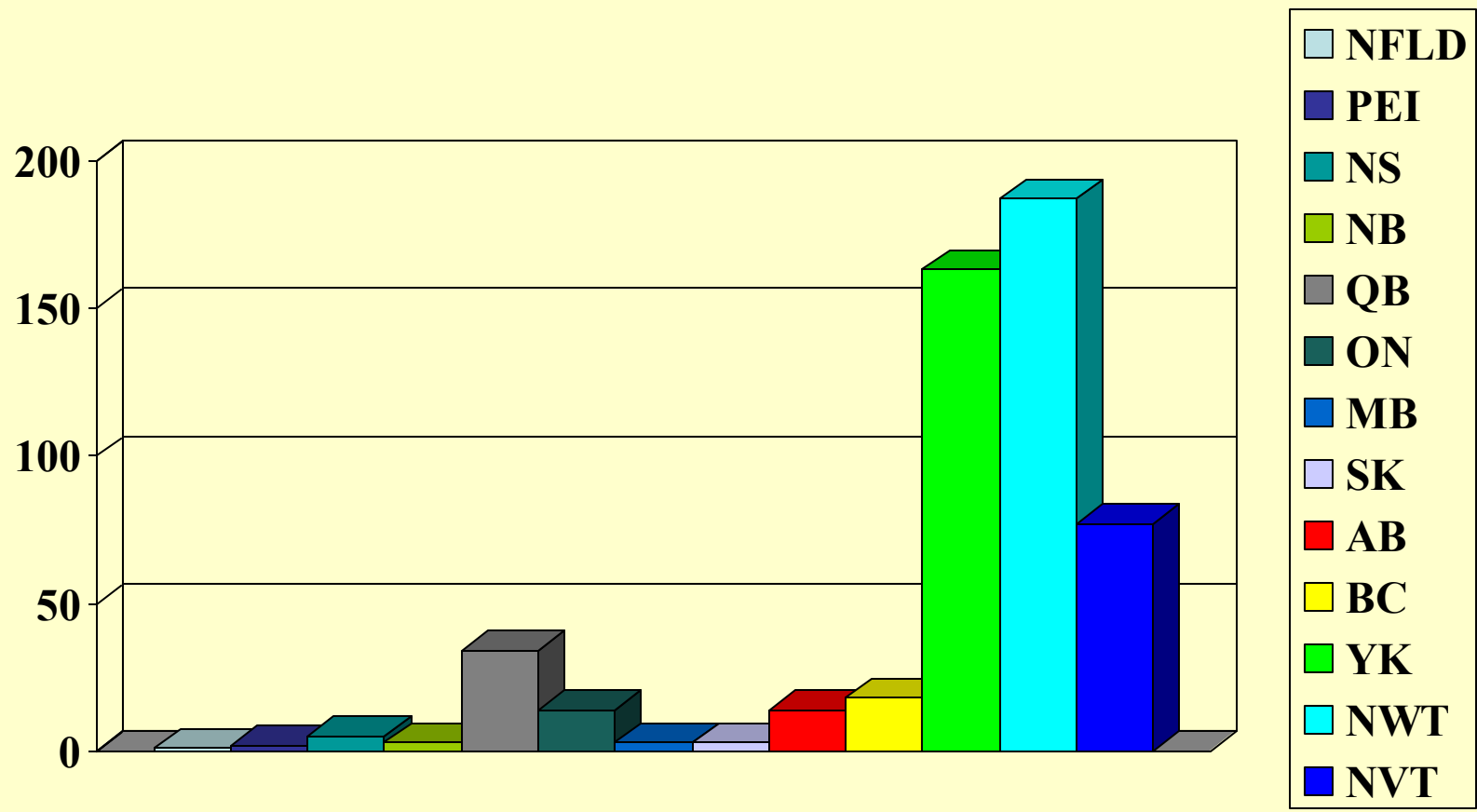
- 7065 - questionnaires mailed out
  - 153 - explicit refusals
  - 1114 - wrong address, duplicate registration, moved (no forwarding address), deceased
  - 169 - completed but ineligible (lived rural but worked urban, retired, long-term disability)
  - 1696 - 'Not heard from'
  - 5782 - eligible respondents [7065-(1114+169)]
- CALCULATION:  $3933/5782 = 68\%$

# Province of Residence N = 3933

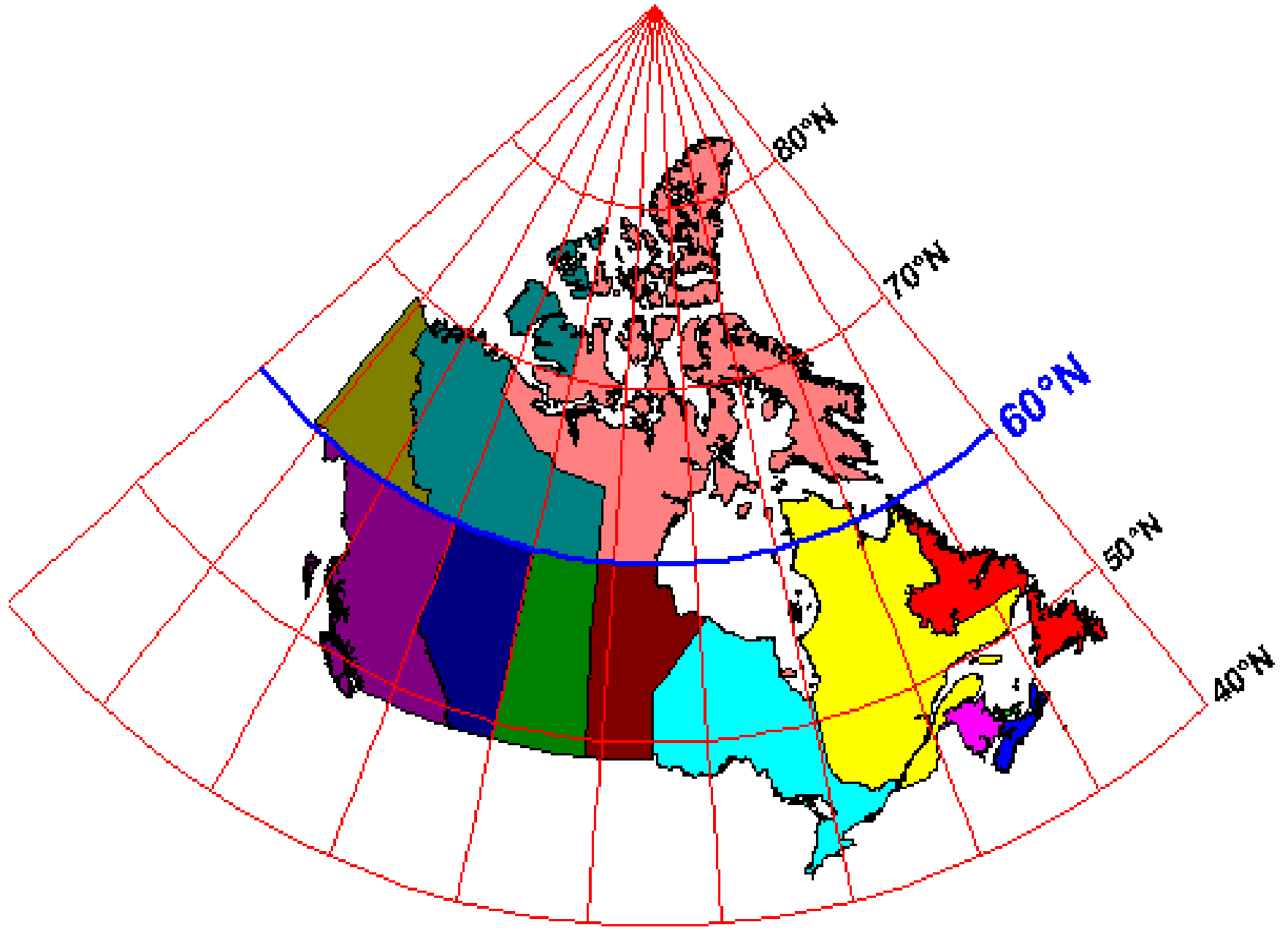




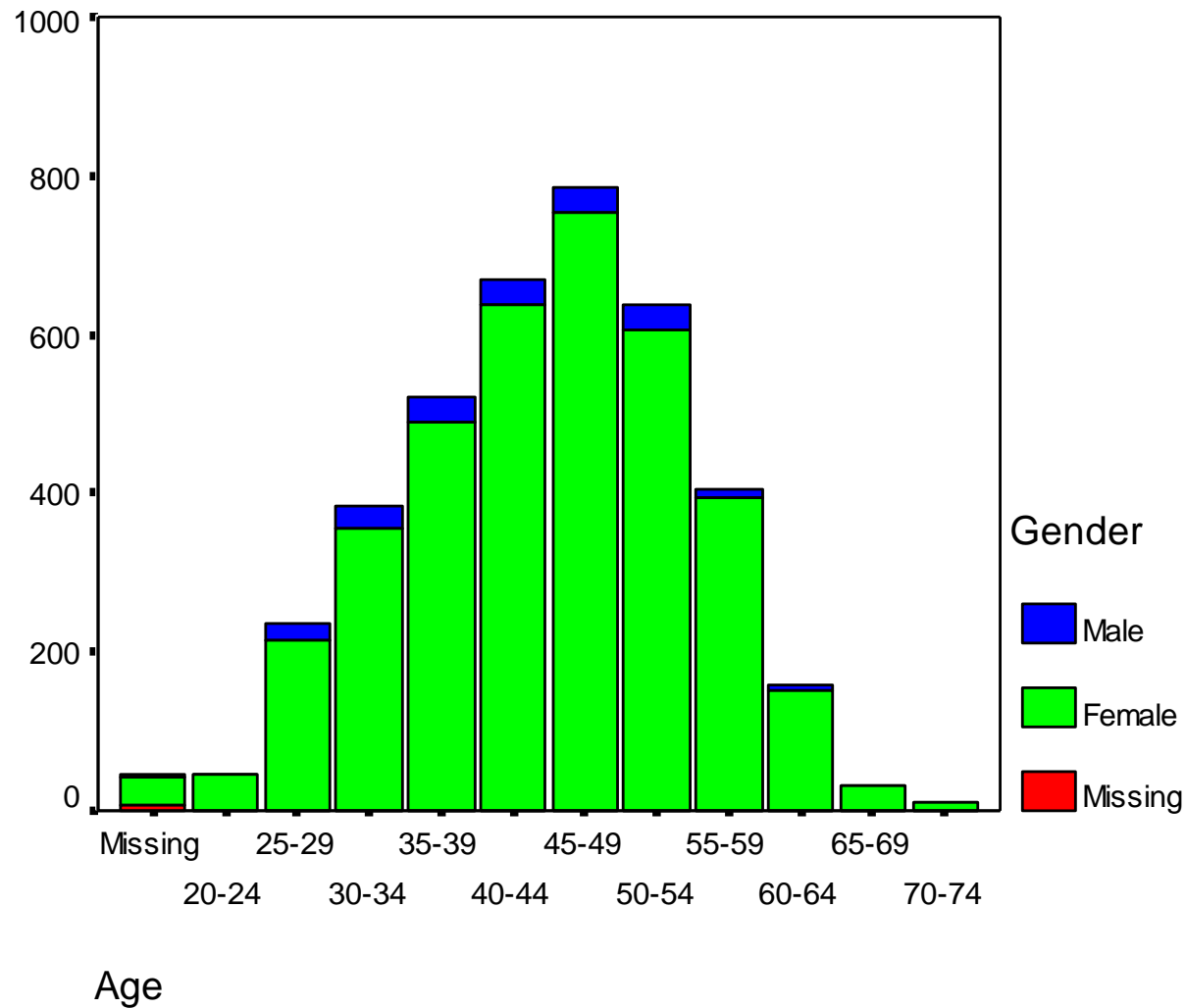
# Province of Residence n = 526



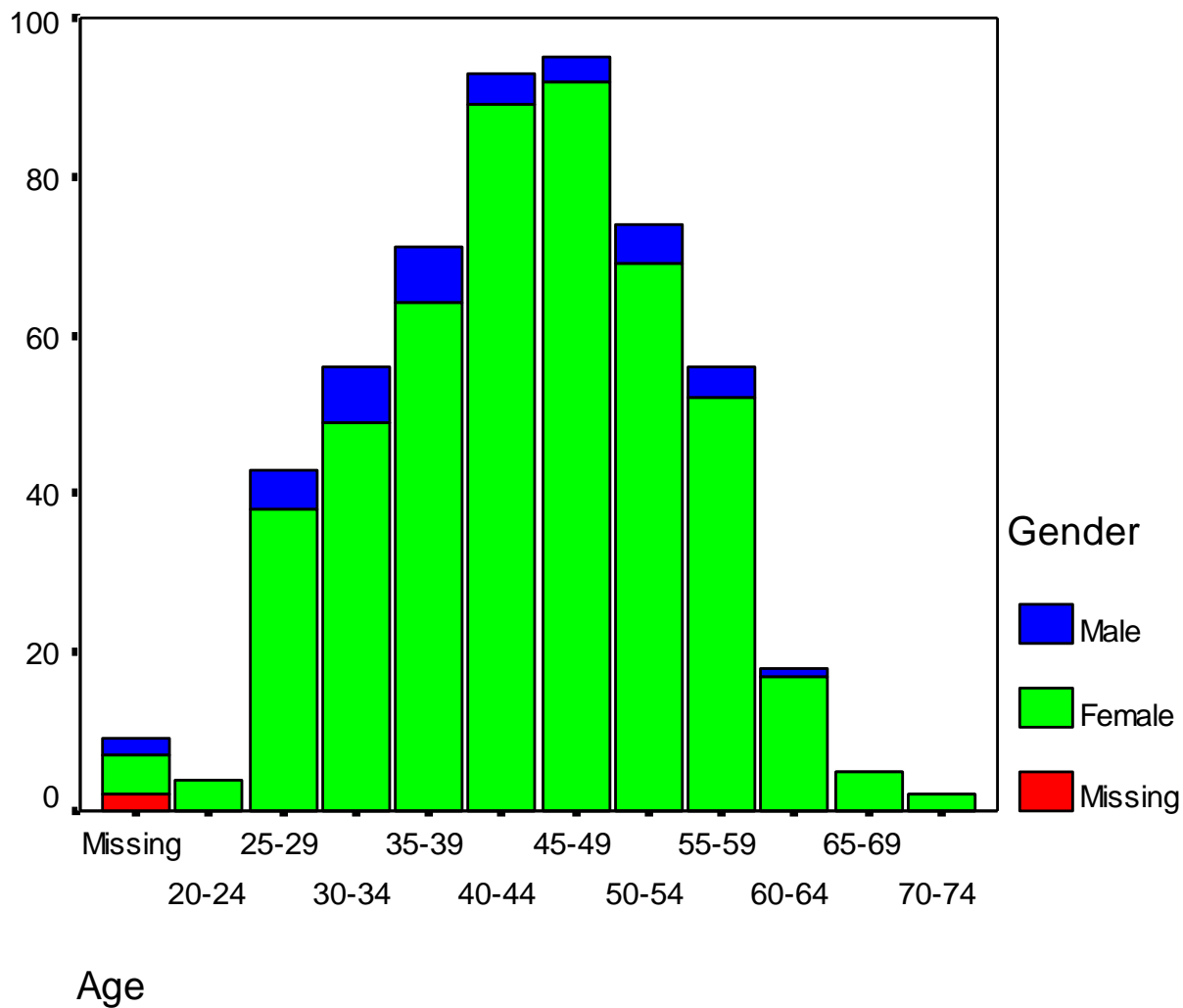




# Age & Gender: Total Sample



# Age & Gender: North of 60

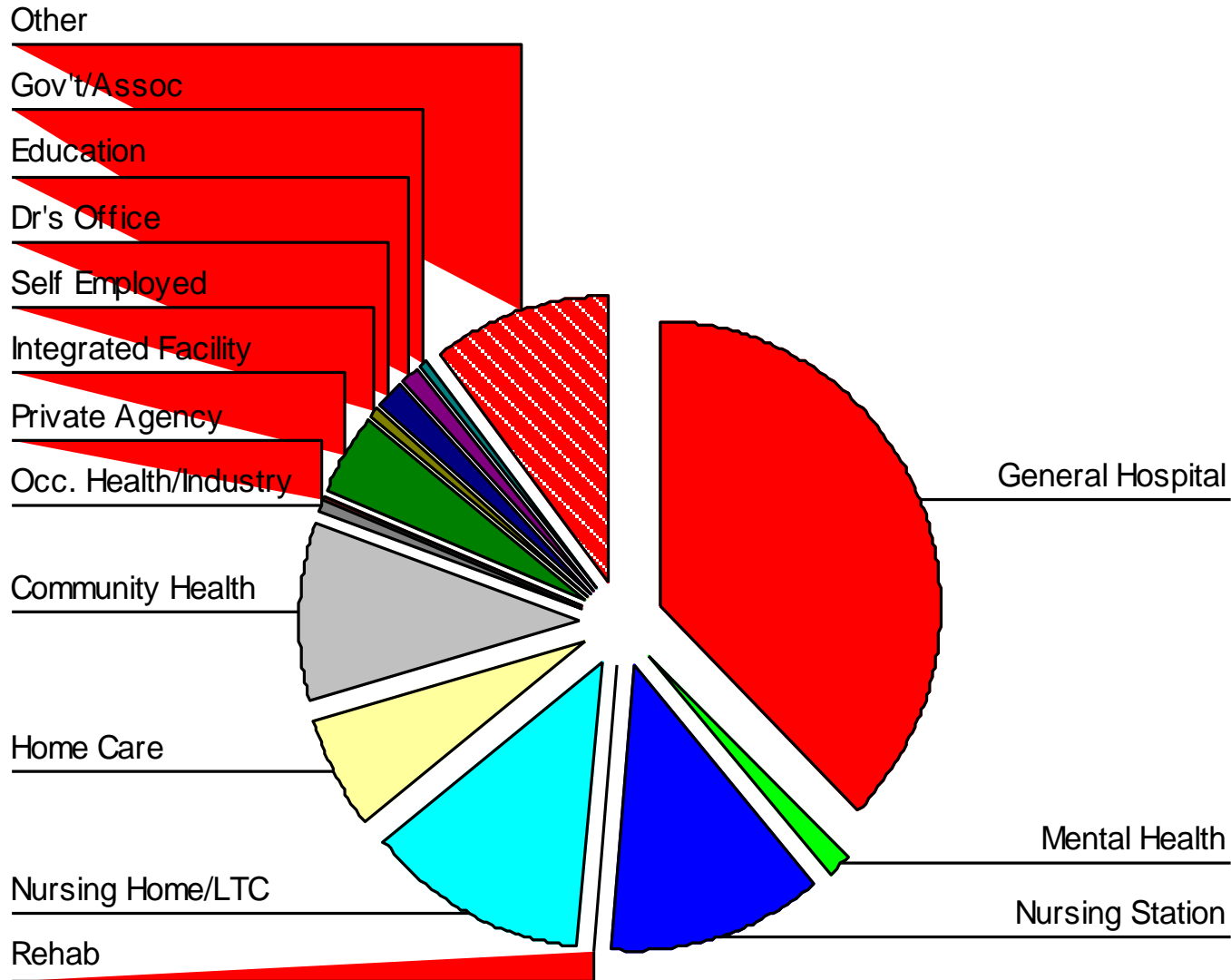




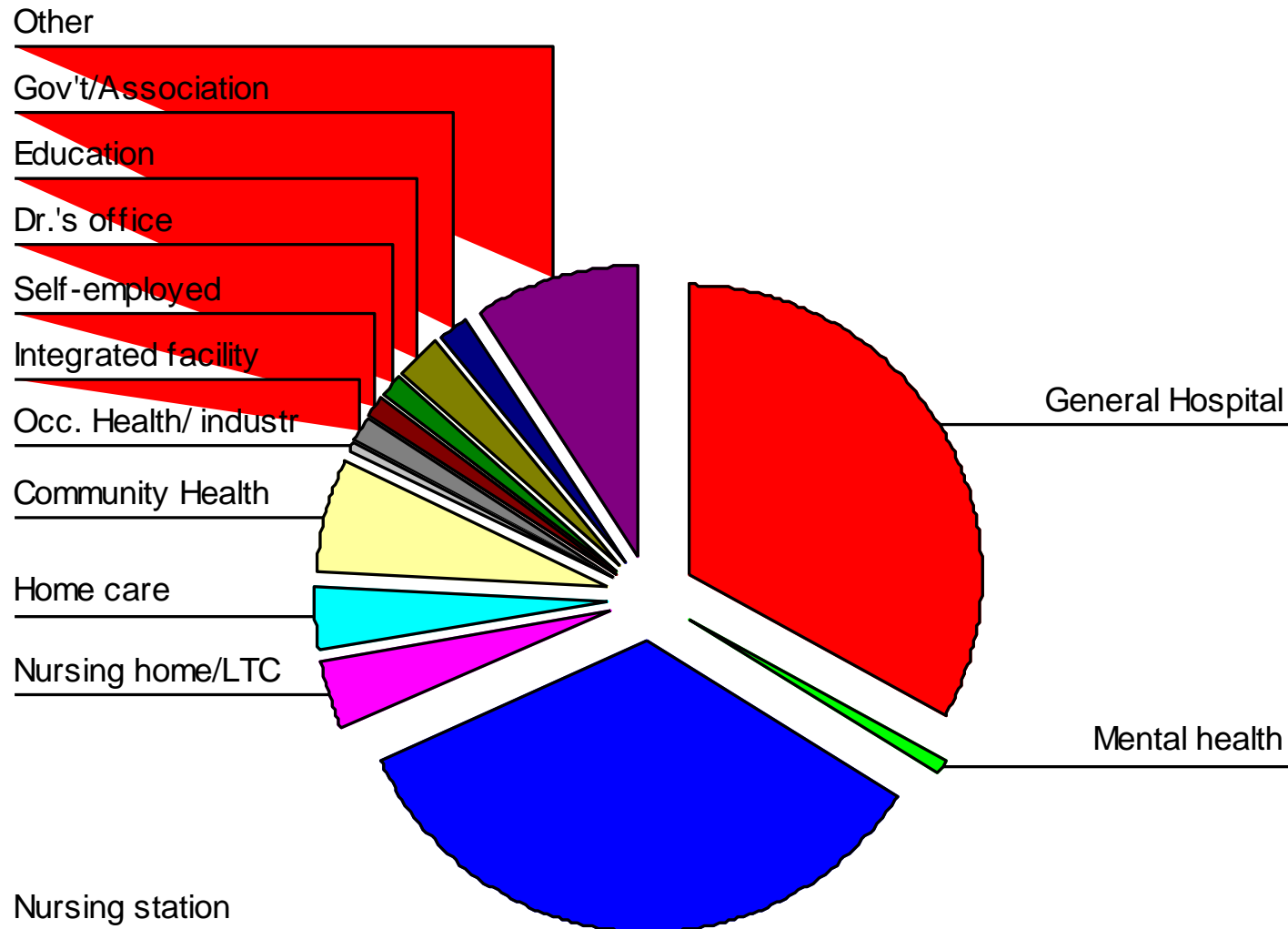
# Highest Nursing Education

- North of 60
  - Diploma 57.2%
  - Degree 38.6
  - Master 3.4%
  - Doctorate 0.2%
- Total Sample
  - Diploma 71.8%
  - Degree 25.7%
  - Master 1.3%
  - Doctorate 0% (1 case)

# Work Setting (N=3933)



# Work Setting (n=526)





# Facility Ownership: North of 60

Territory/prov. government :	329 (64.3%)
Local health board:	109 (21.3%)
Private facility:	27 (5.3%)
Tribal council/band:	12 (2.3%)
Federal government:	9 (1.2%)
Other:	26 (5.1%)





Northwest  
Territories

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Baker Lake Health Centre



NO PARKING

NO PARKING













**LA LOCHE CLINIC**





# RNs in Workplace: North of 60\*

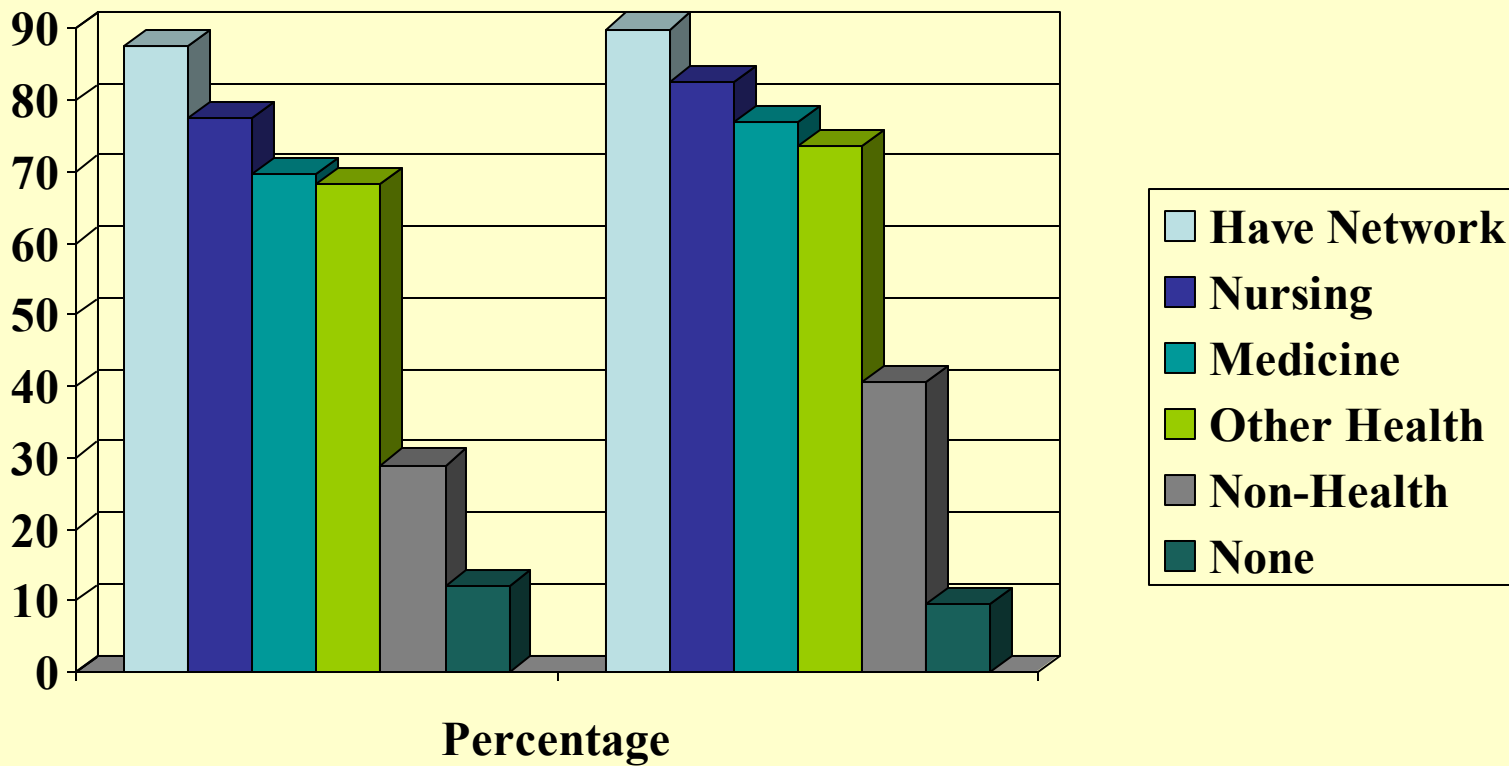
Sole RN in workplace:	44 RNs (8.9%)
>1 and < 6 RNs:	234 RNs (47.2%)
6 to 12 RNs in workplace:	109 RNs (22%)
13 to 35 RNs:	53 RNs (10.7%)
40 to 150 RNs:	56 RNs (11.3%)

\* 496 RNs responded to this question



# Colleague Support

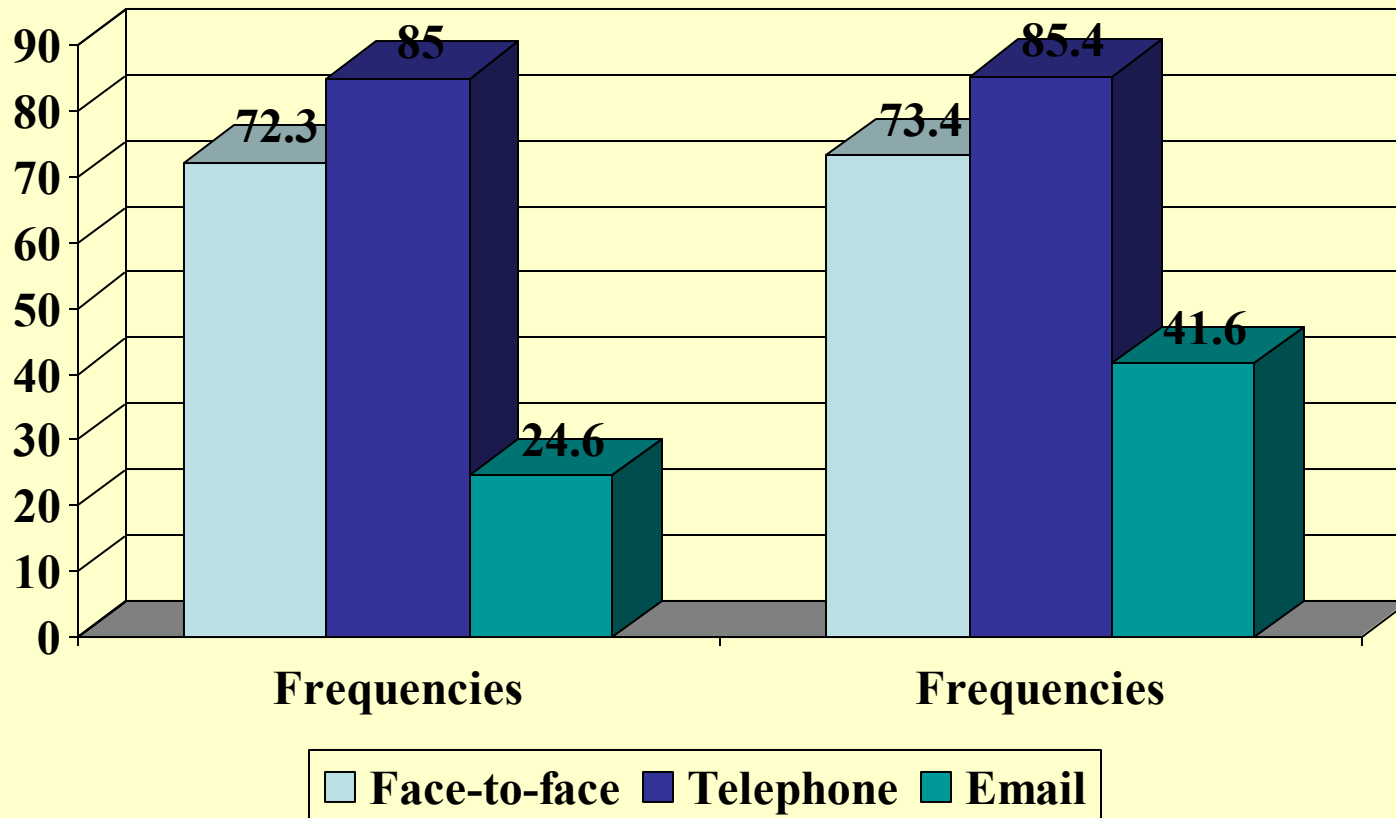
N = 3933    n = 526



# Colleague Contact

N=3933

n = 526







# Advanced Nursing Practice

- 54.2% of RNs who work north of 60, think of their role as advanced nursing practice
- 62% regularly evacuate patients
- 29.6% regularly manage deliveries
- 45.3% prescribe medication
- 48-53% regularly order, undertake & interpret diagnostic tests
- 32.1% directly refer to a medical specialist



# Frequency of Interdisciplinary Contact (n=526)

<i>Profession</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Q2-6 months</i>	<i>Q7-12 months</i>	<i>Not available</i>
<i>Public Health Services</i>	428 81.4%	28 5.3%	2 0.4%	3 0.6%	2 0.4%	44 8.7%
<i>Pharmacy Services</i>	389 74.0%	19 3.6%	3 0.6%	1 0.2%	1 0.2%	94 18.5%
<i>Home Care</i>	361 68.6%	54 10.3%	4 0.8%	2 0.4%	5 1.0%	82 16.1%
<i>Family Physician</i>	317 60.3%	24 4.6%	101 19.2%	45 8.6%	0 0.0%	22 4.3%
<i>Dental</i>	303 57.6%	21 4.0%	17 3.2%	113 21.5%	18 3.4%	41 7.9%
<i>Mental Health Services</i>	302 57.4%	19 3.6%	38 7.2%	61 11.4%	20 3.8%	67 13.2%



# Frequency of Interdisciplinary Contact (n=526)

<i>Profession</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Q2-6 months</i>	<i>Q7-12 months</i>	<i>Not available</i>
<i>Physiotherapy</i>	245 46.6%	18 3.4	10 1.9	55 10.5	46 8.7	131 25.9
<i>Nutritionist</i>	228 43.3	16 3.0	3 0.6	21 4.0	24 4.6	214 42.3
<i>Occupational Therapy</i>	226 43.0	19 3.6	11 2.1	60 11.4	52 9.9	135 26.8
<i>Alternative Medicine</i>	161 30.6	11 2.1	2 0.4	5 1.0	4 0.8	306 62.6
<i>Medical Specialist</i>	122 23.2	10 1.9	60 11.4	136 25.9	30 5.7	128 26.3



# How is nursing role different?

- Scope of practice
  - decision-making
  - critical thinking
  - expertise & knowledge recognized
  - teamwork essential
- Interdisciplinary
  - more support
  - collegial (GPs)
  - no specialists
  - few resources
  - perform roles of other professionals



# Autonomy

“In a rural setting you have more autonomy. The working relationship with other professionals is more collaborative. You must know a bit about everything. You utilize a wide variety of technical and interpersonal skills. I can’t imagine working in the south again.” (RN from NWT)



# Collaboration

“Very different. Population mostly aboriginal, different cultural concerns. Climate unforgiving. Long nights in winter. Greater camaraderie and support from each other. Greater collaboration between professionals and between health and community NGO agencies.” (RN from NWT)



# Changes in “Remote”

“This is much less remote than working in isolated fly-in outpost nursing stations in the early 70’s, when radio communications were intermittent and usually [you were] the only nurse. Here we can phone/email experts in our field, there are other nurses around to discuss questions. We don’t have the ‘big city’ facilities, but we do have the personal touch.” (RN from YT)





# Cultural Interface

“As a remote practitioner, I’m required to make astute decisions regarding health and wellness of clients in collaboration with the doctors and other professionals. My work is hands-on, it interfaces with the aboriginal culture and, hopefully, encourages an increase in aboriginal practitioners.”

(RN from SK)



# Respect

- “...easier to move forward because there is mutual respect [colleagues] and minimal levels of bureaucracy to overcome” (RN from Yukon Territory)
- “In rural nursing we are autonomous and respected by community and physicians” (RN from Newfoundland)



# Final comment...North of 60

“I love nursing in Northern Canada. I think we deliver some of the best Health Care that Canadians can access. I feel good about what I do. I love my autonomy, my expertise, my ability to collaborate. I love working with varied cultures. I love the flexibility in work schedules. There are bad days, under staffing, poor management, poor support – but no more than elsewhere.

(RN from Newfoundland/Labrador)



# Research Issues – North of 60

- Outpost nurses – professional group with no urban equivalent; small numbers
- Isolation of outpost nurse – Distance from researcher (geography & experience)
- Proximity needed to develop rapport and refine research questions
- Research funding with large travel budgets



# Evaluation Projects: North of 60

## IDEAS:

- Interdisciplinary “rounds” using technology
- Network development for sole RNs
- Demonstration projects with creative education methods (informal, case-based)
- Examine effectiveness of: (1) infrastructure supports; & (2) interdisciplinary team development at a distance
- Cultural competence development



# Definition of Rural and Remote

REMOTE: fly in, no doctor

RURAL: road access, no Starbucks

(RN from Quebec)







