

## **Abstract**

This is a phenomenological study of factors that influence and shape the work of effective nurse directors in Iceland. The study included an investigation of essential skills within this sphere of action, which are important to be aware of, and how they are developed. In order to gain a good overview of the nurse director's role, a discussion on the role of the leader and the manager within their activities was raised.

The data gathering method was focus groups, a semi-structured group interview where groups of individuals sharing an experience of a phenomenon (here, factors that influence and shape their work) view and discuss their experience. The data emerge from the group interaction. Fifteen nurse directors participated in the study, three focus group interviews were conducted. The interviews were tape-recorded and themes developed from analysis of transcribed interviews.

Sparse research within this field of nursing in Iceland and my interest in the further development of an independent nursing profession are the main reasons for choosing this research subject.

The findings of the study are that both the role of the leader and the manager are integrated within the work of the nurse director's role, and can not be separated, although it is important to be able to jump from one role to the other.

The following factors mainly influence and shape the work of effective nurse directors in Iceland:

Human resource management: A challenging factor where discussions regarding salary issues were interpreted as negative.

Financial management: Where the main challenge is to conform budget and quality patient care delivery.

Quality management and patient delivery care: These are strongly related to budget and employee empowerment.

Organisational structure: Respecting the culture and habits and staying loyal to the organisation.

Political issues: Making nursing visible to politicians and the environment.

Academic issues: The importance of evidence based practice in spite of lack of time.

Essential skills were related to personal knowledge, personal quality and communication. Having a clinical background and the importance of augmenting political skills were further important factors according to my findings. Experience and the appropriate education were identified as the best way to develop those essential skills.