

ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF THE NURSE PRACTITIONER ON THE
JAMAICAN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

BERYL JOYCE WEBLEY

The Nurse Practitioner programme was introduced into the primary health care system in 1977 after much negotiation and consultation with relevant interest groups. Since the introduction of the programme there have been many frustrations due to unfilled promises, thus massive resignations have occurred and the number of persons entering the programme has decreased.

Efforts have been made by the Ministry of Health on two occasions to discontinue training due to questions about its cost effectiveness.

This study was conducted in an attempt to identify the impact of this programme on the health care system to see if it has been effective, thus worth continuing. It compared the Nurse Practitioner in the private and public sectors.

Data collection was through self administered questionnaires, checklists and interviews.

Findings highlighted a definite improvement in the health status of individuals exposed to management of their health problems by the Nurse Practitioner. This was in keeping with previous studies done in North America.

However, in quantifying the difference in production hours lost in industry due to ill health since the introduction of the programme, there was uncertainty as to any real achievement.

The main limitation of the study was the small sample size. The study population was also small but scattered across the island thus limiting the possibility of studying it in its entirety in the very short time available for data collection.