



## Nursing Praxis COVID-19 Special Issue: Introduction

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### Citation

Adams, S. (2021). Nursing Praxis COVID-19 Special Issue: Introduction [Editorial]. *Nursing Praxis in Aotearoa New Zealand*, 37(3), iii-v, <https://doi.org/10.36951/27034542.2021.025>

This Special Issue intends to capture a *moment in time* of the COVID-19 pandemic by recording reflections, activities, and experiences of nurses from a range of contributors across Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally. Nurses as clinicians, educators, leaders, researchers, and academics were invited to submit abstracts to *Nursing Praxis* in April 2021. Full manuscripts were received between August and October 2021 and subjected to the usual peer review processes. The result is a compendium of articles which include short reflective pieces; commentaries and critiques; original research; and in-depth pieces as case studies, *kōrero* or *talanoa* (discussion). They provide a snapshot during a time in Aotearoa which will historically be known as the elimination phase of COVID-19 (from February 2020 to December 2021).

The issue begins with a timeline depicting the key events and decisions that relate to Aotearoa New Zealand and nursing through the elimination phase of COVID-19 (Hales, 2021). Alongside this timeline are references to the articles locating their topics within a particular time period of the response. Two editorials are presented. The first is a polemic drawing on the legacy of Te Puea Hērangi, which stipulates the need to listen to Māori nurses and Māori nurse leaders who promote hauora (health and wellbeing) and equity in their communities, (Hunter & Tipa, 2021). The second reflects on how the nursing voice has so often been missing in key policy decisions at national, regional, and local levels throughout the pandemic, despite the hero status often afforded to nurses through the pandemic (and particularly overseas) (Popoola, 2021).

A series of shorter articles then describe how nurses were instrumental in setting up the national contact centre (Hales et al., 2021); developed infection prevention and control policies within a district health board (Berger, 2021); trained nurses to provide lifesaving non-invasive ventilation to critically unwell patients (Malik, 2021); and set up triage processes in the emergency department based

upon earlier research (Lockett, 2021). Other nurses reflected on the value of having clinical currency to return to frontline practice in critical care from an education setting (Blunden & Poulsen, 2021); change the delivery of education to nursing students to optimise learnings from the pandemic (Thomson et al., 2021); and the challenges for academics in providing pastoral care to nursing students (Winnington & Cook, 2021). A newly established nursing leadership group advocated for the aged residential care sector at a national level and with district health boards, supporting local facilities to protect their residents (Hughes et al., 2021); Māori nurse leaders navigated the health system between local health providers, the public health unit, and the primary health enterprise to promote hauora for Māori whānau in rural communities (Davis et al., 2021); and Pacific nurse leaders described the challenges and commitment to Pacific communities and the need for greater acknowledgement and investment in the Pacific nursing workforce (Smith et al., 2021). Three pieces of qualitative research are presented exploring registered nurses' sensemaking and resilience to maintain their wellbeing through the pandemic (Cook et al., 2021); nurses' challenges including stigmatisation, while working in managed isolation and quarantine facilities (Jamieson et al., 2021); and how nurses adapted to new technologies and the importance of providing good access to information, software, internet, and support (Collins & Honey, 2021). Case studies from Aotearoa, Australia, Canada and the United States provide an overview of the COVID-19 response to Indigenous Peoples by governments, nurses, and Indigenous Peoples themselves, noting how pandemics result in increased inequities and the necessity for Indigenous leadership, self-determination, and sovereignty (Clark et al., 2021). Finally, academics from the International Network of Child and Family Centered Care (INCFCC), share children's self-reported experiences through lockdown, using mediums



including art, poetry, and storytelling (Foster et al., 2021).

We know that every nurse has a story to tell, as does every person in Aotearoa. All of us have had to make adjustments to our daily lives and routines, with many people being severely disaffected with changes to jobs, income, schooling, friendships, whānau, community, careers, isolation, and health and wellbeing. On top of the many personal challenges experienced, nurses have demonstrated their ability to respond creatively and iteratively to deliver services that protect and care for the public, while putting their own personal safety, and that of their whānau, at risk.

As health workers, we know that the ramifications of the pandemic will be far-reaching with a long tail of recovery for many. We are witnessing high levels of stress, anxiety, and even anger within communities, and acknowledge that frontline workers, who have gone above and beyond what would usually be expected of them, have experienced abuse, stigmatisation, and racism. At the same time, we know that inequities that were present before the pandemic have been exacerbated, highlighting persisting issues of access to health, education, and social services, and institutional racism.

Living with COVID-19 is the next phase of this global pandemic beginning, as we go to press, on 15 December 2021 with the opening up of regional borders and national travel. This new normal will be with us for the foreseeable future and nurses, along with colleagues from across the health and disability sector, will continue to respond to health and wellbeing needs of their communities. Ongoing research is going to be critical to explore the lived experiences of people and the work of nurses during the pandemic, enabling us to acknowledge the past and learn for the future.

### **Acknowledgements and Bouquets:**

**Editors:** Associate Professor Catherine Cook, Dr Mandie Foster, and Dr Helen Rook have worked tirelessly to complete this Special Issue of *Nursing Praxis*, from the call to abstracts, to finalising manuscripts ready for publication. This is possibly the most ambitious project yet for *Nursing Praxis* and certainly the biggest issue.

**Reviewers:** *Nursing Praxis* would like to thank the many reviewers who carefully, and in a very timely

way, reviewed manuscripts for this issue. The peer review process is crucial for academic integrity.

**Contributors:** Finally, *Nursing Praxis* would like to thank the contributors for developing fabulous manuscripts, responding to feedback, and working with us to deliver a completed issue. We hope this Special Issue honours your contribution to the safety, protection, and hauora of individuals, whānau, and communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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