

Experiences Designing and Testing a Questionnaire Focusing on LGBTQIA+ Attitudes Among Certified Nursing Assistants Working at Nursing Facilities

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Introduction

Research has shown that many LGBTQ+ elders worry about discrimination and are concerned that they may need to hide their identity if they use long-term care service. The purpose of this study is to document comfort level and knowledge level of individuals working in the health field. Our target population for this survey is nursing assistants working in long-term care facilities. Nursing assistants specifically have been chosen because they have the lowest education level among health workers which makes it more likely their comfort and education levels would be lower.

Sample Design

The sample frame for the project was hand-curated by Baillie Fleming, a former student in the Healthcare Administration program. In order to ensure a representative sample of long-term health care facilities, a complex sample design was used. First, we stratified by Urban versus Rural County. We then attempted to sub-stratify by type of ownership (for-profit, non-profit, county, state) and size of facility (small, medium, large). However, we discovered that all strata were not present in all counties. To create more even probabilities of selection, we collapsed strata within rural/urban status, creating new strata containing multiple contiguous counties. Specifically, we printed up maps with zip codes, marked how many facilities were in each location and divided the zip codes into groups of around forty. In the end, counties were grouped into 11 urban strata and 12 rural strata.

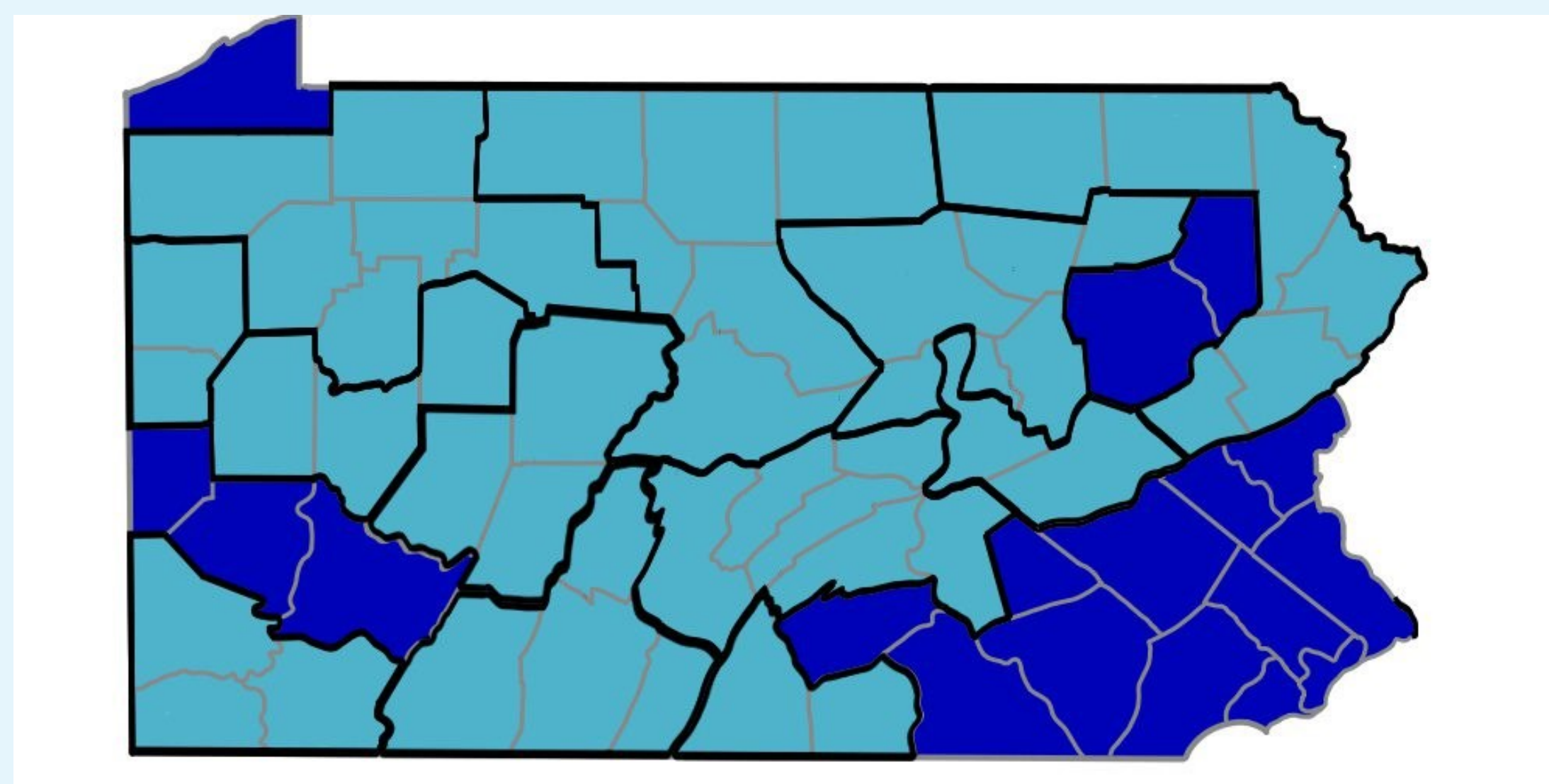


Figure 1: Primary strata for the sample design. Rural strata are light blue; urban strata are royal blue.

Sample Design, continued

Within each strata between 4-6 substrata based on ownership and facility size were formed, and a sampling weight based on estimated number of nursing staff was created for each facility. Facilities were then selected in a probability-proportional-to-size method, to allow final weights assigned to each response to be consistent as possible.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire design is based on several previous studies and is designed to measure nursing staff preparation for working with LGBTQIA+ patients, their experiences with LGBTQIA+ patients, and their attitudes toward those patients. However, the original questions considered for inclusion in the survey confounded concepts around gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. Although three separate modules were developed to allow for specific questions related to experiences and attitudes towards trans patients, non-binary patients, and non-heterosexual patients were developed, several issues arose with this questionnaire structure. First, the response burden had tripled as a result of developing separate sets of questions for each of these subgroups. Second, the questions themselves had become repetitive, meaning that respondents might begin to lose interest in answering the questions thoughtfully.

To reduce the response burden and remove the possibility of the repetition annoying or boring respondents, the decision was made to design the survey on the Qualtrics platform so that for each respondent, only one of the three modules was randomly selected and displayed.

Project Status

IRB approval has been obtained for the field testing phase of this study. Several long-term care facilities that were not selected as part of the study sample were approached and agreed to participate in the next phase of the study, during which the questionnaire will be tested and finalized.

Next Steps

Because the questionnaire design has not been validated, our first step will be to utilize a questionnaire design technique called cognitive interviewing. In cognitive interviewing, each question on the survey is vetted through observation of respondents as they navigate the survey, respondents' use of "think aloud" to share their thinking process as they respond to questions, and the use of probing questions to further understand how respondents perceive and answer the questions. Typically multiple waves of cognitive interviews are performed, with editing between each wave, until all major misunderstandings of survey questions and other survey issues are addressed.

Participants are currently being solicited to participate in the cognitive interviewing process for a small level of compensation, and the cognitive interviewing effort is expected to be completed this summer.

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