# Participant information sheet

**Date Information Sheet Produced:**

02/02/24

**Project Title**

How new graduate nurses address sexual harassment from patients in the workplace:

An interpretive-descriptive study.

**An Invitation**

My name is Jane Marshall and I work at AUT as a nursing clinical educator. I have been employed in this role for over 9 years and enjoy working with students in their clinical placements. Before this role, I worked in the public hospital system for over 20 years in medical, surgical, orthopaedic, and emergency department areas.

I am interested in interviewing you if you have experienced any instances of sexual harassment from patients in your workplace. From my own experience and when working with students, I am aware that many nurses experience sexual harassment but often this is unreported.

Legally, sexual harassment is a health and safety workplace harm that workplaces are required to address if someone chooses to make a formal complaint. Despite legislation, sexual harassment of nurses is commonplace. Sexual harassment is defined by the Human Rights Act (1993) as “any unwelcome or offensive sexual behaviour that is repeated or is serious enough to have a harmful effect”. Sexual harassment occurs across a continuum from sexual remarks and fleeting touch to overt sexual approaches.

This research will be for my master’s in nursing science qualification, and I hope it will help identify if this problem occurs, and result in increased support for students, new graduates, and registered nurses. The findings may result in publication in academic nursing journals and presentations at conferences.

Participating in this research will not advantage or disadvantage you as your details and workplace details will be kept confidential.

**What is the purpose of this research?**

The purpose of this research is to explore new graduate nurses’ experiences of sexual harassment from patients.

I hope to gain insights as to how new graduates cope with these situations, to determine if this affects their decision to stay nursing or not and what support, education and processes are needed to assist them to thrive in their careers.

This topic is important as support is needed to retain our new graduate nurses in Aotearoa, New Zealand. This is due to the worldwide nursing shortage and staffing retention difficulties. International studies show sexual harassment of nurses is a major concern and nurses are reluctant to report this. Relatively little research has been conducted into sexual harassment in the healthcare setting, both internationally and in Aotearoa New Zealand, possibly as it is a sensitive subject.

If you would like to participate, I would like to interview you face to face, either in person at AUT or by Zoom meeting if more convenient, to discuss your experiences of sexual harassment from patients.

**How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You responded to the advertisement in either the Kai Tiaki, the magazine of the New Zealand Nursing Organisation (NZNO) members, on the AUT website for Research participant recruitment, from your course Canvas page or to the online notice board mailouts to College of Nurses members.

You contacted me via email or phone to show your interest in participating in this research and that you meet the below criteria. You have been given two weeks before the interview, to have time to reflect on whether to participate.

**Participation criteria:**

* Are you a new graduate registered nurse in your first two years post-graduation?
* Are you working in a nursing-related area in Aotearoa, with patients/residents/service users who are predominantly adults aged over 18?
* Have you experienced sexual harassment from patients as defined by the Human Rights Act (1993) definition above?

**Please note the exclusion criteria:**

* + Have you had an admission to a mental health facility in the last six months?
  + Are you currently under the care of a community mental health team within the last six months?

If so, you are not eligible to participate in this research.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

* + Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice). Whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you.
  + You can withdraw from the study at any time.
  + If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.
  + You will need to sign a consent form which will outline your right to withdraw from the study at any time.
  + You have the right to stop the interview process at any time.
  + If you can be interviewed face to face you can sign the consent form on paper but if you prefer to be interviewed by electronic platform such as “Zoom” or Microsoft Teams, there is an electronic consent form to sign.

**Please note:** Travel reimbursement for petrol is available so you are not financially disadvantaged if you need to travel to an AUT campus for interviews.

**What will happen in this research?**

* Interviews will be recorded, and these will be transcribed by myself. I will be aiming to interview eight to ten participants to identify any common themes based on participants’ shared experiences for my research.
* Once my research is finalised, I will contact participants to outline my findings.
* Please be reassured that all your contact information and recordings both audio and audio-visual (such as “Zoom” or Microsoft Teams recordings) will be kept confidential under the Privacy Act 2020. AUTEC guidelines will be adhered to so all information both written and recorded will be kept confidential in a secure manner.

**What are the discomforts and risks?**

I am aware this is a sensitive topic, and you may feel uncomfortable and /or emotional discussing any sexual harassment you have experienced. This may also affect you physically as you could experience insomnia, stomach upsets and other physical or emotional symptoms. However, you may feel relief talking about experiences and may feel empowered after discussing these.

You can stop the interview at any time if you experience any discomfort.

Sexual harassment is illegal, and you have the right to be supported in your workplace. See the government Workspace website for further information:

<https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/sexual-harassment/>

Your place of work will have designated people for you to talk to about this issue if you choose to follow up further.

**How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

AUT Student Counselling and Mental Health can offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly because of participation in the research and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

* drop into our centre at WB203 City Campus
* email [counselling@aut.ac.nz](mailto:counselling@aut.ac.nz)
* or call 921 9292.
* let the receptionist know that you are a research participant, and provide the title of my research, my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet.

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling at <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health>

**Legal rights:**

Sexual harassment is illegal even if the offender is mentally unsound or has cognitive deterioration. Management of this will be to look at the legal rights links below and AUT counselling can support you if you wish to lay a legal complaint.

**Please be advised of your legal rights regarding sexual harassment in the links below:**

[Sexual harassment | WorkSafe](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/sexual-harassment/)

[Sexual Harassment Guidelines (tikatangata.org.nz)](https://tikatangata.org.nz/resources-and-support/guidelines/sexual)

**What are the benefits?**

You may experience some positive emotions, as discussing your experiences and contributing to this research could have beneficial results for others.

You will be assisting my research for my MNSc (master’s in health science degree). Any information gained as to how new graduate nurses address sexual harassment from patients in the workplace will also assist in identifying processes to help prepare students during their training. I am interested in discovering if new graduate nurses are reporting these situations.

This research may be used for journal articles and be presented at conferences to increase awareness about sexual harassment from patients in clinical practice. This research may identify what support, education and processes are needed to assist new graduate nurses to thrive in their careers. This topic is important as we need to support and retain our new graduate nurses in Aotearoa, New Zealand due to the worldwide nursing shortage and staffing retention difficulties.

I will ensure I provide you and all participants with a one- or two-page summary of the findings of this research.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

* Meetings can be face-to-face at an AUT location (and recorded on a digital voice recorder) or be arranged and recorded on Microsoft Teams or Zoom electronic platforms. I will ensure I am interviewing from a private space where the meeting cannot be overheard.
* Data will be stored as per AUT’s data management protocol according to AUTECS’s guidelines and procedures.
* Limited demographic data will be collected to protect your identity.
* Demographic data will include a broad description of the area of your work and the months of your post-graduate practice.
* Your gender and ethnicity data will be collected as research highlights sexual harassment of women and some ethnic groups are over-represented in harassment.
* Demographic data on age will be collected using five-year age bands.
* All your details will be kept confidential, and the transcripts will be anonymized regarding your name and workplace.
* My supervisor will be given the master list of participants’ names, contact details and the pseudonyms used, to be kept in a secure locked filing cabinet.
* Recordings will be kept safe digitally on OneDrive and accessed using a designated password-protected computer.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

You will ideally participate for about 60 minutes of interview time plus travel time to the interview room at AUT (unless the interview is online). If you need to travel to an AUT premises for the interview a travel reimbursement in the form of a petrol voucher will be available so you are not disadvantaged financially through travel expenses.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

After your initial contact with myself after responding to the advertisement, you can consider whether to be interviewed for one month before an interview is arranged.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

I will provide you and other participants with a one or two-page summary of my findings.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor,

Dr Catherine Cook, email: [catherine.cook@aut.ac.nz](mailto:catherine.cook@aut.ac.nz)

phone: .09 921 9999 ext 6651

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

**Researcher Contact Details:**

Jane Marshall

[jane.marshall@aut.ac.nz](mailto:jane.marshall@aut.ac.nz)

021 958 954 (AUT work phone)

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

Dr Catherine Cook, email: [catherine.cook@aut.ac.nz](mailto:catherine.cook@aut.ac.nz)

phone: .09 921 9999 ext 6651

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *2/2/24 final ethics approval was granted*, AUTEC Reference number *23/352*.**