

Public Health Nurses' Experience of Collaboration with Primary Care Providers in Northern British Columbia

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Presenter Disclosures

- ▶ Nothing to disclose.
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Research Problem

- ▶ Public health nurses (PHNs) and primary care providers (PCPs) will need to work more closely together in primary care homes and interprofessional teams, but little is known about how these providers collaborate.

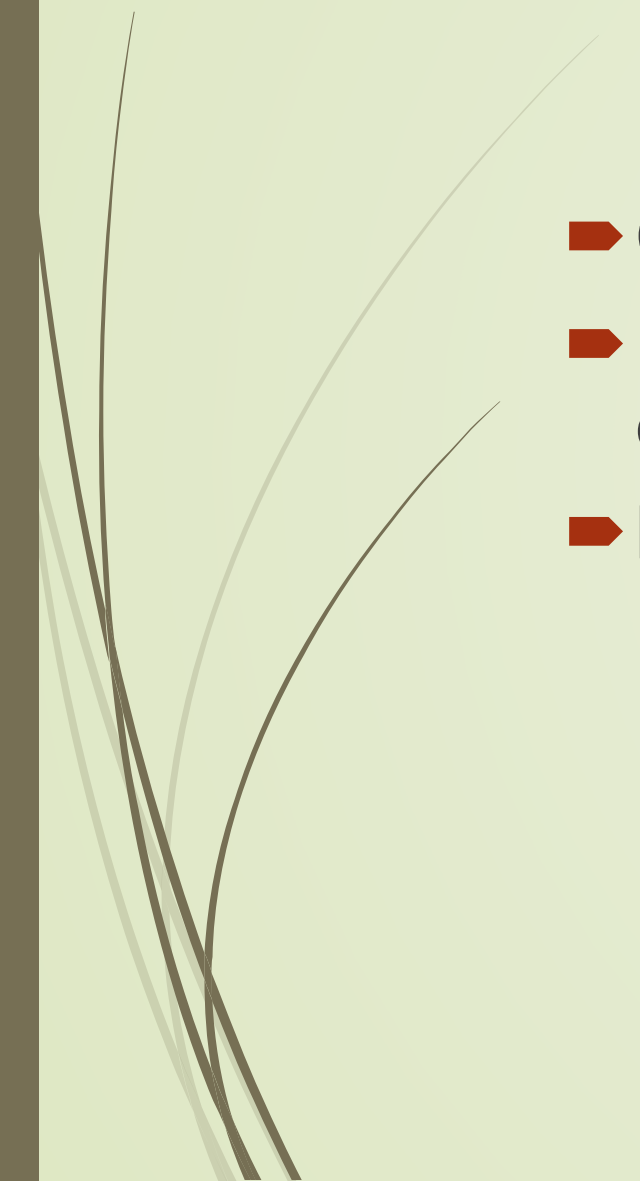


Study Purpose

- ▶ To develop a better understanding of how PHNs collaborate with PCPs in a rural, northern setting.
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Research Design & Participants

- ▶ Qualitative research approach.
 - ▶ Interviews with 15 PHNs in 7 different communities of various sizes in northern B.C.
 - ▶ Ethical approval from UNBC and Northern Health.
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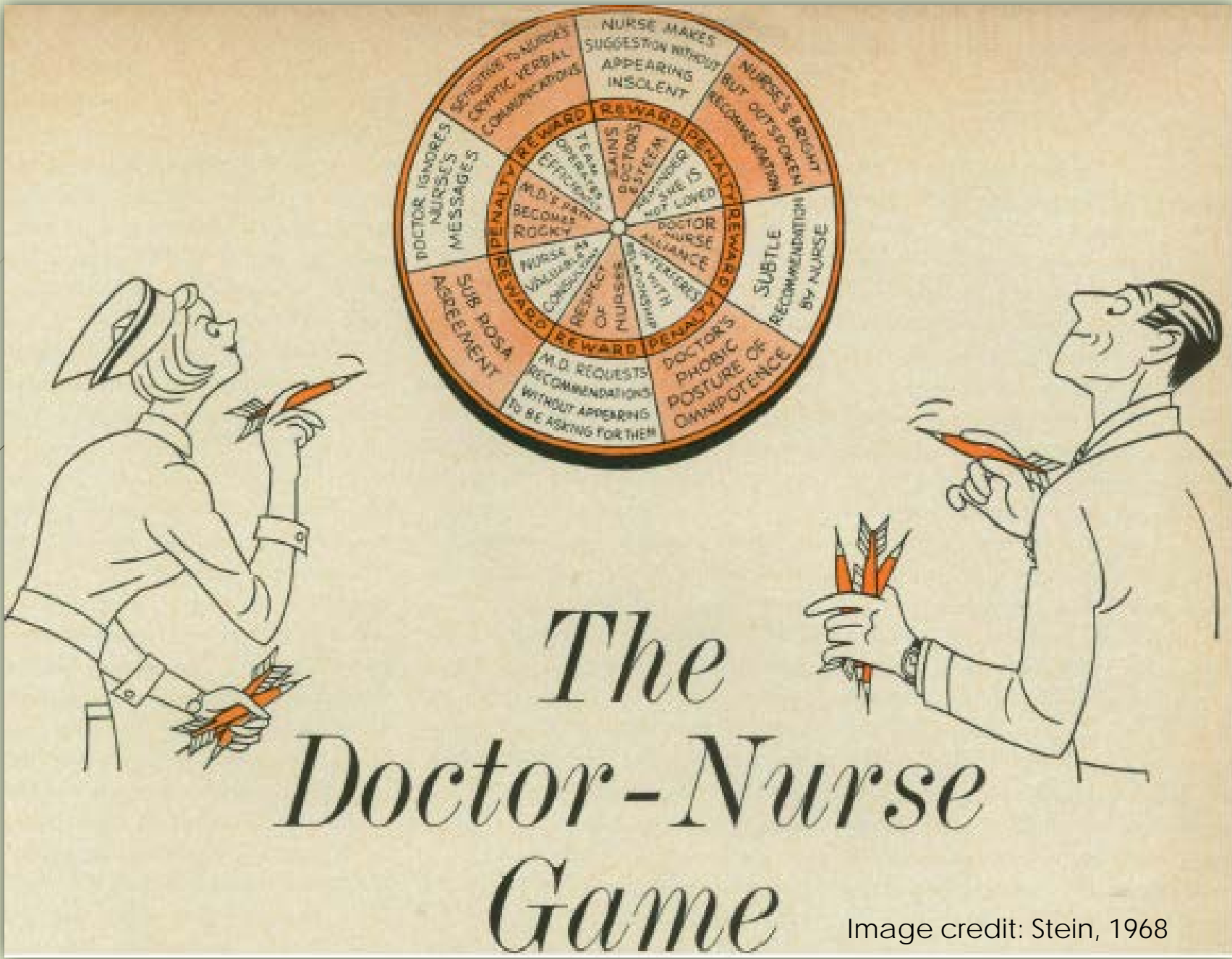
Data Collection & Analysis

- Interviews conducted between November, 2015, and January, 2016.
 - PHNs described day-to-day experiences of collaborating with PCPs.
 - Shared advice for fostering and sustaining collaboration in future primary care homes and interprofessional teams.
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Overview of Findings

- ▶ Collaboration was evolving from ad hoc to intentional and sustained over time.
- ▶ A muted form of the “doctor-nurse game” was being played (Stein, 1968).



The Doctor-Nurse Game

Image credit: Stein, 1968

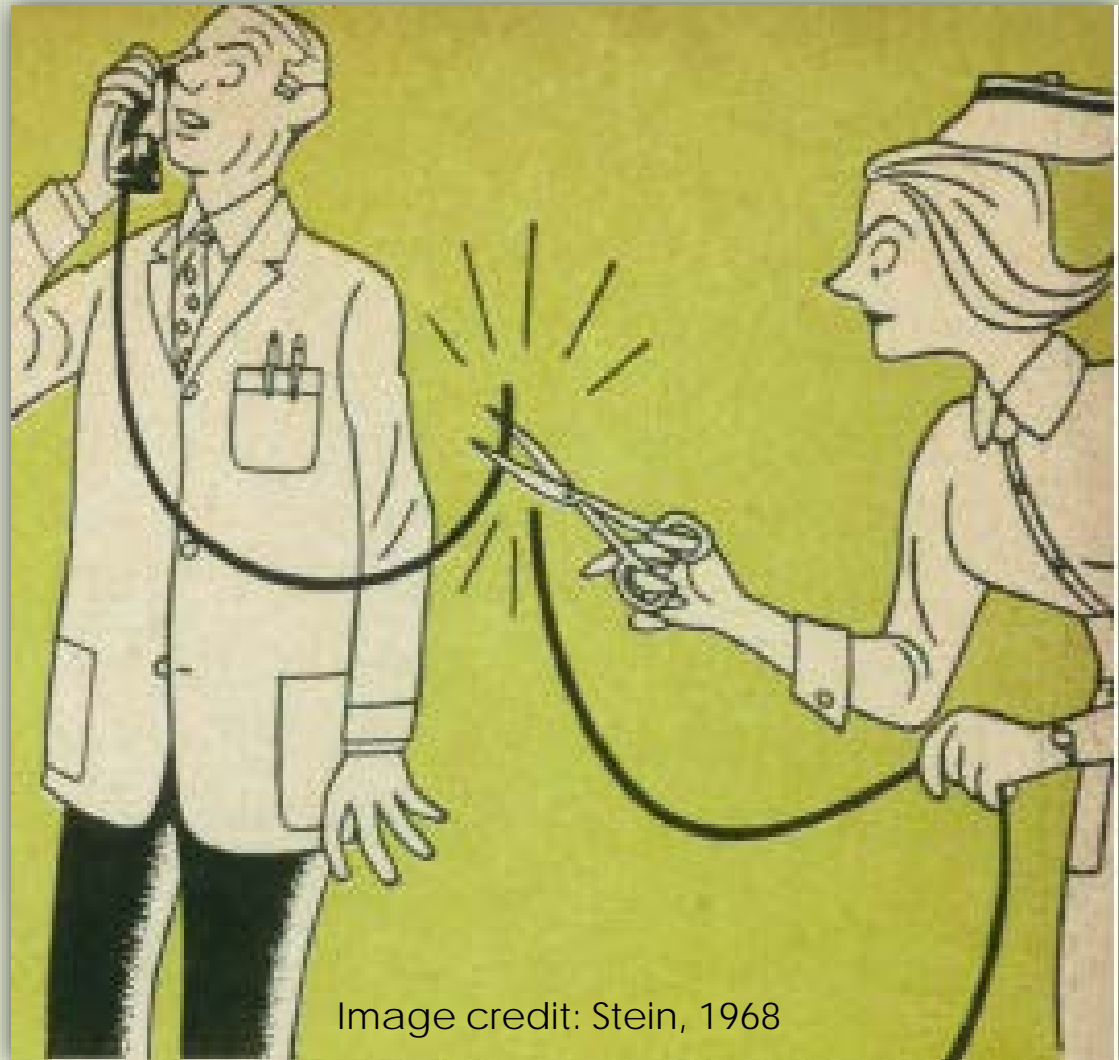


Image credit: Stein, 1968

Power

- Providers were distracted from client care when they were focused on harnessing power.
- Client care was positively impacted when providers were attuned to power imbalances.



Autonomy

- ▶ Examples showed working with physicians supported autonomous practice.
- ▶ Autonomous practice might just look different in interprofessional teams.



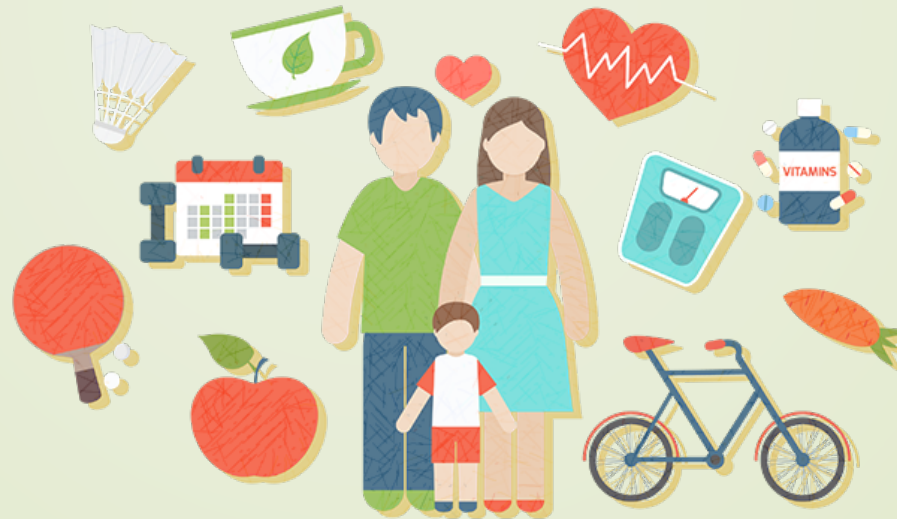
Communication

- Essential to establish a connection, share information, and collaboratively plan care.
- Two-way communication needed in urgent situations and for complex clients.



A Public Health Perspective

- Knowledge and skill in public health practice, population health, and social justice influenced collaboration.



Example: Unsuccessful Collaboration

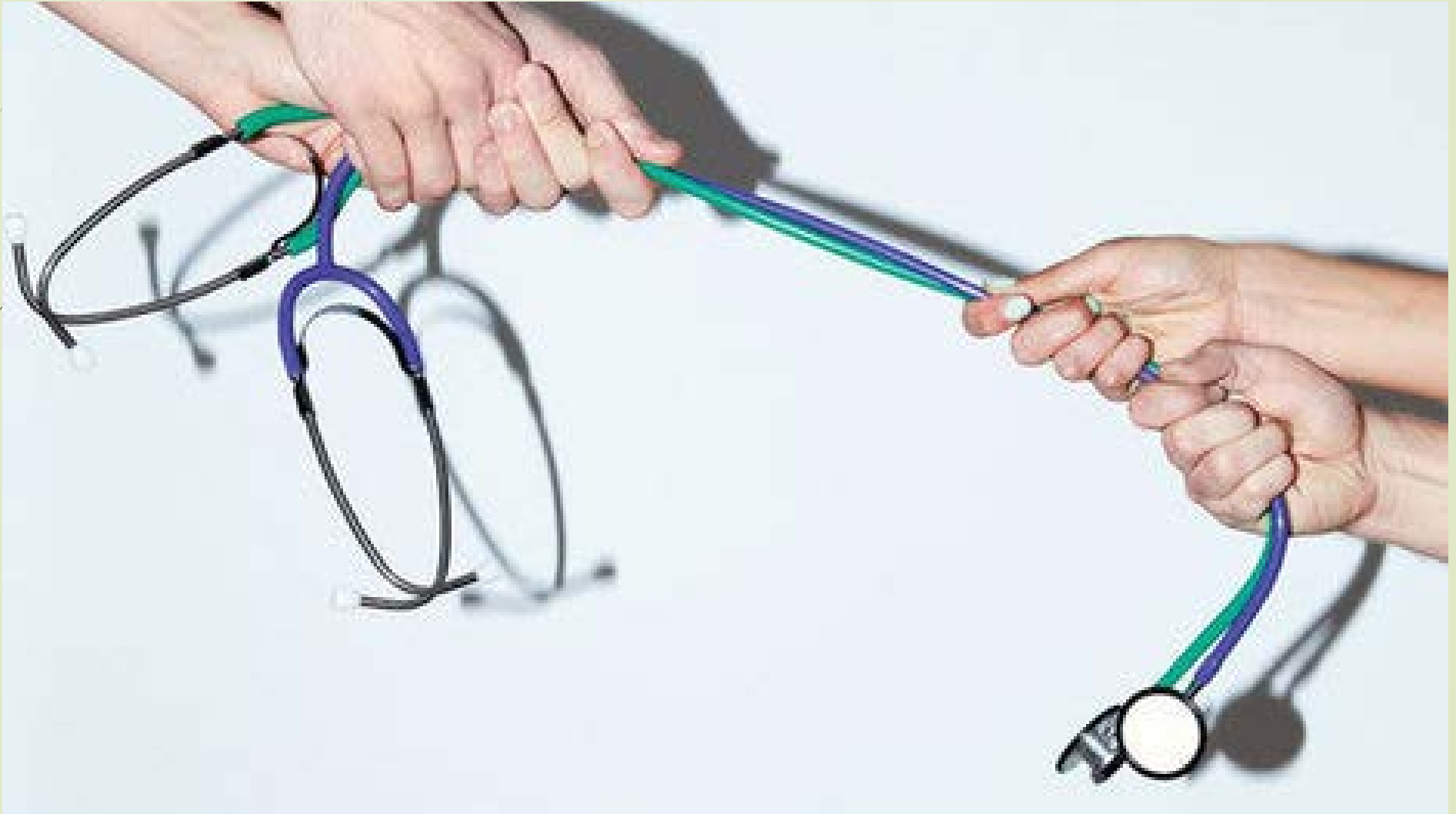


Image credit: <https://www.scoop.it>

Example: Successful Collaboration



Image credit: <https://www.freepik.com>

A Focus on Client-Centred Care

- Focusing on clients' needs and preferences could be a starting point for promoting collaboration in primary care homes and interprofessional teams.



Professional Relationships with Primary Care Providers

- PHNs could consider how working together in daily practice may help build professional relationships that support collaboration.



Image credit: <https://heal.com/>

An Ethos of Teamwork

- PHNs simply need to build upon the skills they already possess to adapt their practice for interprofessional teamwork.



Leadership that Promoted Equality

- Making positive client outcomes the stated goal of leadership could prevent providers from getting caught up in team dynamics.



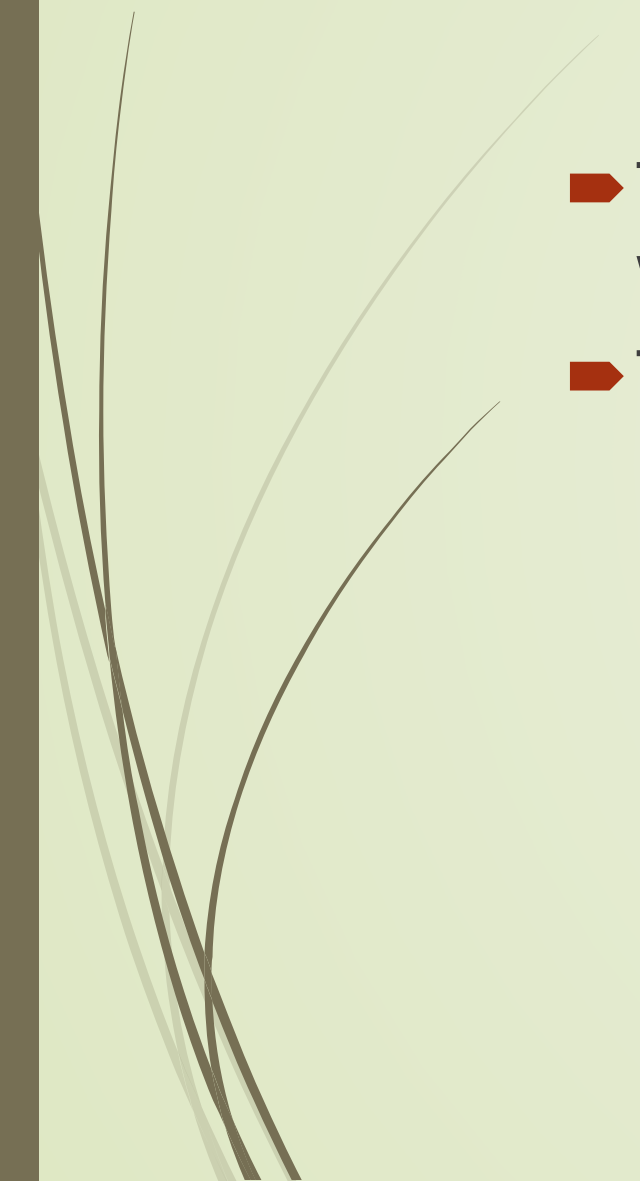
Clear, Direct Communication

- Would thwart the doctor-nurse game.






Study Limitations

- Transferability of the findings should be done with care as this was a small study.
 - The findings reflect PHNs' experiences and perceptions at a time of great uncertainty.
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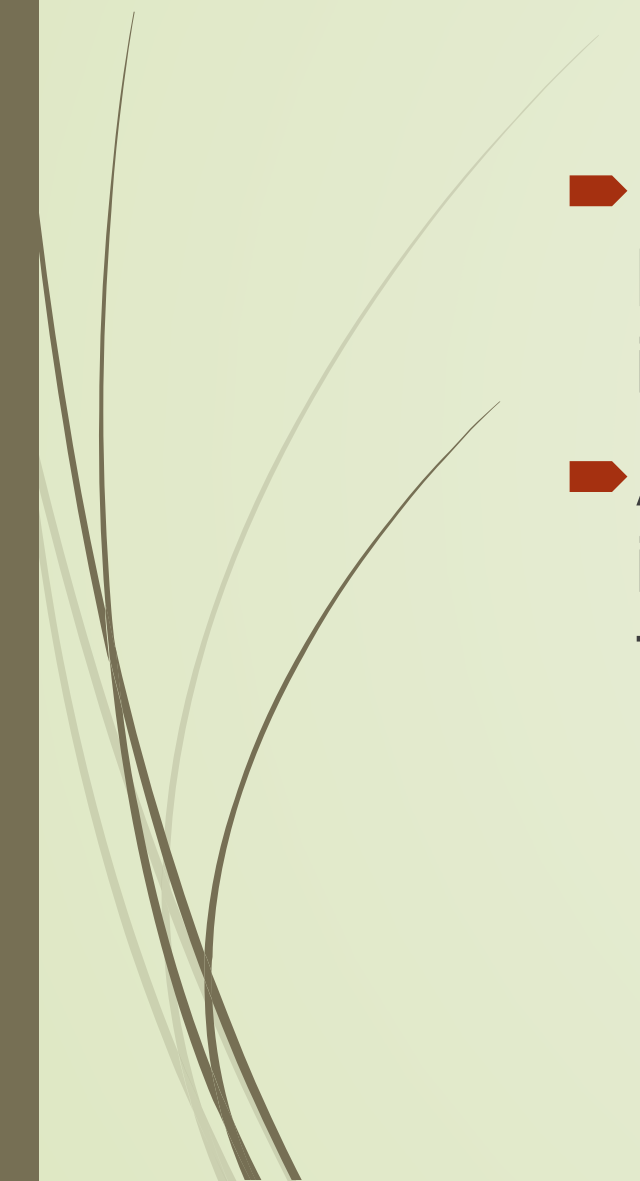


Implications for Research

- Research examining primary care providers' perspectives is needed.
 - Research examining the relationship between client-centred and collaboration is needed.
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Implications for Education

- Nursing and medical students need to learn how to practice collaboratively and interprofessionally.
 - All health care providers need to participate in continuing education to learn how to work together in new ways.
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Implications for Practice

- PHNs could reflect on aspects of practice that contribute to success to build confidence for collaboration.
 - PHNs could increase comfort with primary care practice to take a more active role in acute care collaboration.
 - Approach new opportunities with positivity, optimism, and a willingness to learn.
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Implications for Leadership

- Recognize nurse-physician power imbalances and work to promote a non-hierarchical team structure.
 - Help providers develop positive ways of interacting and communicating to avert the doctor-nurse game.
 - Develop conflict resolution policies to guide problem solving (Brown et al., 2011).
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Final Thoughts

- There is a solid basis for collaboration between PHNs and PCPs in northern B.C.
 - Focus on clients, build on strengths, find common ground.
 - Collaboration may thrive in primary care homes and interprofessional teams.
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References

Brown, J., Lewis, L., Ellis, K., Stewart, M., Freeman, T. R., & Kasperski, M. J. (2011). Conflict on interprofessional primary health care teams—can it be resolved? *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 25(1), 4-10. doi: 10.3109/13561820.2010.497750

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