

JOINT EVENT

49th International Congress on **Nursing Care Plan & Health**
&
50th World Congress on **Men in Nursing**

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Undoing gender: Men in nursing resisting heteronormativity**Thomas Harding**

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The heteronormative scripts of femininity and masculinity are powerful constructs with respect to the typing of 'gender appropriate' occupations. This paper presents the serendipitous findings from a study of New Zealand men in a graduate nursing programme that rather than 'doing' gender they are involved in a transgressive project of 'undoing' gender. Thematic analysis of the participants' narratives revealed their understanding of the feminization of caring, the devaluing of nursing as women's work, their understanding of some areas of nursing as being more 'male appropriate', and the stereotyping of men in nursing as homosexual. These constructions are disquieting and raised anxiety for these men with respect to their personal and professional impact. However, these men did not subscribe to the script of hegemonic masculinity and saw themselves as resistant and hopeful of being part of a societal change, where men's movement into 'female' occupations is no longer problematized.

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