

# The Journey towards Becoming a Paulinian Nurse

<sup>1</sup>Carissa Juliana De Luzuriaga - Balaria

<sup>1</sup>St. Paul University Manila

<sup>1</sup>College of Nursing and Allied Medical Sciences, Malate, Manila, Philippines

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to understand the process of becoming a Paulinian Nurse. It utilized Colaizzi's methodological interpretation of Phenomenology. The study was conducted in St. Paul University Manila. A total of ten respondents were gathered by convenience sampling. Interview and e-mail correspondence were the main data collection methods. The data went through three stages of coding. There were ten stages that emerged in the quest to understand the lived experiences of Paulinian nurses in their journey towards becoming a Paulinian nurse: Life experience leading to St. Paul's, Student Life, Academic Education, Character Building, Preparing for Obstacles, Enduring excellence, competence, and reputation, Facing the Professional Arena, Practicing Paulinian Compassion as a Professional Nurse, Success as a Fruit of a Strong Foundation, and Giving back to a nurturing alma mater. There were four common components that each stage possessed: High standards of education, Compassionate Nursing Practice, Character Formation: Values integrated into practice, and Support from the SPUM community. These four components were seen as four formative influences in the making of a Paulinian nurse. Combining the ten stages and the four formative influences depicted the essence of who the Paulinian nurse is.

**Keywords:** Paulinian, Nurse, Phenomenology.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

A nurse is considered to be someone who is caring. Filipinos are, by nature, caring as well, and since they are also known for their warmth and good natured hospitality, they are highly in demand in the nursing profession. Nursing is a known profession across the world, and Filipinos have made a brand for themselves worldwide.

Based on the recent data of the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) last 2011, in the Philippines alone, there are about 467 schools of Nursing. However, not all of these schools are able to meet the passing rate in the board exams. Yearly, the PRC releases the list of top performing schools, St. Paul University Manila (SPUManila) is always included in that list. Despite the up and down trend of the demand for nursing, St. Paul University Manila has always been one to produce quality nursing graduates.

As the researcher has observed, Paulinian nurses have distinguished themselves from other nursing graduates. Not only are they efficient and excellent care providers, they are also able to provide holistic compassionate care to patients in different care settings. Aside from these, Paulinian nursing graduates had risen through the ranks of different organizations, government and non-government, which proves that Paulinian nurses are also capable of leading and contributing largely to society. Being a Paulinian graduate herself, the researcher would like to identify what makes a Paulinian graduate special.

There are a lot of studies regarding Nursing since its beginnings during Florence Nightingale's time. These studies have paved the way to show how we know nursing today. However, little is known about Paulinian Nurses, since there are no books that describe who the Paulinian nurse is. In line with this, the researcher intends to uncover the process, if there is a process, of how it is to become a Paulinian Nurse.

This study explored the lived experience of Paulinian nurses in their journey towards becoming a Paulinian nurse. By asking participants to share thoughts, feelings, observations, and events, it identified factors which the respondent's described as significant and meaningful to their movement from student towards competent, confident, and compassionate Paulinian nurses. Reflections of these described experiences allowed a portrayal of each individuals unique path and searched for themes and patterns common to all.

This study described and reflected on the journey towards becoming a Paulinian Nurse. Specifically, it described the lived experience of Paulinian nurses; and explored the insights that can be drawn from the lived experience of Paulinian Nurses.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study, by employing a phenomenological methodology, explored the lived experience of Paulinian nurses in their journey towards becoming a Paulinian nurse. By asking participants to share thoughts, feelings, observations, and events, it identified factors which the respondent's described as significant and meaningful to their movement from student towards competent, confident, and compassionate Paulinian nurses. Reflections of these described experiences allows a portrayal of each individuals unique path and search for themes and patterns common to all.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### **A. Research Design:**

This study aimed to describe the lived experience of Paulinian nurses in their journey towards becoming a Paulinian Nurse. The study is a phenomenological research where the data was collected from direct interviews from the participants and was analyzed using a modified Colaizzi and Van Manen methodology.

Colaizzi's (1978) method of data analysis is an approach to interpreting qualitative research data to identify meaningful information and organize it into themes or categories [1].

Max van Manen (1990) another noted name who considers phenomenology as the most appropriate method to explore the phenomena of pedagogical significance elaborates phenomenology as a response to how one orients to lived experience and questions the way one experiences the world[2].

### **B. Sampling Design, Selections, and Study Site:**

Sampling is an essential step in this qualitative research process. The research site and selections were selected initially using a non-probability, purposive sampling. The characteristics of the study participants were used as the basis of selection. Due to the repetitive nature of the study, eventually theoretical sampling was done wherein continual sampling, collection and analysis of data to inform the next stage of the sample design was done, until 'theoretical saturation' was achieved.

To gain an in-depth understanding and description of experiences of Paulinian Nurses towards their journey towards becoming a Paulinian Nurse, ten (10) Paulinian alumni were included as participants of the study. The only criterion set was that participants must be a graduate of the College of Nursing of St. Paul College Manila/St. Paul University Manila. Respondents were solicited through a letter describing the study's purpose. Requirements were sent and distributed through e-mail. Paulinian graduates interested in participating in the study were contacted by phone and by e-mail correspondence to further clarify the study and to answer questions. Those willing to participate gave informed consent and agreed with the personal interview and responded to the e-mail invitation.

### **C. Instrumentation:**

Unstructured open-ended type of interview, tape recording and note taking of nonverbal responses aided in collecting information.

Participants were asked one grand tour question "May I ask you to describe your experiences from entering the BSN, studying at St. Paul Manila College of Nursing, to graduating, taking the boards, as well as practicing as a Paulinian nurse?". Follow-up questions were asked after their initial responses. Questions were asked until saturation has been met.

Open-ended questions allows the participants to contribute as much detailed information as they desire and it also allows the researcher to ask probing questions as a means of follow-up [3].

Tape recorder was an added utility used to conduct the interview which will accurately record the participants' answers word-for-word. Face to face interview with simultaneous note taking or memoing was also utilized to capture verbal and non-verbal cues as well the participants' emotions and reactions during the interview.

Responses were recorded verbatim, translated, and tabulated. From the translations, these were interpreted based on common themes that were similar for all ten participants.

Consent was sought from each of the participant after full disclosure of the nature of the study. Anonymity of the participants and confidentiality of the responses and information obtained were observed.

#### **D. Trustworthiness:**

To ensure trustworthiness of a qualitative study, Lincoln and Gubba suggested using these four (4) criteria: credibility, transferability, confidentiality and confirmability.

Credibility is an evaluation of whether or not the research findings represent a "credible" conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants' original data. Transferability is the degree to which the findings of this inquiry can apply or transfer beyond the bounds of the project. Dependability is an assessment of the quality of the integrated processes of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation. Confirmability is a measure of how well the inquiry's findings are supported by the data collected [4]. In this inquiry, trustworthiness was enhanced through the strategies detailed below.

Credibility was established because multiple methods such as interview, narrative recording, and memoing were done.

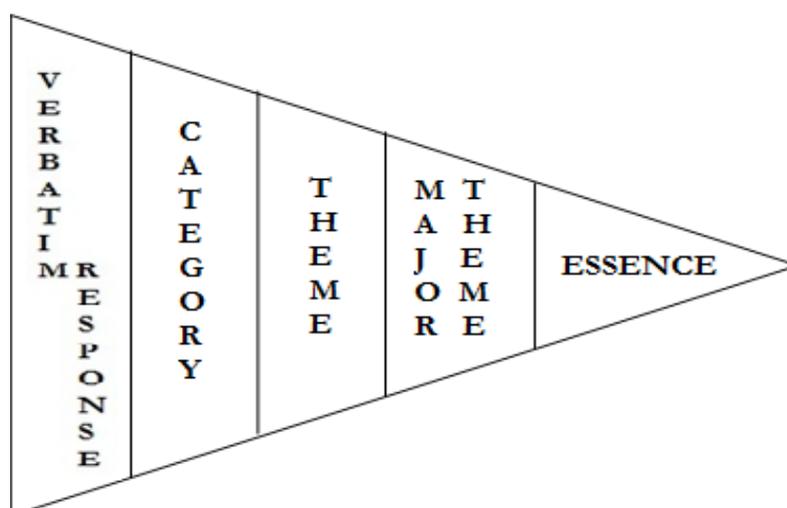
Transferability was established since the experiences shared by the participants are similar to other fields when faced with the experiences of their own nurse graduates.

Confirmability was established since the study was only based on the participants' responses. Bracketing was also a form done by the researchers to ensure that any preconceived notions or biases by the researcher would not affect the results of the study. Also, member check was done at the end of the study to ensure that participants verified any information and interpretation made by the researchers.

Finally, dependability was established since verbatim transcriptions were recorded and made available to the readers.

#### **E. Data Analysis:**

Thematic analysis following Collaizzi's and Max van Manen's method of data analysis for descriptive phenomenology was applied to accurately analyze and interpret various aspects of the participants' experiences.



**Fig 1: The Researcher's Process**

This is a modified triangle depicting the process of reflection that the researcher underwent. It is composed of 5 phases that the researcher underwent. The first phase indicates that all verbatim responses from the participants were grouped

together and transcribed. From these transcriptions, the researcher came up with similar and frequent experiences and grouped them into themes. From the themes, the researcher fused together similar terms that can further be clustered into major themes. Lastly, from the major themes, the researcher merged all data arising and come up with the essence of the phenomenon.

All material was coded and handled in a way that ensured anonymity and confidentiality. Written verbatim and transcribed notes were cross compared and integrated into a final transcript of each interview.

This cross comparison ensured completeness and accuracy of data and also allowed a review of the interview in its entirety. A copy of each transcript was filled in its entirety in each participant's folder. This facilitated analysis of the transcribed notes for each participant. It also allowed comparison of participant's general experiences and process at each point in time.

Data analyses were undertaken in order to answer the research problems:

1. Describe the lived experience of Paulinian nurses;
2. Explore the insights that can be drawn from the lived experiences of Paulinian Nurses.

The first question proved the easiest to answer. Participants responded to direct questions regarding what they experienced as a Paulinian nurse, from the time they entered BSN until they graduated and worked as Paulinian Nurse. Answers to the questions required unitizing and organizing the data into themes and then identifying major themes arising which would guide the telling of the lived experiences of Paulinian Nurses.

The unitized and organized data first formed categories. These categories were then placed near categories and filed according to identified themes.

Based on these themes, major themes developed. Out of these major themes, there are ten stages that became apparent in the experiences of Paulinian nurses. The themes were derived from the actual statements from the respondents gathered from the interview.

All of the respondent's narrative description of their experience were grouped together in order to come up with different translations based on the researcher's understanding and interpretation of their personal account regarding their experiences as Paulinian nurses. Finally these interpretations were merged together to formulate different themes.

The formulated themes were then described through categorical statements extracted from the transcriptions from the actual interview notes. Each category that fits the major themes was merged together after extensive analysis.

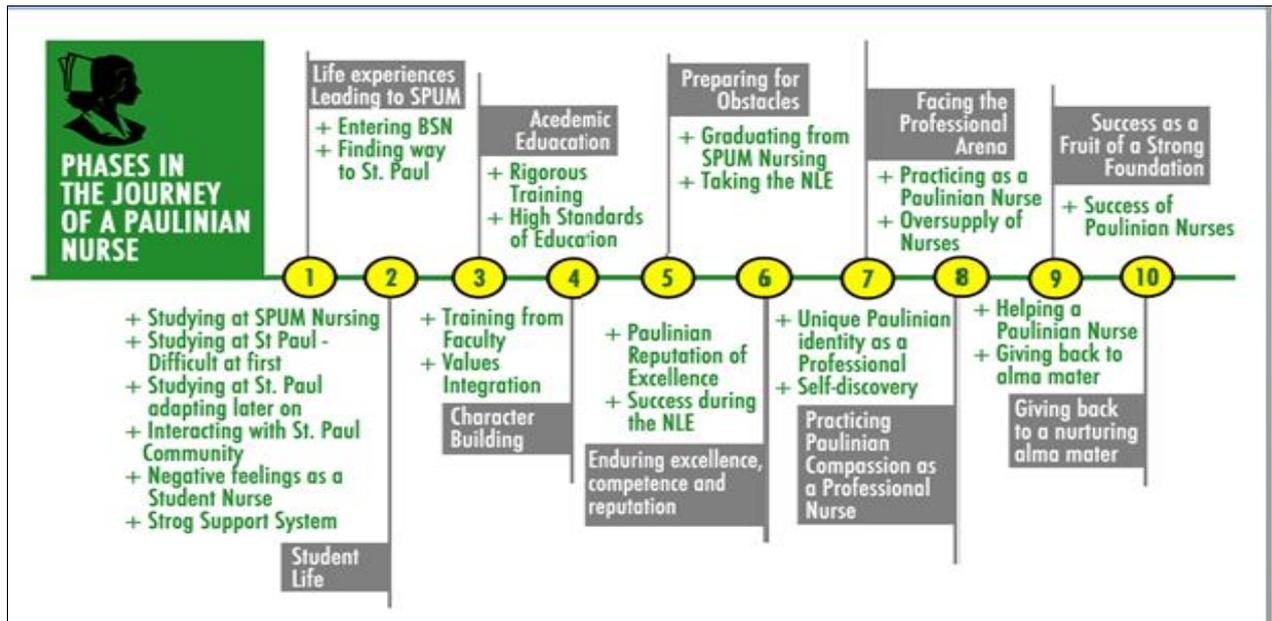
The themes were then clustered into major themes symbolizing the stages towards becoming a Paulinian Nurse. Beneath the stages are minor themes which are categorized as phases which the Paulinian nurses undergo underneath each stage.

These major themes, portraying the different stages before becoming a Paulinian nurse, were now consolidated in a diagram that shows the totality of the finding.

#### **IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

After extensive analysis, there were ten major themes that emerged from the study. These themes portray the different phases towards becoming a Paulinian Nurse. Each major theme encompasses minor themes. These minor themes are shown in phases that the Paulinian nurses undergo during each stage.

To answer problem number one "Describe the lived experience of Paulinian nurses", Findings reveal that there are ten Phases that emerged in the quest to understand the lived experiences of Paulinian nurses in their journey towards becoming a Paulinian nurse. These ten Phases are: Life experience leading to SPUM Manila, Student Life, Academic Education, Character Building, Preparing for Obstacles, Enduring excellence, competence, and reputation, Facing the Professional Arena, Practicing Paulinian Compassion as a Professional Nurse, Success as a Fruit of a Strong Foundation, and Giving back to a nurturing alma mater.



**Fig 2: Phases in the Journey of a Paulinian Nurse**

The ten panels show the ten Phases of a Paulinian Nurse's life which have been formulated from the themes originating from the actual responses of the interviewees.

The first panel indicates the experiences of a student as he/she finds SPUM Manila and enters the Nursing program, along with the requirements and expectations that entail.

The second panel, indicates the unique lives of student nurses: from adapting to the new culture and settling in, to the mixed feelings and encounters that they had in their student lives, may it be positive or negative.

The third panel portrays the academic life of students, wherein they have to meet high expectations and standards of the college given the rigorous and holistic training given to them in the setting of a high-quality education institution.

The fourth panel further asserts the holistic training given at SPUM Manila as the education given in the aforementioned institution not only imparts knowledge of theory and skills pertinent to a nurse, but also pass on values and attitudes characteristic and unique to a Paulinian Nurse that he/she even carries after graduation and into professional practice.

The fifth panel portrays the preparation of Paulinian nursing graduates as they face obstacles in life: taking the board exam, leaving the security of the academe, and starting out on their own as professional nurses, leading to what is portrayed by the sixth, seventh, and eighth panels, which shows how Paulinian Nurses have performed well in the board exams and in have proven themselves to be compassionate, knowledgeable, efficient, confident, and competent professionals may it be in nursing practice and other fields, thereby adding to the reputation of excellence that SPUM Manila's Nursing Program has amassed throughout the years of its existence and leading to Paulinian Professional Nurses understanding and appreciating themselves by serving a wide variety of people under different circumstances.

The ninth panel celebrates the success of Paulinian Nurses as they have consistently showed excellence in leadership, practice, and knowledge in nursing and in the society.

The last panel shows that as some Paulinian Nurses reach the zenith of their careers, some of them subsequently appreciate the value of Paulinian education that they have and have given back to their alma mater through serving younger generations of Paulinians, imparting their knowledge to fellow Paulinians, serving in the school hierarchy itself or by continuously bringing honor to the school.

The panels are strategically placed in order showing the progression of the "Phases" of a Paulinian Nurse's life and how one Phase can lead to the achievement of the other. This concept can be likened to Benner & Tanner's 2009 work showing the increasing levels of competency of nurses as they mature in experience. It can also be associated with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) which demonstrates a succession of needs leading from the achievement of the lower-ranked needs to the attainment of high needs leading to self-actualization. In this model, lower rank needs can be

likened to the early Phases of studenthood and as they progress into the deeper reaches of a Paulinian Nurse's experience, they reach more heights and more success. As they reach the pinnacle of their careers, they in turn have the opportunity to serve and give back to their alma mater, hence, the last Phase can be compared to Maslow's self-actualization need in his model.

The themes that emerged from the data collected from various conversations with the Paulinian Nurses are further explained below.

**Theme 1: Life experience leading to SPUManila:**

Theme 1 describes the respondent's experiences which led her to study at SPU Manila – College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences and her reasons of going there. All the respondents have varied experiences in becoming a Paulinian nurse, both positive and negative. Paulinians admit that nursing is not their first choice for a course and neither is SPUM their first choice as a college. Students that have chosen SPUM as a school were formerly Paulinians who are loyal to their alma mater and know that the education offered at SPUM is of high quality. Paulinians describe entering the BSN program as a whole new culture as they view it differently from the social climate they have grown upon.

**Theme 2: Student Life:**

Theme 2 describes the respondent's experience regarding student life, both positive and negative in nature. Students view their student life as somewhat two-sided: First, as a challenging experience given the rigid training and competitive nature of the program and second, as an enjoyable experience since they were given ample time and opportunity to commune and engrain themselves in the school community and have fun as students. The education at SPUM is only for a chosen few, and there has been a rigorous and tedious selection of who gets to be called Paulinian nurse.

**Theme 3: Academic Education**

Theme 3 describes the respondent's perception of the academic training at SPUM. The third Phase portrays the academic life of students, wherein they have to meet high expectations and standards of the college given the rigorous and holistic training given to them in the setting of a high-quality education institution.

**Theme 4: Character Building:**

Theme 4 describes the respondent's experiences on the institution's integration of values and attitude in its instruction. The fourth Phase further asserts the holistic training given at SPUManila as the education given in the aforementioned institution not only imparts knowledge of theory and skills pertinent to a nurse, but also pass on values and attitudes characteristic and unique to a Paulinian Nurse that he/she even carries after graduation and into professional practice.

**Theme 5: Preparing:**

Theme 5 describes the respondent's experience on how she prepared for obstacles that she faced in life and in her profession with the aid of the training given at the Nursing Program of SPUManila. The fifth Phase portrays the preparation of Paulinian nursing graduates as they face obstacles in life: taking the board exam, leaving the security of the academe, and starting out on their own as professional nurses

**Theme 6: Enduring excellence, competence, and reputation:**

Theme 6 describes the respondent's experience on how she showed excellence and competence and how she earned and maintained her reputation as a Paulinian nurse. The sixth Phase, which shows how Paulinian Nurses have performed well in the board exams and in have proven themselves to be compassionate, knowledgeable, efficient, confident, and competent professionals may it be in nursing practice and other fields, thereby adding to the reputation of excellence that SPU Manila's Nursing Program has amassed throughout the years of its existence and leading to Paulinian Professional Nurses' understanding and appreciating themselves by serving a wide variety of people under different circumstances.

**Theme 7: Facing the Professional Arena:**

Theme 7 describes the respondent's experience on how she faced the obstacles, challenges, and adaptations of the professional world as a Paulinian nurse. The seventh Phase explores the experiences of the respondent as they practice as Paulinian nurses. It also discusses the issues of today's nursing profession: the oversupply of nurses and the lack of jobs thereof. As well as explains the reason for Paulinian nursing graduates pursuing other career options other than nursing.

**Theme 8: Practicing Paulinian Compassion as a Professional Nurse:**

Theme 8 describes the unique type of care that she gives as a Professional Paulinian nurse as perceived by the respondents. The eighth Phase explains the experiences leading to practicing compassion as a professional Paulinian nurse

**Theme 9: Success as a Fruit of a Strong Foundation:**

Theme 9 describes the successes of a Paulinian nurse resulting from her education at SPUManila College of Nursing. The ninth Phase celebrates the success of Paulinian Nurses as they have consistently showed excellence in leadership, practice, and knowledge in nursing and in the society.

**Theme 10: Giving back to a nurturing alma mater:**

Theme 10 describes the ways of how alumnae have shown their gratitude to their alma mater. The last Phase shows that as some Paulinian Nurses reach the zenith of their careers, some of them subsequently appreciate the value of Paulinian education that they have and have given back to their alma mater through serving younger generations of Paulinians, imparting their knowledge to fellow Paulinians, serving in the school hierarchy itself or by continuously bringing honor to the school.

**Eidetic Symbol:**



**Fig 3: Eidetic symbol**

Combining the ten phases and the four formative influences depicts the essence of who the Paulinian nurse is. The product of a phenomenological study is the essence of the phenomenon. The essence of the Paulinian nurse, based on my study, is the outcome of the Phases accompanied by the four formative influences that guided the Paulinian nurse in their journey. The results show that each Paulinian nurse goes through different phases in their lives as a Paulinian nurse. Furthermore, accompanying each Phase, are four formative influences that Paulinian nurses claim that make them unique.

The illustration shows that the ten phases in the journey of a Paulinian nurse are enclosed in the four formative influences. It is portrayed in this manner because in order to become a Paulinian nurse, one must go through all of the Phases; hence the phases are located in the center. The four formative influences are strategically placed beneath the phases to portray that they are the foundation for the phases. Based on the participant’s response, each phase encompasses the four formative influences. Thus, combining the phases and the four formative influences reveals who the Paulinian nurse is.

## V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study explores the lived experiences of Paulinian nurses in their journey towards becoming a Paulinian nurse. The framework depicting the process of becoming a Paulinian nurse highlights issues and tasks faced and allow future graduates, their educators, and the nursing profession in general to anticipate and give form to the experience. The ability to anticipate and give form to an experience brings it into the known or the conscious. Making something known decreases anxiety and enhances control or modification if needed or desired.

Explication of the process of becoming a Paulinian nurse may prove useful for other disciplines. All new nursing college entrants probably encounter similar experiences and confront similar tasks and issues in their early weeks and months as nursing college student. It remains unclear whether other disciplines, in accord with nursing, confront similar conflict between idealism and reality.

The finding regarding the importance of the student-teacher relationship and experience holds significance with nursing and in other fields. The relationship, which one has to get used to with regards to policies and procedures, rules and regulations, values and practices, serves as a basis for early practice patterns and the development of self-esteem and self-confidence.

The potential for teachers to generate negative as well as positive results allows experienced nurses, nurse educators, and nurse leaders to remain sensitive to the process of how a teacher supervises a student. It could also prove useful in reducing the shock and enhancing the response of new Paulinian graduates as they enter the real work world should they encounter negative and difficult peers.

Recognizing the Paulinian nurses feelings, individual experiences, and reactions have interesting implications in terms of academic development and in the provision of services and the nurturing of student welfare. The SPUManila community, faculty, and staff have an important role to play in supporting the ongoing evolution of Paulinian students to become holistic Paulinian nurses. They also have a responsibility to support and evaluate the results of this trend in terms of academic performance and the student's sense of professional well-being.

An understanding of the feelings and sentiments of students is important for the overall recognition and response to these future nurses. By increasing awareness of faculty, staff, and administration on various aspects of the life of a Paulinian nurse, the acceptance and support for this area of student development can be improved.

The findings of the study have implications for nurse education and structuring of the profession as they show that most nurses feel marginalized by the perceived general lack of recognition from the faculty. Results could also be considered in the development of strategies to modify the ways and teachings of the faculty that is suitable and more acceptable to student nurses.

This study expands on the little that is known authoritatively about Paulinian nurses. It considers an innovation that is developing nursing practice and illuminates what nurses know with an opportunity to inform others. Further research may lead to additional understanding of this dynamic area of practice. The data provided by this study provides a benchmark against which subsequent data can be compared and from which further studies can be built.

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