

Double-Duty Caregiving: Development of the Role Augmentation Scale

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Despite many contributions to our understanding of role stress, role strain and work-family balance among family caregivers, knowledge about individuals who provide care in both their professional and personal lives is limited. Any evaluation of gender and health equity as it pertains to the demands of multiple roles must recognize that health professionals who care at home and at work may experience a unique source of work-family stress not experienced by other employed caregivers. The purpose of this study is to develop and validate an instrument, the Role Augmentation Scale (RAS), which will measure the interface of personal and professional caregiving of elderly amongst nurses.

An extensive review of the literature and qualitative data derived from previous in-depth interviews with 38 health professionals will be used to inform the development of the RAS. The instrument will be pilot tested with a sample of full time nurses who provide a minimum of 4 hours of care to an older relative randomly selected from the registry lists of the College of Nurses of Ontario. Using a mail survey approach, potential participants will be asked to complete a package consisting of a demographic questionnaire, a double-duty caregiving scale (RAS), and previously tested measures of role strain and health related outcomes. This proposal is particularly relevant as it responds to the quality of nurses' personal lives and the elders they care for, particularly in view of the rapidly increasing number of seniors in the Canadian population.