

# Down the corridors of healing

## *The distribution of types in an Australian sample of nurses*

Ian Ball

*Ian Ball continues his forays into the MBTI Australian Data Archive with a look at the nursing profession.*

The MBTI Australian Data Archive holds Form G profiles for 89 nurses from a variety of sources.

These providers of nursing care in hospitals, nursing homes, extended care facilities and in the community have all been coded 2323 in the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO). Unfortunately, the data sheets submitted do not provide any information about the type of nursing practice undertaken.

The following table of type differences in the sample of nurses may be of interest.

**Table 1: Type distribution for nurses**  
(MBTI Australian Data Archive, 2001; n = 89)

ISTJ 9.0%	ISFJ 19.1%	INFJ 10.1%	INTJ 2.3%
ISTP 4.5%	ISFP 12.4%	INFP 7.9%	INTP 2.3%
ESTP 2.3%	ESFP 6.7%	ENFP 7.9%	ENTP 3.4%
ESTJ 5.6%	ESFJ 2.3%	ENFJ 4.5%	ENTJ 0.0%

The table shows substantial differences in the recorded frequencies of nurses' types, and a general unevenness of the distribution of preferences.

- Twice as many nurses prefer *introversion* than *extraversion* (E 32.6%, I 67.4%). The majority of the sample express a preference for directing energy mainly to the inner world of experiences and ideas.
- The majority of the sample express a preference for *sensing* (S 61.8%, N 38.2%): they tend to focus mainly on what can be perceived by the five senses.
- The majority express a *feeling* preference (T 29.2%, F 70.8%). Those with a feeling preference tend to base their conclusions on personal or social values, with a focus on understanding and harmony.
- Interestingly, the JP preferences are fairly evenly distributed (J 52.8%, P 47.2%).

One type, ISFJ, accounts for one fifth of the sample (19.1%). The next most common type, ISFP, makes up a further 12.4%. Together, the pair of ISF types make up about one third of the sample.

Several types are either not represented at all, or are represented by just a few in the sample. For example, there are no ENTJs, and few ESTPs, ESFJs, INTPs and INTJs. Individuals of these five types are apparently fairly rare in the nursing profession.

There are only seven nurses with NT preferences (7.9%). The other three temperaments are much more strongly represented: SJ (36.0%), NF (30.3%) and SP (25.8%).

One conclusion that might be drawn from the data is that nurses tend to be people with preferences for:

- directing energy inwardly (I);
- storing the facts and details of external reality and internal thoughts and experiences (S); and
- seeking intensely meaningful and complex inner harmony through sensitivity to their own and others' inner values and outer behaviour (F).

In a study of 52 staff nurses, Van Ham (1994) found that:

- the nurses sample had more S and F types than did a composite sample of women with college degrees.
- a similarly-sized sample of nurse managers had more T types than did the staff nurses sample.

Does anyone have access to any other data that would either support or refute these findings? ❖

### Reference

Van Ham, L B J 1994, 'Psychological variables related to the management progress of women employed as registered nurses in a hospital setting: Implications for career counseling and consulting' (doctoral dissertation), Lincoln: University of Nebraska, unpublished.

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## Wanted: Your MBTI forms

The **MBTI Australian Data Archive** is a comprehensive national data repository for psychological type, used to identify national trends and patterns of type distribution. The Data Archive is maintained by the Psychological Type Research Unit at Deakin University.

Practitioners are invited to contribute completed MBTI forms, subject to the following conditions:

**Confidentiality.** Deakin University's Institutional Ethics policy requires that MBTI answer sheets are submitted anonymously, i.e. without names of respondents. It is a simple matter to white them out, blacken them, or cut them out of the answer sheet.

**Consent.** It is expected that informed consent will have been obtained from respondents. Submission of answer sheets implies consent to take part in the research.

**Demographic data.** Inclusion of demographic data (age, gender, occupation, education, State of residence) would be appreciated.

**Labelling.** Please provide the nature of the group data submitted and the reason for the typing (e.g. MBTI taken as part of training, professional development, job application, career guidance, psychological profile, etc).

Material for the Data Archive may be sent to Ian Ball:

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