Effective team working is essential in the delivery of care and services to the client with rehabilitation needs. Within the rehabilitation team the nurse has a key role to play. This dissertation aims to examine the perceptions and experiences of nurses at the author’s hospital working as part of the multi-professional team.

The study begins with a background to the research and an orientation to the author’s hospital in which the research took place. This is followed by an in-depth review of the literature on teams, team working and the different team approaches to rehabilitation, and a review of the role of the nurse within the multi-professional team. The author chose qualitative semi-structured interviews to explore the nurses’ perceptions from among various types of methodology.

The main findings of the research indicated that nurses viewed multi-professional teamwork as essential to the rehabilitation process. Another inference is that nurses’ engagement in multi-professional teamwork was contingent on their interaction with the multi-professional team, which occurred mainly as formal meetings of which the patient conferences were most common. It was also dependent on nurses’ years of experience in rehabilitation and length of time working at the hospital. Nurses viewed their role as being an essential link in the multi-professional team, providing up-to-date pertinent information to other disciplines, because of their 24 hour presence. The main barriers identified by the nurses to multi-professional teamwork were communication, and the practice of nursing which entails shift work, and therefore not always being available nine to five like the other disciplines. A greater understanding of the philosophy and process of rehabilitation was seen by the nurses as a means of enhancing their self-confidence in relation to their contribution as members of the multi-professional team, and team building.