

Australian General Practice Nursing Study

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BULLETIN



Australian Divisions of **General Practice** Ltd

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Thank you

We wish to express a sincere thank you for the energy and enthusiasm displayed by Division of General Practice staff in the recruitment of our practices, including those who were nominated but not chosen to participate. Divisions have played a key role in helping us get underway.

Many thanks also to all those practices who expressed an interest in participating. The project attracted lots of interest and was oversubscribed with practices wanting to be involved. Unfortunately we were unable to include everybody at this point. However the level of enthusiasm has been very encouraging. We look forward to being able to work with more of you during Phase 2 of the project.

Welcome to the 1st Bulletin

The Australian General Practice Nurses Study is a three year project examining the roles of nurses in general practice, with funding from the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI). The study is the result of unique research collaboration between the Australian Divisions of General Practice and the Australian National University, and represents an exciting move forward for primary care research in Australia.

We're interested in learning about the real life work of practice nurses, so we can get a better idea of what contribution they make to all aspects of general practice. We anticipate that nurses make a contribution to the quality and safety of general practice in a variety of ways, but to date there's been little detailed research on that. We want to use the results of this research to describe the ways in which nurses work, and then to try to work out ways in which interested practices can better support (or change) the work of nurses in general practice.

Recruitment of Phase 1

The 24 practices who will participate in Phase 1 of the project have now been finalised. Eight of these are in NSW, and the remaining 16 in Victoria.

Rapid appraisal visits to these practices have commenced and will be completed by the end of December 2005.

The first phase of the project commenced in August this year and while the project is confined to NSW and Victoria in the early stages, activity will take on a national focus during phase 2, scheduled to begin in May 2006.

Overview of Practices

The sample of practices chosen for the study has been designed to be illustrative rather than representative. This means we have tried to capture the widest range of possible models, rather than the most common or typical.

Practices were selected for inclusion in the study on the basis of location, local demographics, rural or urban orientation, size, business structure, GP & nurse workforce size, and types of nursing role. The group of study practices includes a mix of rural, urban, remote, outer metro, regional, large and small, with a wide range of nursing models.

Of these 11 are urban, 12 are rural and one is classified as remote. The majority of practices are group or partnership structures, with around 4 being solo practitioners. We've also made an effort to include more unusual or innovative practice nurse models, including practices with high nurse to doctor ratios, male nurses, corporate and community health based practices.

Staff on Board



*Julie Porritt, Principal Advisor for
Nursing in General Practice
Australian Divisions of General Practice*

Project Personnel includes:

Dr Christine Phillips	Chief Investigator
Dr Kathryn Dwan	Chief Investigator
Dr Chris Pearce	Chief Investigator
Ms Julie Porritt	Associate Investigator
Ms Rachael Yates	Associate Investigator
Prof Bonnie Sibbald	Consultant Investigator
Prof Marjan Kljakovic	Associate Investigator & Management
Ms Leanne Wells	Management
Ms Sally Hall	Project Manager
Ms Hannah Walker	Research Assistant
Mr Daniel Sybaczynskyj	Research Assistant
Ms Monika Thompson	Administrative Assistant

Tell us what you think

An early focus of our analysis is to look at the workspaces of nurses. Practice nurses often seem to work in shared spaces and in a public way. The common setting is that the nurse is “stationed” in the treatment room, a room that has multiple functions and is used by multiple people. In part this stems from the early model where the nurses’ role was almost exclusively to assist the doctor. Having occupied this space, nurses are now adapting it to expanded roles.

While spaces allotted to nurses suggest that they are placed in public rather than enclosed places (e.g. thoroughfares and treatment rooms), their micro-workspace (e.g. the desk and shelving) indicate highly specific, non-public activities, with a cluttering of medical equipment, papers and computer. Reception desks, for example, are not piled high with this kind of work-related business. Receptionists' work occurs in public, while the ways in which nurses working spaces are constructed suggest that nurses occupy an intermediate space, not quite public (receptionist space), not quite private (doctors' space). They occupy a transitional space that seems to be an expression of their role in the practice.

We’re interested in your opinions as to what shapes the nature of nurse workspaces in general practice.

Please use our weblog (below) to give us some feedback.

Upcoming Events

- Reference Group Meeting – 15 December 2005
- Data Analysis for phase 1 will be undertaken between December 2005 and March 2006

Contact Us

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Website and Blog

Welcome to the website of the Australian General Nurse Practice Study:

http://homepage.mac.com/chris_pearce/AGPNS/index.htm

Presentations from the RCNA General Nurse Practice Conference held on 9 & 10 September 2005 and the ADGP Forum on 3-6 November 2005 can also be accessed from our website.

A great way to send us your feedback or comments on the project is by accessing the interactive weblog (blog) at

<http://agpns.blogspot.com/>