The development of national practice standards for nurses in general practice

Elizabeth J. Halcomb
University of Wollongong, ehalcomb@uow.edu.au

Julianne Bryce
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, julianne@anmf.org.au

Elizabeth Foley
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation

Christine Ashley
University of Wollongong, cma130@uowmail.edu.au
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Abstract

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2015 PHC RESEARCH CONFERENCE: PAPER ABSTRACT

Author(s)
Elizabeth Halcomb*, Julianne Bryce, Elizabeth Foley, Christine Ashley

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Aims & rationale
Nursing in Australian general practice has matured significantly since the Competency standards for nurses in general practice were first published in 2005. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation has recently completed a project, funded by the Department of Health, to revise these Standards and bring them into line with contemporary clinical practice.

Methods
This mixed methods study used two online surveys of nurses and a series of fourteen focus groups conducted around Australia to collect data.

Findings
A total of 561 survey responses were received across the two surveys and 200 nurses participated in the focus groups. The final 22 Practice Standards were divided into four domains; 1) Professional practice, 2) Nursing Care, 3) General Practice Environment and 4) Collaborative Practice. These standards outline the broad scope of the potential role of enrolled, registered and advanced practice registered nurses employed within general practice.

Relevance to policy, research and/or practice needs
Professional practice standards are an important way of defining the role and scope of practice of a profession to both consumers and other professionals, as well as being a guide for curriculum development and measurement of performance. For individual nurses they provide a tool for both performance assessment and planning of professional development. They have clear relevance to policymakers, researchers and those in clinical practice as they provide role clarity that will optimise the contribution of nurses to Australian general practice.

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