



THE UNIVERSITY
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Faculty of Health Sciences
Professional Practice

Professional Practice

The Professional Practice program of research has a focus on the contemporary role of the nurse, nursing workforce and nursing at the interface with education, the health care system and interdisciplinary teams

The Professional Practice Program, led by Dr Lynette Cusack and Professor Kristine Gebbie is a program that has very close links with the practice setting where the research seeks to influence positive outcomes for students, practitioners and patients. The research program includes studies in a number of distinct areas.

Resilience of nursing students

The School of Nursing is part of a broader research group titled International Collaborative Workforce Resilience (ICWR), which includes a number of Universities across Australia, Hong Kong and Singapore. The centre is administered from Curtin University. This study was used to validate a resilience tool that measures psychological resilience. In 2015 testing of ICWR-1 model commenced using large samples of RN and student RN data. Analysis of data from 1743 nurses in Queensland provides support for the model with resilience found to mediate the relationship between neuroticism and psychological adjustment. The ICWR-1 model, provides one explanation of the influences of burnout and other psychological factors on the ability of the individual RN to remain resilient in the face of workplace stressors within 21st century health care systems (midwives were not included in this study).

Health practitioner workplace resilience

Nurses are the major providers of health care; however, the nature of nursing work, as well as the workplace environment, can provide challenges to their psychological well-being. Additionally, RNs/RMs who exhibit changes to their psychological well-being are more likely to resign from the workforce or may reduce their employment fraction, which has an

economic cost to employers and the nation at large. Previous work led to the development and testing of an individual workforce resilience model. This has been further developed to include a unified model. As such, the second phase of work in 2015 was the construction of the Health Service Workplace Environmental Resilience Model (HSWERM). This model incorporates the ICWR-1 model's key individual difference constructs but also emphasises environmental-systems factors implicated in workplace resilience. The HSWERM was developed using literary synthesis. The most frequent workplace environmental factors were identified, extracted and clustered in alignment with the key constructs for psychological resilience. Seven major organisational concepts emerged that related to a positive resilience building workplace and formed the foundation of the HSWERM. An ARC grant is currently being developed with partnerships across Australia, Hong Kong and Brazil Universities and health care services.

Evidence for reduced length of stay for elective caesarean sections

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare indicate that in Australia in 2011 95,894 women gave birth by caesarean section. This is one in three births. In addition caesarean section rates increased from eighteen percent in 1991 to thirty two percent in 2011. Given the high and increasing rate of elective caesarean sections a quality improvement project on an alternative pathway for the safe transition of maternity care from hospital to home, for women and their babies 24 hours after a planned Elective Caesarean Section (ECS) was undertaken in October 2014 by the Women's and Children's Division at the Lyell McEwin Hospital. The project titled 'Enhanced Recovery Elective Caesarean' (EREC) was initiated based on evidence from the literature that identified key aspects of safe practice for this model of care. The outcome of this research is to provide the evidence on whether or not EREC is a cost effective intervention which is also acceptable to women and their family. The study has been funded by HCF Research Foundation.

'Sometimes your safety goes a bit by the wayside'... exploring Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) with Student Nurses

Nursing is a high risk profession in terms of OHS as is evident in the extent of illness and injury sustained by nursing practitioners world-wide. Learning from nursing students about any OHS issues and concerns is an integral part of stakeholder consultation for teaching staff. Further, both clinical and non-clinical OHS subject matters are important for deliberation by staff in supervisory positions as part of their duty of care for their students. This project explores some of the non-clinical OHS issues expressed by Australian nursing students.

The broad purpose of the study was to more fully understand nursing students' perspectives about OHS. The intent was to subsequently consider this information when planning future OHS teaching and management initiatives.

The principal theme for non-clinical OHS issues was 'Pedestrian Concerns'. Spanning life both on and off campus, this theme encompassed issues of self-care including stressors related to work-life balance and the transition from school (or pre-university) to university student. Other OHS concerns varied according to location and activity. On campus concerns related to safety, computer use, textbooks and storage. Placement concerns related to commuting (in terms of cost and safety) and apprehension about fatigue.

Students were able to identify hazards when sharing their concerns and provide suggestions for their management. This information can be used by staff to enhance the students' university experience.

For further enquiries

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