

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



**School of Nursing and Midwifery
Research Futures Forum**

4th - 5th July 2019

Foreword: Professor Deborah Hatcher, Dean



It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 2019 School of Nursing and Midwifery Research Futures Forum.

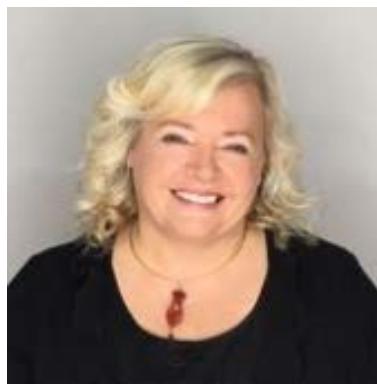
This annual forum provides an opportunity for our Higher Degree Research students to showcase their research. It promotes engagement in rich, thought provoking discussions between students and academics in a supportive research focused environment.

Over the last decade the School of Nursing and Midwifery has built an outstanding research reputation both in Australia and globally, attested by our world ranking successes including our recent Excellence in Research Australia (ERA) Above World Standard rating.

This forum directly contributes to the development of new ideas and concepts, fostering the next generation of researchers. Our Higher Degree Research students with the expert guidance of our dedicated academics will lead research that will impact practice, shaping our future health care.

I hope you enjoy the 2019 Research Futures Forum.

Professor Hannah Dahlen, HDR Director and Professor of Midwifery



It is my very great pleasure to welcome you to our 2019 School of Nursing and Midwifery (SONM) Research Futures Forum. This event provides an opportunity for all our HDR students to come together, share their research and network with their colleagues. It provides staff and supervisors from the SONM the opportunity to listen to our future leaders and ask them questions and support them in their journey. These wonderful HDR students are our future leaders and so we take great delight in watching them grow.

Every year we continue to grow in terms of the number of HDR students we have. Our excellent reputation as leading in the area of research is attracting more and more HDR students every year. Currently we have 54 PhD students, 4 MPhil students, 14 MRes students and 19 BN Honours. This means we have around 90 students on a higher degree research pathway. Our MRes numbers have increased, which is very exciting. All these students have been invited to join us at the Research Futures Forum as we feel getting to participate in this exciting research event is important. The numbers of staff that can now supervise our HDR students has also grown and we now have over 70 staff on the supervisor register. This means we can offer excellent supervision to more HDR students than ever. I want to thank all the supervisors who give up so much of their time and energy to support our HDR students. This year we have had 4 students complete their PhDs/MPhil. Going to graduations is always a highlight for me and watching our HDR students walk across the stage and wear that 'floppy hat' is such a joy.

This year like past year we will continue to have the senior HDR students give their presentation as a 3 Minute thesis format as this worked so well in the past and enables us to get the whole program into two days. We have prizes for best senior, best junior and best MRes presentation. Once again we will have the 3 minute thesis (3MT)

competition during the forum and we are very pleased so many have put their hands up to participate in it.

This year we thought we would begin the forum with a newly graduated PhD student speaking and an overview of the new LAMPS program that is now in place to give HDR students support. We are so lucky to have Dr Jeni Stevens, who graduated with her PhD last year, come back and talk to the current HDR students about her journey and give her tips and inspiration. Our very own PhD student Nikki Meller will talk to you all about the new LAMPS program.

Please go up and introduce yourself to the wonderful Ferina Khayum who is our new research administrative officer. We are so glad to have her on board working with us.

I will leave you with a quote I love because it captures the careful and at times tedious work we do to get our research question right.

"If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on it, I would use the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask (Albert Einstein)

Research Futures Forum

July 4th and 5th 2019

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Keynote Address: Tips for survival from a new Dr – Dr Jeni Stevens



Dr Jeni Stevens is a proud mother of four young men, a RM, RN, an IBCLC, an Adjunct Fellow for Western Sydney University and the Clinical Midwifery Consultant in Infant Feeding at Nepean Hospital, NBMLHD. Her PhD thesis was on the Facilitators, Barriers and Implications of Immediate Skin-to-Skin Contact after a Caesarean Section. Jeni continues to conduct research in collaboration with NBMLHD and Western Sydney University.

Keynote Address: Ms Nikki-Meller Leaders and Mentors Peer Support (LaMPS)



Nikki Meller, RN, MN (Research) with Distinction, PhD Candidate.

Nikki is an experienced nurse with previous clinical positions in coronary and palliative care and has held concurrent clinical and academic research positions. She is a lecturer within the School of Nursing & Midwifery teaching in the undergraduate nursing programs. Nikki is passionate about building a sustainable and engaged nursing workforce having particular research interests in nurse grief and bereavement, empathy, the influence of new modes of teaching and learning in higher education and graduate employability.

Stressors and coping strategies for emergency department nurses in New South Wales of Australia

MRes Candidate - Ali Alomari

Supervisors: Dr Nathan J Wilson, Dr Leanne Hunt, Dr James Collison

Purpose

The aim of this research is to identify the most common factors that contribute to stress for emergency departments nurses. In addition, this research will identify some preferred strategies for emergency departments nurses to minimise stress.

Method

The research methodology is a cross-sectional survey. This survey was sent to a sample of emergency departments nurses working in NSW hospitals. The survey content was developed based on research of the topic and input from experts. Two scales were used in the survey, the Expanded Nursing Stress Scale and Maslach Burnout Inventory. The sampling method for this research is a non-probability purposive sampling approach where the research participants were selected based on their characteristics and the purpose of the study. Therefore, research participants were contacted through the College of Emergency Nursing Australasia and social media.

Results

At this stage, the survey remains “live” and so no detailed results will be presented. Rather, a brief insight into some preliminary results, such as responses and demographic profile of those who have responded, will be presented.

Conclusion

The anticipated impact of this research is to identify factors that contribute to stress and increase the awareness of how stress impacts emergency departments nurses. In addition, this research is hoping to identify ways that NSW emergency departments nurses use to minimise stress, which in turn will provide some ideas about interventions that could provide a better working environment and better patient outcomes.

Intensive insulin therapy in the early primary school setting: Parental narratives

PhD Candidate - Anne Marks

Supervisors: Dr Nathan Wilson, Dr Stacy Blythe, Dr Christine Johnston

Purpose

To gain a deeper understanding of the facilitators of intensive insulin therapy in the early primary school setting from a parent's perspective.

Method

A qualitative design, using narrative inquiry. Participants were recruited via Facebook pages and support groups after ethics approval. 15 mothers from 6 Australian states/territories participated in semi-structured telephone interviews between December 2014 and September 2016. Narrative analysis was used to interpret the data.

Findings

Preliminary data analysis revealed narrative threads that facilitated the use of intensive insulin therapy; school principal support, diabetes care plans, the ability of the child to give insulin, continuous glucose monitoring, parental availability, parental advocacy, reasonable expectations of school staff, a proactive class teacher, teacher's aide availability, supervision of diabetes care and Diabetes Educator involvement.

Conclusion

Intensive insulin therapy can be successfully used in the early primary school setting if appropriate support and resources are available.

Capacity Building Aboriginal Health Workers in Oral Health Promotion: A New Model of Care for Indigenous Pregnant Women

PhD Candidate - Ariana C. Kong

Supervisors: A/Prof Ajesh George, A/Prof Lucie Ramjan, Dr Mariana Sousa

Background

Over 60% of Australian pregnant women have dental problems yet only 10% of women receive dental advice during pregnancy. A model around training midwives to promote oral health has been successfully established in Australia and has improved the oral health behaviours of pregnant women. However, this model may not meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Purpose

The aim of this study is to capacity build Aboriginal Health Workers to promote oral health among Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pregnant women.

Method

To undertake this study, a transformative paradigm will be adopted to support a participatory action research approach. The study will be conducted over three phases: 1) reviewing the literature; 2) exploring the perceptions and needs of Aboriginal Health Workers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pregnant women; 3) developing and evaluating the training program.

Results

The literature confirms the need for Aboriginal Health Workers globally to be trained in antenatal oral health. It also identifies specific socioeconomic and psychosocial contextual factors affecting the oral health of Indigenous pregnant women worldwide.

Preliminary findings indicate that Aboriginal Health Workers face multiple challenges providing oral care to Aboriginal pregnant women. Translating these findings to meet the needs of this population will require formal training, structural changes and improved priority pathways to increase accessibility to dental services.

Conclusion

Although Aboriginal Health Workers require additional training to promote antenatal oral health, how this training is initiated, developed and implemented greatly affects the effectiveness and sustainability of the program.

Reporting clinical incidents: Graduate nurses' lived experiences in the first 12 months of practice

MRes Candidate - Asiye Kopan

Supervisors: Dr Stephen McNally, Dr Antionette Cotton and Dr Peter Lewis

Purpose

This study aims to explore the lived experiences of Graduate Nurses' when reporting clinical incidents in the first twelve months of practice. In order to maintain quality and safety for consumers within health care organisations, it is vital that an inquiry is conducted to understand how graduate nurses experience incident reporting at the start of their careers

Method

A qualitative study using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is being conducted to understand the experiences of eight new graduate nurses in reporting clinical incidents. A semi-structured interview schedule was used and an in-depth analysis is currently underway.

Expected Outcomes of the study

The expected outcomes for this study is to increase awareness about how undergraduate students can be taught to define, identify and understand the processes involved in navigating reporting systems in order to maintain quality and safety for consumers within health care organisations. Understanding work related pressures associated with clinical incident reporting may also lead to new graduate retention.

Constructions of perinatal mental health amongst recent Indian immigrants to Australia: a mixed method study

PhD Candidate - Bridgit Philip

Supervisors: Prof Virginia Schmied, Prof Lynn Kemp, Dr Christine Taylor

Purpose

Mental health problems in the year before and after birth are a significant public health issue. Depression during pregnancy and the postnatal period is higher among immigrant women. This study will explore Indian women's and men's understandings and experiences of emotional well-being in pregnancy and following birth and their adherence to, or negotiations of, traditional birth practices.

Method

This is a mixed method study; the study design is Exploratory Sequential design. One of the challenges faced during the design of this study was to determine the best approach to one-to-one or couple interviews so that the participants will talk freely about rarely spoken issues in their culture, for example mental health and gender preference. To facilitate in-depth discussions on such topics during the interviews, the researcher has used photo elicitation, free listing and pile sorting. As data collection progressed, the researcher faced certain challenges, modifications were made to the techniques and ways in which the photographs and free list of words were presented to the participants.

This presentation will focus on these data collection methods, the challenges faced and provide examples of data collected so far during the qualitative phase of the study.

Conclusion

Use of multiple data collection methods in conjunction with interviews has proven to be beneficial. It has facilitated the participants to engage in the discussions about mental health.

Pedagogical approaches to the teaching of numeracy in undergraduate nurse education: Towards an evidence-based and standardised approach

PhD Candidate - Christine Ann Minty Walker

Supervisors: Dr Nathan J Wilson, A/Prof Leanne Rylands, Dr Leanne Hunt

Purpose

Teaching numeracy to undergraduate nursing students is a critical, yet challenging issue as evidenced by high fail rates in numeracy calculation tests worldwide. The literature suggests there are ad-hoc pedagogical approaches to teaching numeracy, as well as many ad hoc teaching methods. There are arguably many strengths and weaknesses to all approaches and teaching methods, however, there still remains a very large issue, and that is that undergraduates and Registered Nurses alike are struggling to achieve 100% accuracy on calculations tests, and in real life patient cases.

Method

This study will use an exploratory mixed methods design across 5 stages, that will be described in detail.

Results

No data has been collected to date.

Conclusion

The aim of this research is to focus on the formulation of a standardised approach to the design, development, planning and implementation of the numeracy aspects of the Bachelor of Nursing degree within Australia.

Physical Restraints During Mechanical Ventilation in Intensive Care – Nurses’ Perspectives

PhD Candidate - Dawn Perez

Supervisors: A/Prof Kath Peters, Prof Lesley Wilkes, Dr Gillian Murphy

Purpose

The aim of this study is to explore the experience of physical restraints (PR) during mechanical ventilation in intensive care, from the perspectives of patients, families and nurses. The aim of this presentation is to explore preliminary results for the nursing participants.

Method

The study used qualitative methodology, more specifically, naturalistic inquiry, in order to gain a holistic view of the experience. A purposive sampling method was used and data were collected through semi-structured and audio-recorded conversations. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

Results

A total of 12 nurses were interviewed. Preliminary analysis has thus far revealed the following major themes: *The ICU culture* – an exploration of how nurses prioritise patient safety, the pressures associated with this responsibility, the expectation of maintaining the ‘perfect patient’ and how these factors impact on the provision of holistic patient care; *Ways of learning* – identifies how nurses learn how to use PR in the ICU and its impact on practice; *Identifying consequences of PR* – comprises the exploration of the emotional and psychological consequences of PR from the nurses’ perspective and their understanding of the patients’ perspective.

Conclusion

The interviews provided in-depth insights into the way ICU nurses view and experience the use of physical restraints during mechanical ventilation in intensive care. In particular, the data highlighted the cultural and workplace factors which impact nurses’ perception, decision-making skills and learning pathways. While valuable insights have been gained, further results from the patient and family groups will be essential in understanding the experience from a more holistic perspective.

Unregulated birth workers in Australia

PhD Candidate - Elizabeth Rigg

Supervisors: Prof Hannah Dahlen, Prof Virginia Schmied, A/Prof Kath Peters

Purpose

To establish the role, training and practices of unregulated birth workers in Australia and why women seek their care.

Methods

This was a sequential, exploratory mixed methods study design that utilised document analysis, interviews and surveys to explore the question. Study 1 thematically analysed submissions made to the South Australian Government on a proposal to protect midwifery practice. Study 2 interviewed nine participants who had experienced an unregulated birth worker supported homebirth. Study 3 and 4 were two national surveys of unregulated birth workers and women respectfully.

Results

The proposal did not address the underlying issues that generated the problem of unregulated birth workers attending homebirth in Australia. When women were unable to access their preferred choices, they experienced the system as traumatising and inflexible with limited choices stimulating them to seek alternative options outside the system. Unregulated birth workers provide home birthing services irrespective of women's risk factors when this choice is unavailable via mainstream services. They can be experienced and trained in childbirth care and practice like a midwife. While most women reported a positive homebirth outcome, there were three baby deaths.

Conclusions

Policy makers and the professions need to work collaboratively to change how mainstream service models are funded, managed and provided to improve women's experience of hospital care. Homebirth and midwives need to be fully supported to enable all women's access to this choice.

Discovering the positive: using appreciative inquiry to explore the peak experiences of Graduate diploma in Midwifery students on practice placement

PhD Candidate - Fiona Arundell

Supervisors: A/Prof Kath Peters, A/Prof Athena Sheehan, Dr Judy Mannix

Aim of study

The aim of this study is to explore how midwives facilitate the practice development of student midwives. In particular, the research seeks to describe the relationship between preceptor and student and the processes and strategies utilised by midwives to facilitate a positive learning experience in the practice setting.

Methods

To observe the aim of the study appreciative inquiry has been selected as the appropriate methodology. Appreciative inquiry is composed of four phases which are identified as the 4D cycle, the phases are termed discovery, dream, design and destiny. This presentation will focus on the discovery phase which appreciates and values the best of what has been, in relation to this study how midwives facilitate the development of midwifery students. Thirteen postgraduate midwifery students from one university in NSW participated in individual appreciative inquiry interviews. These interviews were analysed using iterative thematic analysis.

Results

Midwives are influential in determining the experience of students while on clinical placement, not all midwives practice similarly. The most positive experiences occur when the midwife befriends the student, is woman centred and has the confidence to provide evidence based care.

Purpose of presentation

This presentation provides an overview of the findings from the discovery phase of the study

Emergency nurses' experiences of the implementation of early goal-directed fluid resuscitation therapy in the management of sepsis

MRes Candidate - Gladis Kabil

Supervisors: Dr Stephen McNally, Prof Deborah Hatcher, Dr Evan Alexandrou

Background

Severe sepsis can lead to multiple organ failure and death if intravenous fluids are not commenced within the first hour. The time critical nature of the initiation of intravenous fluids is not always given its deserved priority. Whilst a large number of studies have analysed administration of first dose antibiotics, studies have not explored factors inhibiting timely intravenous fluids and the experience of emergency nurses related to the initiation of early goal-directed fluid resuscitation (EGDFR).

Aim

To explore the experiences of emergency nurses related to the initiation of EGDFR in the care of patients with sepsis

Methods

A qualitative exploratory approach, encompassing face to face semi-structured interviews was used for data collection. Ten registered nurses currently practicing in emergency settings across NSW were interviewed. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework guided the data analysis.

Results

Following preliminary analysis, three main themes were identified: 1. Nurses' perceptions and experiences regarding IVF administration in sepsis; 2. Challenges related to initiating fluids and 3. Strategies to improve compliance with EGDFR. Participants have described various factors that they find inhibiting timely initiation of IVF such as busyness of the department, delayed diagnosis, complex patient presentations, and limited scope of practice of nurses to initiate fluids.

Conclusion

The outcomes of this research will provide an impetus for re-evaluating current protocol guidelines and provide a positive impact on the scope of emergency nurse practice empowering them to initiate EGDFR.

The decision to provide palliative care to patients with heart failure: A qualitative meta-synthesis

PhD Candidate - Gursharan K Singh

Supervisors: Prof Phillip Newton, Prof Patricia Davidson, Dr Caleb Ferguson

Introduction

Individuals with heart failure experience high symptom burden, impacting quality of life. The implementation of palliative care approaches is relatively unclear. This meta-synthesis aimed to examine the decision-making process of healthcare professionals in the referral for palliative care for patients with heart failure.

Methods

The electronic databases SCOPUS, CINAHL and Medline were searched. Included studies reported healthcare professionals' perceptions of palliative care referral in heart failure through qualitative data collection, written in English and peer-reviewed articles. Included articles were analysed in accordance with Thomas and Harden's approach.

Results

Healthcare professionals used their intuitive thinking to determine if a patient would not benefit from active treatment and if they should transition to a palliative care phase. They use analytical thinking or rational judgement to collect information about the patient, and intuitive thinking to determine prognosis and if palliative care could address goals of care. Themes reflecting the analytical thinking were an understanding of their professional role, using pre-existing decision processes, including methodological plans such as care pathways and checklists as well as balancing their viewpoints with other healthcare professionals to confirm their decision.

Conclusion

This meta-synthesis identified factors influencing the decision-making process in referring patients with heart failure to palliative care. The information described can be used to increase palliative care access by enabling opportunities to develop interventions that allow for timely referrals and ultimately, improve patients' quality of life through the provision of palliative care that addresses the patient's needs.

The experiences of refugees that are registered nurses working in the healthcare system in Australia

PhD Candidate - Harrison Ng Chok

Supervisors: Dr Judy Mannix, Dr Cathy Dickson, Adjunct Prof Lesley Wilkes

Background

At the turn of the millennium, there was an abundance of literature critiquing research professionals about the lack of sensitivity, methodological and ethical considerations when researching refugee participants. In response, refugee organisations in Australia began running comprehensive training workshops to educate and train professionals that work with refugees. In NSW, the Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) developed a 'core concepts' framework ('core concepts') for professionals working with refugees. This presentation highlights the lead researchers preparation and implementation of a modified 'core concepts' before 'entering the field' with refugee participants.

Purpose

To provide practical insights into the preparation and implementation of 'core concepts' when interviewing refugee participants that are employed as registered nurses (RNs).

Method

A professional workshop run by STARTTS was attended by the lead researcher and covered topics about the refugee experience and skills competencies of workers. For applicability, the lead researcher modified the 'core concepts' for the PhD study.

Results

Of the ten 'core-concepts', seven were appropriate for the study and implemented in the research: 1) 'Identifying the target population', 2) 'Cultural competence', 3) 'Key recovery principles', 4) 'Minimising triggers', 5) 'Strong professional boundaries', 6) 'Communicating effectively' and 7) 'Refer to counselling and other support'.

Conclusions

The importance of formal training and preparation for researchers engaging refugee research, for the first time, should not be overlooked. This presentation highlights an exemplar of applying professional training concepts when engaging participants who have had a lengthy resettlement but experienced trauma as refugees.

The relationship between personal lubricants and self-reported sexual health outcomes in NSW: a cross-sectional study

MRes Candidate - James Spiller

Supervisors: Dr Virginia Stulz, Dr Lyn Francis

Purpose

Personal lubricant (PL) is widely used to increase the effectiveness of condoms and reduce discomfort associated with sex. Anecdotal accounts and isolated in-vitro studies suggest that friction reduction from PL outweighs any potential negative effects, however there are no studies examining the effect of PL on sexual health across a population. This project is designed to assess the PL usage habits of people in NSW through a cross-sectional survey and determine if there is an association between participants' PL use and self reported sexual health outcomes. PL has great potential as an adjunctive and independent intervention, both as a treatment and prophylactic measure. However, PL requires a greater formalised understanding for this potential to be realised. By determining if widely used PL is associated with sexual health this project aims to provide baseline knowledge for research into PL to improve sexual health outcomes.

Method

Exploratory online survey of people in NSW. This study is an internet-based survey which seeks to snapshot the general public's usage patterns and habits of PL and associated health outcomes in the community.

Results

The pilot survey assessed reliability via test-retest reliability and a Cronbach's alpha value of .889 was achieved. The main survey is currently in distribution phase. Online participation to date has been promising with over 100 respondents.

Conclusion

This data will assist government and peak health bodies to make more informed policy decisions and recommendations about the use of PL and will provide information on how PL formulations may affect health.

Young Pregnant Women's experience of pregnancy care in NSW, Australia: A Mixed Method Study

MPhil Candidate - Jen Doust

Supervisors: Dr Elaine Burns, Dr Athena Sheehan, Dr Kim Psaila

Purpose

To explore what kind of pregnancy care services are available for young pregnant women, aged 16-24 years, within NSW, Australia, maternity service provision? What challenges young pregnant women are faced with in the context of their lives throughout their pregnancy? And to explore the experiences of young pregnant women of the care they received. The study hopes to influence models of care that promote positive maternal and neonatal outcomes and to best support young pregnant women to become “good mums”

Method

Two phase approach using both quantitative and qualitative data and integrating the findings from each data set to find common themes to answer the research question.

- Phase 1 – Online Survey- Online Facebook survey posted on dedicated young mother’s groups
- Phase 2 - Follow up volunteered interviews using SMS and Facebook Messenger

Results

The study explored the experiences of 105 Young Pregnant Women throughout their journey to become a mum and currently the analysis of the online survey has been analysed with the initial findings of follow up interviews. The descriptive quantitative data from the survey has found that half of Young Women had their antenatal care from a hospital midwife or doctor. Over 60% of young women experienced social hardships and mental health issues and less than a third was supported with their complexities and less than half of the participants rated their care as very good. The biggest fear during pregnancy was “*losing their baby*”. The young women’s stories talked about equity of care, a turning point in their life and what it meant to them to be a good mum.

Conclusion

The initial findings of the study will be presented including the descriptive analysis of the online Facebook survey and the initial thematic analysis of in-depth interviews. Overall young women want to be good “mums” however the way in which care is provided impacts on their experience of how they achieve this.

When a trivial research finding is statistically significant: Using p - value to identify risk factors for high similarity index

PhD Candidate -Joan Lynch

Supervisors: Prof Yenna Salamonson, A/Prof Lucie Ramjan, Dr Paul Glew

Introduction

P -values are ubiquitous in the research literature. The concept of statistical significance represented by p -values—was developed to determine the probability that the results of a study were due to random chance. An arbitrary p -value of ' < 0.05 ' is commonly used in research to represent statistical significance; however, the p -value does not equate to trivial, important or even real research findings.

Background

The ECLIPSE study examined the risk factors for high similarity index in students enrolled in the Bachelor of Nursing program. Although the study results showed that female students had 34% increased similarity index risk ($OR = 1.34, p < 0.001$), what does it really mean? Although p -values are in essence quantitative, the correct application of p -values is a profoundly qualitative process that requires judgement and insight.

Discussion

P -values should not be employed reflexively to determine whether research findings are trivial, important, or even ‘real’. A common misconception is that when “statistical significance” is achieved, this determines whether the results refute or support a study hypothesis.

P -values, when used in conjunction with other designations of statistical significance (such as confidence intervals), have value in evaluating the evidence. All being equal, smaller p -values provide more evidence against a null hypothesis than larger ones.

Conclusion

Excessive reverence to p -values has led to an over reliance by researchers to use p -values to interpret research findings. However, their application to determine if a hypothesis has been supported ($p \leq 0.05$) or not ($p > 0.05$) promotes a level of “certainty” that is not realistic.

The p -value does not provide information about the magnitude of the effect being studied or its meaningfulness. The p -value is one among many criteria that can be valuable through providing the probability of an event occurring by chance. The p -value can also stand for pragmatic—a research imperative for keeping the interpretation of statistical results meaningful but not magical.

Failure, hardship, endurance, and reward - Australian women's experience of traumatic brain injury

PhD Candidate - Kate O'Reilly

Supervisors: A/Prof Kath Peters, Dr Nathan Wilson, Dr Cannas Kwok

Purpose

Research in the field of traumatic brain injury is readily available, however an exploration of gender issues which are specific for women following traumatic brain injury remain scarce in the literature. This research aims to identify the gender specific issues for Australian women following traumatic brain injury to draw attention to the current limitations within the literature and to stimulate discussion and inform future directions for research, policy and practice.

Method

Pragmatism as a research paradigm underpinned a critical feminist transformative framework for this concurrent mixed methods study. Findings from qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey were integrated to develop a gendered understanding of Australian women's experience of living with TBI.

Results 20 Australian women participated in conversational interviews and 49 Australian women shared their experience through completion of an online survey. Themes which have emerged from both the qualitative and quantitative data include: Showing Tenacity; Being or Feeling Vulnerable; Changing Perception of Self; Sexuality, Sexual and Reproductive Health; and Navigating Relationships.

Conclusion

This research provides insights with the aim of improving clinical care, rehabilitation, policy development and advocacy services for women following traumatic brain injury.

Access Block Impasse: Through the Lens of Nurses In The Hospital: The ABILITI Project

PhD Candidate - Lauren-Leigh Metcalfe

Supervisors: Prof Martin Christensen, Dr Steven Frost

Aim

To explore the perceptions and experience of nurses' whose role requires allocating patients to outlier and over census beds.

Background

A direct result of access block to inpatient ward beds is the extended time patients spend in the ED. Patients waiting for ward beds occupy beds intended to service emergency patients. Consequently, ED congestion leads to patients who arrive to ED waiting long periods of time for assessment and treatment as often there is no appropriate physical space for patients to be accommodated. A management strategy employed by nurses managing the flow of patients throughout the hospital to relieve congestion in EDs is the transfer of patients to a ward bed using an over-census protocol and admitting patients to outlier wards.

Method

A systematic literature search was conducted to assess the level of existing qualitative evidence relating to nurses' perceptions and experiences on their role allocating patients to outlier and over census beds. Five electronic data bases were searched including CINAHL, Cochran, Medline, Proquest and Google Scholar from 1999-2019 using the keywords boarding, outlier, surge bed, surge capacity, over census nurse opinion, nurse decision and nurse perspective.

Results

The abstracts of 16 papers met some aspects of the inclusion criteria. However, closer analysis using the CASP tool for qualitative research excluded these. Therefore, this review failed to identify suitable publications relevant to the study aim.

Conclusion

The significant lack of published literature in this important area, highlights the work that needs to be done to explore the perceptions and experience of nurses' whose role requires allocating patients to outlier and over census beds within the hospital setting.

Exploring the effect of nurse-led supportive care on patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, and their caregivers

PhD Candidate - Linda Ora

Supervisors: Dr Judy Mannix, Adjunct Prof Lesley Wilkes, Clinical A/Prof Lucy Morgan

Purpose

The thesis is a work of three parts:

Part I will describe the development and implementation of a novel nurse-led model of supportive care within an existing nurse-led COPD service in a public hospital in Western Sydney.

Part II will explore the effect of this model of care on patients' experiences of their illness, and the experience of their caregivers.

Part III will assess the impact of this model on patients with COPD and their caregivers' participation in advance care planning discussions and concordance between preferences for care and delivered care across the illness trajectory.

Method

Case Study methodology will be used to provide a comprehensive, holistic investigation of nurse-led supportive care in COPD as a unique, bounded case. Multiple sources of data will be used to address the aims including qualitative interviews with patients and caregivers to understand their experience of nurse-led supportive care. Document review of meeting notes with reflections will inform the development and implementation phase of the new nurse-led service. Field notes, patients' clinical notes, education/information material developed for patients, caregivers and staff will be also be included in data analysis for the study.

Conclusion

The significance of this research is that it will draw much needed attention to how a supportive care model would work in the context of COPD, especially due to its lengthy and unpredictable illness trajectory. This thesis will also highlight the significance of nurses in leading such models and the impact this has on patients and their caregivers at the point of care.

What determines the optimal management of Midwifery Group Practice in Australia?

PhD Candidate - Leonie Hewitt

Supervisors: Prof Hannah Dahlen, A/Prof Donna Hartz, A/Prof Ann Dadich

Purpose

The aim of this study is to determine the conditions that help to optimise the management of Midwifery Group Practice (MGP) in Australia.

Method

This study will be informed by a feminist theory and underpinned by pragmatism using a sequential mixed methods design in two phases. Phase one will be a qualitative phase using interviews and focus groups. Data will be analysed using thematic analysis.

Participants will be managers of MGPs and their managers, MGP midwives and Clinical Midwifery Consultants who have assisted with MGP.

Phase two will use information gained from phase one to inform the design of a survey for both managers and midwives. The quantitative data will be analysed using simple descriptive analysis and the qualitative data will be analysed using thematic analysis.

Results

A literature search revealed 35 articles that contained some information on the topic of management /leadership of an MGP or management/leadership of midwives. A thematic review of the literature discovered four major themes: 'Sustainability', 'women, men, institutions and power', 'leadership/management preparation' and 'leadership attributes'.

Conclusion

MGP is a midwifery-led continuity of care model with evidence indicating superior outcomes for women and babies, and benefits to midwives. However, there is limited access to these services. With very few studies on MGP management, little is known about the organisational factors that enable and sustain an effective MGP.

Mental health nurses: suicide risk assessment and follow up care

PhD Candidate - Leone Pike

Supervisors: A/Prof Kath Peters, A/Prof Lauretta Luck, Dr Gillian Murphy

Purpose

Suicide prevention is not only a controversial social issue but also a multi-faceted health care issue, and is a leading priority of the national mental health agenda. Quantitative research regarding suicide assessment has inherent statistical problems. Despite the lack of quantitative evidence, there are guiding practice principles evident in health policy at both a state and federal level in Australia. Though suicide risk assessment and developing follow up plans is a routine task for many mental health nurses, more evidence is required to inform practice regarding this complex clinical intervention. This research will explore the experiences of mental health nurses when performing suicide risk assessment and planning follow up care.

Method

A social justice approach will underpin this research as the project aims to discover insights that might improve the care of a vulnerable group, that is, suicidal people. Interpretive design methodology will be used to guide the conduct of the research as it is flexible and emphasises results that may improve clinical practice. Purposive sampling will be used to ensure the recruitment of mental health nurses from a variety of contexts and experience levels. Twenty mental health nurses will be interviewed about their experience of suicide assessment and follow up care planning: exploring their perceptions, knowledge base, emotional responses, clinical practices and experiences of the health system. The interviews will be transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically.

Results/ conclusions

It is hoped the findings may provide new insights for nurse education and practice improvements in the assessment and care of suicidal people.

The health literacy profiles of people with heart disease. Findings from a cluster analysis

PhD Candidate - Maria Mares

Supervisors: A/Prof Bronwyn Everett, Prof Yenna Salamonson, Dr Rakime Elmir

Introduction

People with low levels of health literacy (HL) have high rates of health service utilisation, yet poorer health status, higher mortality and increased healthcare costs. They are less likely to engage in health-promoting behaviours and experience poorer quality of life. Low HL can be compounded by language barriers, magnifying the damaging effects on health outcomes.

Method

Using a cross-sectional design, a total of $n=143$ participants were surveyed between April and December 2016. Concurrently, a qualitative exploratory design using semi-structured interviews ($n=14$) was utilised to provide insights into the individual's experiences when engaging with health practitioners and health services. Cluster analysis was undertaken to identify HL profiles (low/medium/high), and logistic regression analysis was performed to identify predictors of heart-health behaviours. HLQ data was combined with demographic data to provide a clear picture of what a typical person in each cluster looked like.

Results

Participants' mean age was 66.7 (SD 11.8), 64% were male and 76% spoke a language other than English at home. Cluster analysis revealed that 47% of participants who speaks English only, 53% who speaks a language other than English and 77% who speaks Arabic only have low HL. The lowest HL scores were seen for (i) appraisal of health information; (ii) ability to find good health information, and (iii) understand health information well enough to know what to do.

Conclusion

Addressing health literacy and language barriers can improve self-efficacy and promote self-management behaviours in people with heart disease.

Undergraduate Assistant in Nursing (AIN) employment in aged care: Does this prepare new graduates for the clinical work environment?

PhD Candidate - Maricris Algoso

Supervisors: A/Prof Kath Peters, A/Prof Lucie Ramjan, A/Prof Leah East

Purpose

The majority of undergraduate Assistants in Nursing (AINs) work in aged care facilities, where their role mainly consists of assisting with activities of daily living. Previous work has indicated that students do not consider AIN work in aged care provides them with adequate skills for entry-level practice. This paper presents the qualitative phase of a sequential mixed methods study that explored whether AIN experience in aged care contributed to the preparation of new graduates for the clinical work environment.

Method

Twelve participants recruited through social media and professional networks. Participants were currently practising as new graduate nurses and were previously employed as undergraduate AINs in aged care. A semi-structured interview approach was used to collect the data and Riessman's approach to narrative analysis was used to discover trends in participants' stories.

Findings

Four principal themes emerged from participants' stories: familiarity and exposure, consolidating fundamental nursing skills, understanding the fundamentals of nursing, and understanding and applying holistic care. Consolidating fundamental nursing skills built confidence and created realistic expectations of the role of the registered nurse. Exposure to the clinical setting created an understanding of the fundamentals of nursing care, which facilitated the link between theory and practice. More importantly, participants learnt professional conduct and boundaries as they developed an understanding of the concept of holistic care.

Conclusion

Undergraduate AIN employment in aged care encourages a transformative learning experience that supports the journey to becoming a professional nurse through the consolidation of the fundamentals of nursing.

Intention to Pursue a Career in Mental Health Nursing (INTENT)

PhD Candidate - Mark Wilbourn

Supervisors: Prof Yenna Salamonson, A/Prof Lucie Ramjan, Dr Sungwon Chang

Purpose

Attracting people into a career in mental health nursing is a major challenge. This study is an exploration of factors influencing undergraduate students' intention to pursue a career in mental health nursing.

Method

The study used mixed methods research to examine relationships between factors believed to influence undergraduate students' intention to pursue a career in mental health nursing. Two scales, one based on the theory of planned behaviour, a conceptual framework for the study of human actions or behaviour (ASPIRE), and the other based on recovery-oriented practice (ARP) were developed to measure intention to pursue a career in mental health nursing and aptitude for mental health nursing respectively. Cross-sectional and longitudinal surveys were supported by semi-structured interviews.

Results

Mental health nursing is an unpopular career choice for the majority of undergraduate students. Factors affecting career choice fall into two broad categories, namely student-related characteristics, such as age, gender, and previous experience, and course-related characteristics, such as the amount of mental health theory and clinical placements offered. Inadequate course content and poor quality clinical experiences negatively impact students' intention to pursue a career in mental health nursing.

Conclusion

Universities have a responsibility to deliver undergraduate courses that promote mental health nursing as a viable career option, with graduates able to mirror hope, choice, dignity, respect and social support, and be facilitators for finding meaning and purpose in life.

Developing community mobility and independence for young adults on the autism spectrum: Viewpoint of parents of young adults

PhD Candidate - Michelle Kersten

Supervisors: Dr. Nathan Wilson, Dr. Kristy Coxon, Dr. Hoe Lee

Introduction

Community mobility is an important occupation. While successful community mobility enables participation in work, education and leisure activities, little is known about the development of community mobility skills in young adults on the autism spectrum, and the experiences of their parents.

Objectives

To explore the experiences of parents of young adults on the autism spectrum in 1) the development of community mobility including pedestrian, cycling, public transport and driving skills and 2) relationships between community mobility and participation in adolescence and young adulthood.

Method

Semi structured interviews with 12 parents of young adults aged 18-25 in rural, urban and urban fringe areas of NSW were conducted. Parents were included if their young adult was either travel training or independent in any form of community mobility. Interview data were analysed using a grounded theory approach in Quirkos software.

Results

Several themes were identified: parental perception of vulnerability for using public transport, autism specific challenges when learning to drive, and the different motivations for developing community mobility, independence and participation for young adults on the autism spectrum.

Conclusion

The motivations contributing to development of community mobility may differ for young people on the spectrum, compared with their neurotypical peers. Independent community mobility develops from a gradual urging of parents, scaffolding learning experiences, opportunities for practice and growing confidence in skills and safety for both parent and young adult. Although independent mobility enables increased opportunities for participation in work, training and community activities, this doesn't necessarily translate to increased community participation. Young adults still may need support to find patterns of community participation which fit with their special interests and support their wellbeing. Parents identified that their young adult needed space to achieve milestones at their own pace. Professionals need to consider this when planning intervention and support.

Enhancing Assessment Grading among academics in nursing Education. The Engaged Project

PhD Candidate - Miranda Daly

Supervisors: A/Prof Bronwyn Everett, Dr Paul Glew, Prof Yenna Salamonson

Background/ Introduction

The quality of feedback provided to university students has long been recognised as the most important predictor of student learning and satisfaction. However, providing quality feedback to students is challenging in a context where universities increasingly rely on (i) sessional, casualised and potentially inexperienced academic staff to assess undergraduate work and (ii) a shift to blended learning with many assessments marked online. Ensuring staff are suitably equipped to provide quality grading and feedback to students is vital if student learning and satisfaction goals are to be met.

Purpose

The overall aim of this study is to identify examples of good grading practices and processes (including online grading) by nurse academics from the perspectives of nurse academics, unit coordinators and undergraduate nursing students. Specifically, using Appreciative Inquiry, this study will explore: (i) what practices constitute good grading; (ii) why these practices work well; (iii) how these practices could be enhanced; and (iv) how these grading practices could be embedded as part of usual practice within the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Western Sydney University.

Method:

A two-phase sequential explanatory mixed methods study design incorporating a survey and paired interviews/focus groups will be utilised. Study 1 (quantitative) will consist of the development, psychometric testing and administration of a survey to nurse academics and unit coordinators. Study 2 (qualitative) will consist of two phases paired interviews with nurse academics and undergraduate students, and focus groups with nurse academics and unit coordinators.

Exploring the oral cancer risk behaviours of Indian immigrants in Australia

PhD Candidate - Nidhi Saraswat

Supervisors: A/Prof Ajesh George, A/Prof Bronwyn Everett, Ms Rona Pillay

Background

Oral cancer is a serious public health concern globally. Worldwide, it is the sixth most common cancer with an average annual incidence of 275,000 cases. While the majority of oral cancers are reported in developing countries (primarily South Asian), an increase in new cases has been seen in developed countries including Australia. This increase could be due to increased migration from South Asian countries where risk factors for oral cancer including tobacco chewing/smoking, alcohol consumption and betel nut chewing are prevalent.

Purpose

To explore the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of Indian immigrants and health professionals in Australia regarding the oral cancer risk.

Method

Sequential mixed method design involving three phases:

Phase 1: A systematic review and scoping review will be conducted to gather current evidence in the proposed area.

Phase 2: Interviews will be undertaken to explore the perceptions of Indian immigrants and General Health practitioners towards oral cancer risk.

Phase 3: Survey will be conducted among Indian immigrants in Australia to explore their knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding Oral Cancer risk.

Results

The systematic review confirms that South Asian immigrants in developed countries have inadequate oral cancer risk-related knowledge, poor attitudes towards oral cancer risk and a strong inclination towards negative oral cancer risk practices. The findings also highlighted a scarcity of relevant research in Australia.

Conclusion

The review findings have highlighted the significance of this study and the current gap that exist in Australia. Phase 2 and 3 will further explore this gap and provide recommendations.

Putting your nurse face on: Death, grief and maintaining professional identity

PhD Candidate - Nikki Meller

Supervisors: Prof Deborah Hatcher, Prof Deborah Parker, A/Prof Athena Sheehan

Purpose

Identifying and understanding how nurses recognise and manage their own grief responses when a patient has died, may present an opportunity to better understand how nurses manage and negotiate their grief reactions, and how organisations can best support them managing their grief. To date, there is limited empirical research identifying grief responses or exploring grief experiences of nurses working in a hospital setting after the death of a patient in their care.

Methods

A constructivist grounded theory methodology has been used for this study. Fourteen in-depth intensive interviews have been conducted whilst utilising concurrent data collection and constant comparative analysis.

Results

Four categories have been constructed from the current data analysis. The categories "When death is a bad day in the office", "You've just got to keep doing your job" and "You never know when it's going to hit you with grief" describe a nurse's grief and how their day to day responsibilities and perceived social identity interrupt's their ability to grieve when a patient dies. The context "You're a professional and have a great deal of responsibility", explores a nurse's inherent understanding of their caring role and expected professional behaviour when managing a patient death.

Conclusion

These findings may present an opportunity for changes in best practice and individual self-care strategies for nurses who may be grieving the death of a patient. If a nurse's own grief is managed appropriately, it may increase their capacity to provide better quality patient care to future patients.

Children as health ambassadors: An approach to improving health, wellbeing, and learning outcomes for Australian Indigenous children and communities

PhD Candidate - Phillip Good

Supervisors: Dr Rebekah Grace, Dr Cathy Kaplun, Dr Janet Conti

Purpose

The lack of progress in addressing the significant gap in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is well recognised. While programs delivered by health professionals have improved outcomes for Indigenous people, there are few participatory models where community elders, parents and children are driving positive changes in health outcomes for Indigenous communities. There is even less research literature that focuses on the voices and opinions of pre-adolescent children about their overall health and wellbeing. This research will examine a particular innovative model, the Young Doctors for Life program, that aims to address health and wellbeing for Indigenous children aged 9 to 12 years.

Method

The research will employ a mixed methods longitudinal design with qualitative and quantitative analysis. Research participants include the enrolled children, parents, school teachers, program leaders and local staff. The research will focus on one remote and one regional community.

Results

The findings of this study will have examined:

1. The health and wellbeing outcomes for the Indigenous children;
2. Leader, parent and child perspectives on the impact of the children's participation;
3. The understanding of program adaptations necessary to ensure the program is locally relevant.

Conclusion

Research findings from this study will inform future intervention programs aimed at improving health outcomes for Indigenous children. This includes both the positive findings and challenges that are identified.

The CoT Study – Research in Progress

PhD Candidate - Philippa Mann

Supervisors: Prof Virginia Schmied, Dr Jann Foster, Dr Kim Psaila

Purpose

The aim of this study is to examine twin co-bedding practices in neonatal units, and by parents in the home setting in Australia

Methods

At present, Phase 1 and Phase 2 are being undertaken concurrently. Phase 1 is a survey of Australia Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Special Care Nursery (SCN) policies and practice. Phase 2 has two parts – Firstly, interviews with parents of twins who were admitted to NICU to establish their experiences with, and perceptions of twin co-bedding, both in hospital and at home. Secondly, focus groups with NICU/SCN staff (nursing, medical, allied health) to establish their personal experiences with, and perceptions of twin co-bedding.

Results

Phase 1 - The Australia wide survey of NICU/SCN unit policy/practice was live from November 12th 2018 – December 21st 2018. There are >70 NICU/SCN's in Australian hospital. 40 responses were recorded; however some surveys were incomplete. Of the units who responded, 36% reported they practiced twin co-bedding, 36% reported they sometimes did, and 27% stated they did not. Participants were then asked to describe the practice if they used it, with wide variability of practice reported. Only 26% of respondents stated they had a formal unit policy or guideline for twin co-bedding.

Of the responses which were incomplete, it appears that more questions were answered at the beginning, perhaps indicating the respondents (NUM, CNC, NE or CNE) may have had competing demands when undertaking the survey. In order to increase responses, the survey will be made available for a further one month.

Phase 2 – Interviews and focus groups: Recruitment commenced on July 19th 2018. At present, 4 out of a target of 10 interviews have been completed. One focus group has occurred. One theme that has appeared in the interviews so far, is variability of information provided by NICU staff, with participants turning to family, friends or internet forums for advice. In the focus group, it was noted that two of the nursing staff who participated were also parents of twins themselves, and therefore had personal interest/experience with the topic of twin co-bedding.

Where to next

Once the data from Phase 1 and Phase 2 has been collected and analysed, it will be combined and utilised to develop two Australia wide surveys – one for families of twins, and one for neonatal staff, to ascertain Australian twin co-bedding practice, perception, and policies.

Current practices and barriers of general practitioners in promoting oral health care among people with diabetes

PhD Candidate - Prakash Poudel

Supervisors: A/Prof Ajesh George, Prof Rhonda Griffiths, A/Prof Vincent Wong,
Dr Amit Arora

Purpose

Poorly controlled diabetes leads to multiple complications including oral health problems. This study aimed to explore current perceptions, practices, and barriers of GPs towards oral health care in people with diabetes.

Method

The study used a qualitative research design involving telephone interviews. Purposive sampling was used to recruit 12 GPs from the Greater Sydney region. A thematic analysis was undertaken.

Results

Participants were predominantly male (n=10), working in group practices (n=11) with a mean age of 55 years and 25 years of work experience. Most GPs acknowledged the importance of oral health care for people with diabetes, identifying the contributing factors to poor oral health in this group. GPs reported seeing 20 -30% of patients with oral health problems. GPs' current oral health care practices (education, risk assessment and referral) were reported as very limited. GPs perceived several barriers including lack of time, absence of referral pathways as well as limited knowledge and training in promoting oral health care. Similarly, GPs reported barriers for patients with diabetes which included the cost of oral health care and lower oral health awareness. GPs perceived that resources such as education/training, a standardised assessment tool and patient education materials could support them in promoting oral health care. GPs highlighted that other diabetes care providers such as diabetes educators could also play an important role in promoting oral health.

Conclusion

Oral health care practices of GPs were limited and associated with the barriers including lack of time and absence of dental referral pathways.

Good clinical support facilitates learning and transforms new graduate nurses into leaders: A qualitative study

PhD Candidate - Rafic Hussein

Supervisors: Prof Yenna Salamonson, Prof Wendy Hu, A/Prof Bronwyn Everett

Aims

To explore new graduate nurses' (NGNs) clinical support experiences over the 12-month transitional support program (TSP) and how these experiences influenced their learning, job satisfaction and skill development.

Background

Clinical support of NGNs to practise is an essential component during their transition to practice. However, there is little evidence about what is effective in supporting the learning and development of leadership capability in NGNs during this critical period.

Methods

Using a qualitative exploratory design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with NGNs working in a tertiary level teaching hospital in Sydney, Australia. Nurses were interviewed upon completing their 12-month TSP in late 2013-2014. Data were thematically analysed.

Results

Twenty-six NGNs were interviewed. Three major themes identified were: A) Clinical support facilitates learning, this encompassed both tiered (informal) and formal clinical supervision that occurred in three ways: i) on the run; ii), on the spot; and iii) through reflection. B) what makes good clinical support included: i) know my capabilities; ii) be there for me; and iii) support me around the clock. C) transforming NGNs into leaders' was achieved through: i) increased job satisfaction and ii) delivering highest standards of care.

Conclusion

This study highlights that tiered (informal) and formal clinical support is integral in the successful transition of NGNs. Both elements are integral to nurturing confidence, higher standards of care and enables NGNs to be more autonomous clinicians and nurse leaders.

Sexual Health After Mastectomy: Experiences of Arabic Women in Australia

PhD Candidate - Rawan Alsababha

Supervisors: A/Prof Kath Peters, Dr Judy Mannix, Dr Fiona McDermid

Purpose

Breast Cancer (BC) is a major public health threat among women in Arab countries with incidence rates increasing over the last 10 years. Further, women are being diagnosed with BC at more advanced stages of the disease limiting their treatment options, making mastectomy more likely. Previous research suggests that mastectomy has physical and psychological consequences and negatively impacts sexual health. However, there is a lack of research that addresses the experiences of Arabic women after mastectomy. This is likely related to cultural and religious beliefs of Arabic society that consider discussion surrounding sexual health taboo. This study aims to gain knowledge to inform strategies that best accommodate the sexual health needs of Arabic women who have had a mastectomy.

Method

A qualitative approach underpinned by social constructivism, feminist perspectives and storytelling was used. Participants were recruited via social media and through breast cancer and Arabic women's support groups. Women were asked to complete a short survey and indicate their willingness to be interviewed by providing their contact details. Women chose to be interviewed face-to-face, online or via telephone and chose whether they conversed in Arabic or English.

Results

Thus far five Arabic women have completed the survey and have been interviewed, all had undergone reconstructive surgery. Preliminary findings suggest that these women experienced alterations in body image and sexual desire, and encounter substantial challenges negotiating relationships with partners.

Conclusion

These initial findings extend our understanding of the supportive sexual health care needs of Arabic women who have undergone mastectomy.

Workplace culture experiences of midwifery students and newly-graduated midwives in metropolitan and rural maternity units in NSW, Australia

PhD Candidate - Richard Gilfillan

Supervisors: A/Prof Virginia Stulz, Dr Lyn Francis, A/Prof Athena Sheehan, Dr Glenda McDonald

Purpose

The overall purpose of this research project is to explore the workplace culture experiences of midwifery students and newly-graduated midwives in both metropolitan and rural maternity units in NSW. Midwifery workplace culture is not abundantly reported in the literature, especially in rural maternity units, therefore, this study will add to the body of midwifery knowledge.

Method

Grounded Theory methodology will be used to analyse data collected through in-depth interviews from research sites in two large local health districts. Grounded theory methodology utilises open coding, which will develop concepts and meaning from the initial data with resultant categories (themes) emerging.

This data is further categorized into sub themes; compared and reviewed with a core category emerging that explains developing concepts and propositions.

A flyer will invite participation of undergraduate and postgraduate midwifery students, and newly-graduated midwives in their first year since registration as a midwife. Theoretical sampling will inform the number of participants invited to explore their experiences within their workplace.

Results

The expected outcomes will assist leaders to develop specific strategies to implement culture change that reflects a more positive workplace culture, where reputation and productivity are increased, sick leave and staff attrition are reduced and midwifery as a profession will demonstrate a way forward to improving the workplace culture for midwifery students and newly-graduated midwives.

Conclusion

The contributions to knowledge gained from this study will generate an emergent theory about midwifery workplace culture that is grounded in the data, rather than one generated from existing theory (Charmaz, 2014).

The effect of antenatal pelvic floor muscle exercises on female sexual function during pregnancy and the first 3 months following birth: A randomised controlled trial

PhD Candidate - Sahar Sadat Sobhgol

Supervisors: Prof Hannah Dahlen, Prof Caroline Smith, Dr Holly Priddis

Background

Sexual dysfunction can have a negative impact on women's quality of life. There is limited information about female sexual function during pregnancy and the postpartum period. The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of antenatal PFME on female sexual function (SF) during pregnancy and the first 3 months following birth.

Methods

200 primiparous women were randomised to an antenatal PFME programme combined with standard antenatal care to standard antenatal care alone. Eligible women who were less than 22weeks' gestation were recruited from the antenatal clinics of one hospital located in Western Sydney, Australia.

Results

All women have been randomised and given birth and three month follow up is 50% complete. Data about Female SF, urinary and faecal incontinence and childbirth outcomes have been measured at <22weeks' gestation, at 36weeks' gestation and at 3 months following birth. Results will be presented at the conference.

Conclusion

The findings of this study will provide more information on whether a hospital-based antenatal PFME has any effect on female SF, urinary and faecal incontinence during pregnancy and the first 3 months following birth. The study will also provide information on the effectiveness of antenatal PFME on childbirth outcomes such as mode of birth, perineal trauma and length of labour.

Experiences of pregnancy and childbirth in women who are midwives: a mixed methods study

PhD Candidate – Sharon Coulton

Supervisors: A/Prof Athena Sheehan, Prof Hannah Dahlen, Dr Holly Priddis

Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to describe the development of a survey tool that will be used to collect data for Phase One of a PhD study that aims to explore the personal pregnancy and birth experiences of women who are midwives

Methods

The structured survey tool was designed on the Qualtrics Survey Software. Existing validated instruments such as the Childbirth Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and the Homebirth in Australia Survey, were included during the development of the survey. Further questions derived from a literature review were also used within the survey instrument. The survey aims to collect quantitative data on midwives' experiences of their first childbirth experience, as well as the different aspects of maternal satisfaction with labour and birth within the various birth settings available to women in Australia. Questions exploring the impact of their birth experience on their professional practice will also be included.

Expectations of the survey findings

It is expected that the quantitative analysis will allow for a statistical representation, overview and prevalence of the various experiences (both positive and negative) of pregnancy and birth for midwives, the extent to which professional knowledge and experience impacted on their choices and personal birth experiences, as well as the extent to which their personal experience impacted on their professional practice. The survey will provide participants with the opportunity to consent to be contacted for inclusion in the second phase of this study which will involve in-depth interviews to explore in more detail the findings from the survey

The alignment of the characteristics of clinical judgement to the nursing actions of undergraduate student nurses

PhD Candidate - Sharon Jacobs

Supervisors: Prof Lesley Wilkes, Dr Christine Taylor, Dr Kathleen Dixon

Purpose

The aim of the study was to identify whether the characteristics of clinical judgement could be aligned with the nursing actions performed.

Methods

The setting for this study was a simulation laboratory housing a high-fidelity manikin in a large Australian university. The study used a descriptive method collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. Data was collected using a MCQ, a checklist of nursing actions and associated characteristics of clinical judgement and post simulation interviews were audio recorded.

Results

The nursing actions could be clearly aligned to 10 of the characteristics of clinical judgement. However, in this study it was difficult to differentiate between experiential and practical knowledge.

Conclusion

Aligning the nursing actions to the characteristics of clinical judgement could assist students to develop their clinical judgement. The use of aligning nursing actions to the could be a more accurate way of observing clinical judgement in action.

Jordanian women's experiences and constructions of labour and birth in different settings, over time and across generations: A qualitative study

PhD Candidate - Suha Hussein

Supervisors: Prof Virginia Schmied, Prof Hannah Dahlen, Dr Olayide Ogunsiji

Purpose

To examine Jordanian women's experiences and constructions of labour and birth in different settings (home, Jordanian public and private hospitals, and Australian public hospitals), over time and across generations.

Method

A qualitative interpretive design was used. Data were collected by face-to-face semi-structured interviews with 27 Jordanian women. Of these women, 20 were living in Jordan (12 had given birth in the last five years and eight had birthed over 15 years ago) while seven were living in Australia (with birthing experience in both Jordan and Australia). Interview data were transcribed verbatim and thematic analysis attended.

Results

The key concepts that emerged from the analysis were; Pain, Privacy, the Personal and to a lesser extent, Purity. Each concept was evident across the different generations of birthing women and in the different places (home and hospital) and countries they birthed in. Importantly, the experiences reported by participants demonstrate how meanings attributed to labour and birth, particularly the experience of pain, are produced and reproduced providing insights not only into the medical and institutional management of birth, but also the social context influencing decision-making around birth in Jordan and other Middle Eastern countries.

Conclusions

In the final phase of this study, a small participatory group was formed of likeminded midwives and others who would like to see change. The purpose of this participatory group is to start to vision how change could occur and to propose small steps or actions that if may be possible. At the first meeting of this group, the participants were pessimistic that change could occur. These sentiments illustrate the challenges of making change. The participants of the working group discussed what is probably the most pervasive problem, the patriarchal domination of women in Middle Eastern countries. However, in this meeting as in other related research it is suggested that women's privacy can be protected by ensuring women are covered, even just by a sheet and using screens when the door is opened. Most importantly, health professionals require training in how to prove compassionate care to laboring women. In my masters research, participants also suggested increasing the opportunity for prenatal education classes, improving the quality of information given ensuring it is evidence-based and culturally sensitive.

Health professionals' transfer decisions with older people in hospital

PhD Candidate - Tiffany Northall

Supervisors: Prof Esther Chang, Prof Deborah Hatcher, Dr. Daniel Nicholls

Purpose

Globally the population is ageing and due to the increased risk of disease and frailty as we age, older people are more likely to require assistance to perform the activities of daily living. For some older people this assistance will be provided in residential aged care. In Australia older people are more likely to transfer to residential aged care direct from hospital. This presentation describes the factors that influence health professionals' transfer decisions with older people in hospital.

Method:

Qualitative descriptive methods informed by Husserl's phenomenology and operationalised by Colaizzi were used in this study. Participants included Doctors, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Registered Nurses and Social Workers.

Results

Preliminary results revealed that health professionals' transfer decisions were influenced by: clinical judgement; collaborative practices; factors associated with risk; the older person's functional status and cognition; as well as ability to access supports. Their transfer decisions were frequently made under significant pressure to discharge people quickly and they struggled to meet the different needs of the older person, family, carers and the hospital. This left them dissatisfied with the process as they were not able to consider all the options before making a transfer decision.

Conclusion

The health professionals in this study aimed to make appropriate transfer decisions. However, they often found the process challenging. Developing an understanding of this process provides the opportunity to improve policy and practice.

Developing a dietitian led oral health program for individuals with an eating disorder- A mixed methods needs assessment

PhD candidate - Tiffany Patterson Norrie

Supervisors: A/Prof Ajesh George, A/Prof Lucie Ramjan, Dr Mariana Sousa

Purpose

The prevalence of eating disorders (ED) are increasing worldwide. This population is susceptible to poor oral health which further exacerbates their quality of life. Although guidelines support the role of the dietitian in oral health promotion, there is limited research exploring this area in people with ED which is the focus of this study ED.

Method

A sequential explanatory mixed methods approach will be adopted to conduct a needs assessment in three phases.

Phase I: A scoping review will investigate the role of dietitians in oral health promotion and prevention.

Phase II: A national survey of dietitians in Australia will investigate knowledge, attitudes and practices towards oral health promotion and prevention in the general population and individuals with an ED.

Phase III: Semi-structured interviews with dietitians and individuals with an ED will further explore oral health and the feasibility of dietitians promoting oral healthcare.

Results

The scoping review identified that dietitians are actively involved in performing basic oral health assessments in vulnerable populations, including the elderly and children. No evidence existed to show dietitians performing oral health promotion in populations with an ED. Further there was a scarcity of oral health promotion training and resources to support dietitians.

Conclusion

The scoping review confirmed the role dietitians can play in oral health promotion and prevention in vulnerable populations, while highlighting the gap that currently exists in populations with an ED. Phases II and III will further explore the gap and provide recommendations for future training and resources.

Experiences of midwives when they return to work in a maternity unit following a personal pregnancy loss or neonatal death: A phenomenological study

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Purpose

There is a large body of literature available reporting on the experience of pregnancy loss for women and their families. In healthcare contexts, the impact on midwives and other healthcare professionals caring for women experiencing perinatal loss has also been documented. However, the impact on a midwife who loses a baby and then returns to work in an environment that is a constant reminder of her loss is less well known. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the experiences of midwives when they return to work in a maternity unit following a personal pregnancy loss or neonatal death.

Methods

The methodology chosen for this study is Interpretative (Hermeneutic) phenomenology, as operationalized by van Manen. The participants will be purposefully sampled and interviewed using in-depth interviews. Analysis and interpretation will follow the hermeneutic cycle of reading↔reflective-writing↔interpreting.

Results

The literature review will be presented as I have only just completed my Confirmation of Candidature.

Expected outcomes of the study

The literature review has identified a clear gap. There is no information on the experiences of Australian midwives who have experienced a personal pregnancy loss and returned to work so this study will seek to address this gap. The midwife's personal experience could potentially impact the care they give to women and their families. The research I will undertake will hopefully inform employers on how to support midwives on their return to work following personal pregnancy loss, thus minimising any negative impact on the midwives of caring for families, in particular families experiencing perinatal loss. This will possibly prevent midwives leaving the profession due to inability to cope with being in a maternity environment after personal pregnancy loss or perinatal death. The study could also be useful for informing other midwives on the needs of their bereaved colleagues so that they can be sensitive to these needs.

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