

Educating and mentoring clinician nurse researchers through a community of nursing research practice

Background: Research is a specialised skill that requires long-term development, life-long learning and mentorship/supervision grounded in research theory and processes. Despite high willingness among nurses to engage in research, a significant gap persists due to insufficient infrastructure, knowledge, and practical experience (1, 2). A Community of Practice (CoP) presents an innovative approach to bridge this gap through social learning and collaborative knowledge creation (3).

Aims: The educational initiative aimed to establish and evaluate a Nursing Research Community of Practice to build and extend nurses' capacity and capability to undertake impactful, ethically sound, and culturally sensitive translational research.

Methods: The nursing research community of practice was established across two tertiary hospitals and a University School of Nursing & Midwifery in Sydney, Australia, in January 2024. The CoP consisted of 1. Core group of post-doctoral clinically based nurses, research experienced nurses and nurse academics and 2. Advanced practice nurses who were research naïve. An expression of interest was circulated to the latter group, inviting them to attend a pilot CoP consisting of six full-day research workshops, mentoring sessions, group chat via Microsoft TEAMS and invited speaker sessions. The core group meet monthly online. Evaluation of the pilot CoP will determine workshop engagement and report the number of research projects developed as a direct result of the CoP. Qualitative interviews will explore attendees' experience of a Nursing Research Community of Practice and perceptions of the CoP in respect to enabling the domains of community, professional research practice, research knowledge, professional ethics and learning together.

Results: To date, seven nurses have engaged actively in the CoP, with six developing their own research questions and initiating protocols or systematic reviews. Engagement through Microsoft Teams has been varied, but face-to-face interactions have significantly enhanced knowledge sharing.

Conclusion: Preliminary results from the CoP pilot are promising and underscore its potential for scaling up. Ongoing evaluation and forthcoming qualitative insights will guide the expansion of the CoP to additional hospital sites, aiming to further enrich its impact.

References

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