



2020 to 2021 and Beyond.

The Strength, Vision and Resilience of Workforces

Editor: Linda Nichols

It is great to see the research and rapid growth of Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorder Nurse Specialist (PDMDNS) positions across Australia. The 2020 Annual Demographic Survey provides an important baseline, providing key details regarding the workforce in Australia. The results present a unique opportunity to track the growth and changes within the speciality and also address needs areas such as the underservicing of rural and remote areas.

As Covid-19 continues to disrupt the way we live, work, and interact organisations are scrambling to manage the fallout and to prepare for not only what is next but also a new norm of social distancing, remote and virtual communicating and working. Life has been a journey of existential challenges and it is impossible to overestimate the gravity of the pandemic. We might all wish that we had a crystal ball to have predicted the impact and devastation of Covid-19. What we have is strength in the structure of our organisations with vision and mission statements.

As Neuroscience Nurses we need to be leaders and we need to be reactive to the challenges that confront us. We also need vision and a strategic path towards it. We need to look beyond the dark horizon of Covid-19 and be guided, together with guiding those in our care. An essential part of this is understanding our workforce. It is only through measuring, monitoring and formally reviewing our workforce that we can adjust to meet the needs of individuals in our care.

Vision is especially urgent during a pandemic. Variations to our practice that we might have had even two years ago unfolded in a matter of weeks and months following the events of January 2019. Videoconferencing, phone consultations and building the skillsets of regional and rural practitioners is vitally important to meeting needs in this changing



2020 Annual Demographic Survey of Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorder Nurse Specialists

Guest Editorial: Sue Williams, David Tsui

Reflection of the last 12 months.

Over the past 12 months, we have seen a rapid growth in the number of Parkinson's Disease Movement Disorder Nurse Specialist (PDMDNS) positions across Australia. This is largely thanks to Federal funding of \$6.3 million injected into the Primary Health Networks. The result is a creative diversification of the Parkinson's disease nursing model as organisations seek to meet the needs of their local populations with the resources available.

Changes to the landscape diversification of models of care

Creative new models of care include using the funding to upskill a number of rural and remote nurses within their existing positions to provide specialised care to people with Parkinson's disease. Another model has placed one nurse position within a private allied health business setting. A third model is the ongoing initiative from Parkinson's NSW where they have continued to partner with Local Health Districts across New South Wales to insert PDMDNS into public hospitals.

Timeliness of the Demographic survey – what the survey set out to achieve, advantages of tracking change and growth within the speciality



environment and the growth of these areas has been exponentially steep. Covid-19 has widened all our skillsets, we have all become more flexible in the way we network and meet the needs of clients.

However, we need to be open to the fact that this is perhaps the new norm of health care delivery. Alternatively, when this pandemic does end, our healthcare models may be different again from what they were when the pandemic began. We need to begin planning now and have a longer-term vision that envisions beyond the pandemic.

Achieving geographical equity and meeting the needs of individuals residing in rural and remote areas is challenging and never more so than now. The Movement Disorder Chapter aims to reduce geographical isolation and promote professional identity. These key aspect in the Chapter's Mission Statement marry perfectly with the aims and outcomes of the survey. It is often said that an organisation without a Mission Statement is like a ship without a compass and during a pandemic we need every compass bearing we can get. We must work through this pandemic, but we also need to be able to work towards a future and we should not be afraid of setting long-term goals and aspirations. It is all too easy to feel constrained by the pandemic and the restrictions that have resulted from it, but it has also provided us with opportunities. So many stories have been inspiring and imbued with purpose. We can only hope that the future is a little more stable than the current ship we are on and that our vision and Mission Statements continue to provide those compass bearings.

We will emerge from this stronger and more resilient than we were before, and I look forward to seeing this in the 2021 survey.

Linda

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At a time of such rapid advancements, an annual demographic survey enables us to quantify and track the growth and changes within the specialty. Data collection provides clear evidence of the emerging trends and enables us to respond to changes appropriately.

What we are doing:

The publication of results from the first demographic survey highlighted that pharmaceutical companies are the second largest employer of PDMDNS at 21%. In response, the Movement Disorder Chapter (MDC) has focused to be inclusive of this cohort of PDMDNS with unique workplace needs, provide them with a supportive network and educational resources. The MDC is partnering with variety of organisations to provide expertise for co-design processes, clinical governance structures and evaluation of emerging service models.

COVID has widened our skillset to allow more flexible networking and minimised the impact of geographical challenges through video conferencing capabilities. We are now able to provide structured members' meeting to keep everyone updated on our projects and activities and allow for a platform to provide mentoring and support for all PDMDNS.

Our aim as the ANNA MDC is to continue to cultivate a culture of clinical excellence, professionalism, mutual support and an environment of altruistic attitudes. It is truly an exciting time to be a Parkinson's Disease Movement Disorder Nurse Specialist in Australia.

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