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The Australian Nursing Workforce Survey Toolkit



Overview

The nursing workforce is an essential, complex and multi-layered component of health service organisations. Nursing service leaders and policy makers need to understand the structure and service potential of their workforce to effectively plan and optimise nursing resources in line with organisational goals. To date, these service leaders have been reliant upon staff records or population level knowledge from published research to inform their decision-making and service planning.

The Australian Nursing Workforce Survey Toolkit will enable nursing service leaders to develop real time, reliable knowledge of the practice profiles and service potential of the nursing workforce in their organisation or jurisdiction.

Background

An Australian national survey of registered nurses was conducted in 2014. The study was directed by three aims:

1. To identify position titles in Australia that indicate advanced practice nursing
2. To delineate advanced practice nursing from other position titles
3. To standardise nursing titles across Australia by practice profile

This study was part of a 10-year program of research to understand the nature and structure of advanced practice nursing (APN) in Australia. Outcomes from this program of research have been subjected to rigorous peer review and are reported in high ranking nursing journals.^{1,2,3,4,5,6} In addition to identifying APN titles across Australia⁵, the research also provided detailed knowledge about the national nursing workforce, its structure and service profile⁶.

It is now feasible to attain this knowledge at the level of a health service organisation.

The Australian Nursing Workforce Survey Toolkit is a product of this program of research. The Toolkit includes: *i*) a validated questionnaire designed to measure the practice profile of a sample of registered nurses, *ii*) suggested applications for the survey, *iii*) a description of the questionnaire, *iv*) instructions for use, *v*) definition of terms, *vi*) acknowledgements of contributors and references.

Application

This Toolkit will be useful for **service directors & managers to:**

- Gain an understanding of the mix of patterns and levels of practice of their organisation's nursing workforce
- Identify those nursing titles in the organisation that practise at an advanced level
- Include level of expertise and skill of registered nurses as a variable in ward level staffing models and nurse-patient ratios
- Identify education priorities for specific sectors of the organisation's nursing workforce when practice profiles by title are compared with those of the population⁵.

This Toolkit will be useful for **senior nurse policy makers to:**

- Identify the structure of the jurisdiction's nursing workforce
- Gain strategic knowledge of the level of expertise and profile of registered nurses for jurisdiction-wide workforce planning

This Toolkit will be useful for **researchers to:**

- Measure and delineate nursing staff as variables in conducting patient outcomes research in health service settings

The Questionnaire

The Questionnaire in the Toolkit is the Australian Advanced Practice Nursing Role Delineation (APRD) Tool. The APRD Tool was developed from the Strong Model of Advanced Practice.^{7,8} This is a nursing framework developed in the USA by a group of advanced practice nurses and academic staff at Strong Memorial Hospital, University of Rochester Medical Centre.^{7,8} With permission from the original authors, the APRD tool has been amended and validated to accommodate contemporary nursing practice in Australia and the Australian health service context.^{2,3,9}

The APRD tool is so named because it is designed to measure advanced practice and delineate this from other levels of nursing practice. In so doing the APRD tool measures the practice profiles in a nursing workforce by title, ranging from new graduate through to nurse practitioner. When used at an organisational level the APRD tool will identify registered nurse practice by title as they are currently deployed in that organisation.

The APRD tool includes five Domains of nursing practice namely:

1 Clinical Care; 2 Optimising Health Systems; 3 Education; 4 Research; 5 Leadership

Each has a range of activities relating to that Domain. Definitions for the five Domains are provided in Section C of the APRD questionnaire.

The APRD tool has three sections:

- Section A: Demographic information namely age, sex and professional characteristics
- Section B contains the five Domains, each with a list of practice activities that registered nurses undertake to a greater or lesser extent
- Section C is a summary measure to indicate, on a scale, the extent to which the respondent works in each of the five Domains of nursing practice.

There are 42 items in Section B and 5 in Section C. Responses to Domain activity items (Section B) and overall domain practice (Section C) are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale.

Caveats for data analysis

The data for Section B are prepared for analysis by calculating the mean of the activities in each Domain for each participant, and then calculating the mean of those means for each position title. Hence, data analysis for Section B is at the Domain level. Nursing titles with less than 8 individuals should not be included in further analysis as the results will be unreliable.

This is the prepared dataset to be used in all further analyses.

Note, the APRD tool has strong content, face and construct validity for measurement at Domain level only. There is no validity in seeking meaning from scores at the individual activity level.

Section C of the tool provides a description of the Domains of practice and participants indicate on the 5-point Likert scale the extent of time they work within each of the five Domains. Results from analysis of data from this section can be used to validate total domain responses from Section B.

Simple statistical inferences (t-test, ANOVA) and data preparation can be performed with spreadsheet programs. More complicated modelling which includes the demographic data will require use of more specialised statistical packages.

Delineating Advanced Practice Nursing

When using this survey to delineate nursing practice by titles, APN can be delineated from other titles where the Domain means are at or above the validated thresholds as follows:

Clinical Care: **2.27**; Optimising Health Systems: **2.22**; Education: **2.25**; Research: **1.71**; Leadership: **1.58**.

These are the recommended cut off mean scores, established in previous research^{4,5} for a registered nurse survey sample. Advanced practice and advanced nursing definitions are provided on the following page.

The Advanced Practice Nursing Role Delineation Tool is located on page 9.

Definition of terms:

Understanding the meaning and usage of *advanced* in the nursing profession has been constrained by the multiple descriptions, roles and titles that are used interchangeably and ambiguously in relation to a type of nursing and a level of practice. There is a vast body of literature reporting confusion internationally about definitions and titles related to advanced *nursing* practice and advanced *practice* nursing.

Some writers^{10, 11} have clarified this issue by questioning what is being described or qualified by the term advanced. If it is practice that is advanced (as in *advanced practice*), this signifies the performance or the work of nursing. If it is nursing that is advanced (as in *advanced nursing*), this signifies the discipline of nursing.

Drawing on these insights and in order to inform appropriate application of this tool the following evidence-informed definitions are provided for these commonly used terms.

Advanced Practice Nursing

Advanced practice nursing is the experience, education and knowledge to practice at the full capacity of the registered nurse practice scope. It is a level and type of clinical practice that involves cognitive and practical integration of knowledge and skills from the clinical, health systems, education and research domains of the discipline and positions the advanced practice nurse as a leader in nursing and health care. Practice at this level is enabled through master level education.

Advanced Nursing

Advanced nursing is promotion of the nursing discipline through innovation, generation, and expansion of the knowledge, science, education and service models of nursing. Advanced nursing supports interaction between the Discipline and the Profession of nursing.

Nurse Practitioner

Nurse practitioner is an advanced practice nurse endorsed by the NMBA who has direct clinical contact and practises within their scope under the legislatively protected title 'nurse practitioner' under the National Law. (Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia. 1 June 2016).

<http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx>

Acknowledgements

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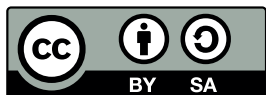
Dr Mary Batch RN, PhD

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Attribution



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Reference to the Strong Model of Advanced Practice to be attributed to reference # 7 above

Reference to the original advanced practice survey tool to be attributed to reference # 8 above

An appropriate citation for this Nursing Workforce Survey Toolkit is:

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The Advanced Practice Nursing Role Delineation Questionnaire

Instructions for completing the APRD Questionnaire

This questionnaire includes items about the pattern of practice activity for registered nurses working in a clinical service environment regardless of title and level of practice position.

The questionnaire has three sections:

- Section A: Demographic information namely age, sex and professional characteristics
- Section B contains the five Domains, each with a list of practice activities that registered nurses undertake to a greater or lesser extent
- Section C is a summary measure to indicate, on a scale, the extent to which the respondent works in each of the five Domains of nursing practice.

There are 42 items in Section B and 5 in Section C. Responses to items in Domain activities (Section B) and overall domain practice (Section C) are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale.

The questionnaire takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. Participants are asked to consider the extent to which they participate in the nursing activities specified in the Domain items. Participation in the survey is voluntary.

Participants need to complete all items in the questionnaire. Those questionnaires with more than one missing response will need to be removed from the sample.

All comments and responses are anonymous. The names of individual persons are not required in the questionnaire or any of the responses. Participants will not be identifiable.

The Australian Advanced Practice Nursing Role Delineation Tool

Section A: Demographic Information

Please answer each of the following questions by clicking on the most appropriate response.

<p>1. What is your age group:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 20-29yrs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 30-39yrs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 40-49yrs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 50-59yrs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 60-69yrs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 70yrs and over</p>	<p>2. What is your sex:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Male</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Female</p>
<p>3. Please indicate your current title/position from the attached list:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 200px; width: 100%;"></div>	<p>4. Please indicate your current classification from the attached list:</p> <p>Grade:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>Increment:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>Other:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; width: 100%;"></div>

Survey administrator: Attach or provide a link to the relevant career structure and classification.

The Australian Advanced Practice Nursing Role Delineation Tool

<p>5. Number of years as a Registered Nurse: _____ Years</p>	<p>6. Number of years in your current position: _____ Years</p>
<p>7. What is your highest level of education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> TAFE Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> BN or equivalent <input type="checkbox"/> Post Graduate Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Post Graduate Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> If education is in a field other than nursing – Please specify: _____ 	<p>8. Please indicate your current practice setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Community <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital <input type="checkbox"/> Aged Care <input type="checkbox"/> Academic <input type="checkbox"/> Other
<p>9. What sector are you currently working in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Government Organisation (NGO) <input type="checkbox"/> Sole Trader <input type="checkbox"/> Other 	<p>10. Please indicate your region of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Metropolitan <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> Rural and Remote <input type="checkbox"/> Other
<p>11. Are you a member of a professional college, association and/or organisation?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – Please specify all: _____</p>	

The Australian Advanced Practice Nursing Role Delineation Tool

Section B: APN Activities

For each of the following activities, please indicate the extent of time, in your current position, that you would spend on each one, by placing a tick in the corresponding box. The scale for Section B is as follows:

4 = To a very great extent; 3 = To a great extent; 2 = To some extent; 1 = To a little extent; 0 = Not at all.

SECTION B: APN ACTIVITIES	Very great extent	Great extent	Some extent	Little extent	Not at all
DOMAIN 1: CLINICAL CARE	4	3	2	1	0
1.1 Conduct and document patient history and physical examination					
1.2 Assess psychosocial, cultural and religious factors affecting patient needs					
1.3 Make a medical diagnosis within specialty scope of practice and practice guidelines					
1.4 Identify and initiate required diagnostic tests and procedures					
1.5 Gather and interpret assessment data to formulate plan of care					
1.6 Perform specialty-specific care and procedures					
1.7 Assess patient/family response to therapy and modify plan of care based on response					
1.8 Communicate plan of care and response to patient/family					
1.9 Provide appropriate education (counselling) to patient and family					
1.10 Document appropriately on patient record					
1.11 Serve as a consultant in improving patient care and nursing practice based on expertise in area of specialisation					
1.12 Facilitate the process of ethical decision making in patient care					
1.13 Coordinate interdisciplinary plan for care of patients					
1.14 Collaborate with other services to optimise patient's health status					
1.15 Facilitate efficient movement of patient through the healthcare system					

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SECTION B: APN ACTIVITIES		Very great extent	Great extent	Some extent	Little extent	Not at all
DOMAIN 2: OPTIMISING HEALTH SYSTEMS		4	3	2	1	0
2.1	Consult with others regarding conduct of projects or presentations					
2.2	Contribute to, consult or collaborate with other healthcare personnel on recruitment and retention activities					
2.3	Participate in strategic planning for the service, department or hospital					
2.4	Provide direction for and participation in unit/service quality improvement programs					
2.5	Actively participate in the assessment, development, implementation, and evaluation of quality-improvement programs in collaboration with nursing leadership					
2.6	Provide leadership in the development, implementation and evaluation of standards of practice, policies and procedures					
2.7	Serve as a mentor					
2.8	Advocate the role of the nurse					
2.9	Serve as a spokesperson for nursing and the health facility when interacting with other professionals, patients, families, and the public					

SECTION B: APN ACTIVITIES		Very great extent	Great extent	Some extent	Little extent	Not at all
DOMAIN 3: EDUCATION		4	3	2	1	0
3.1	Evaluate education programs and recommend revision as needed					
3.2	Serve as educator and clinical preceptor for nursing and/or medical students, staff, and/or others					
3.3	Identify learning needs of various populations and contribute to the development of educational programs/resources					
3.4	Serve as informal educator to staff while providing direct care activities					
3.5	Facilitate professional development of nursing staff through education					
3.6	Provide appropriate patient and family education					

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SECTION B: APN ACTIVITIES	Very great extent	Great extent	Some extent	Little extent	Not at all
DOMAIN 4: RESEARCH	4	3	2	1	0
4.1 Conduct clinical research					
4.2 Participate in audits to monitor and improve quality of patients care practices					
4.3 Contribute to identification of potential funding sources for the development and implementation of clinical projects/programs					
4.4 Use research evidence to guide practice and policy changes					
4.5 Identify the clinical data that needs to be collated and available in information systems for nursing research and quality assurance projects					
4.6 Collaborate with Information specialists in the design of information systems for research and quality assurance projects in nursing					

SECTION B: APN ACTIVITIES	Very great extent	Great extent	Some extent	Little extent	Not at all
DOMAIN 5: LEADERSHIP	4	3	2	1	0
5.1 Disseminate nursing knowledge through presentation or publication at local, regional, national and international levels					
5.2 Serve as a resource or committee member in professional organisations					
5.3 Serve as a consultant to individuals and groups within the professional/lay communities and other hospitals/institutions					
5.4 Represent nursing in institutional/community forums focused on the educational needs of various populations					
5.5 Represent a professional nursing image at institutional and community forums					
5.6 Collaborate with other healthcare professionals to provide leadership in shaping public policy on healthcare					

The Australian APRD Tool is adapted from: Ackerman M, Norsen L, Martin B, Wiedrich J, Kitzman H. (1996) and Mick D. & Ackerman M. (2000).

The Australian Advanced Practice Nursing Role Delineation Tool

Section C: Domains of Practice

For each of the following activities, please indicate the extent of time, in your current position, that you would spend on each one, by placing a tick in the corresponding box. The scale for Section B is as follows:

4 = To a very great extent; 3 = To a great extent; 2 = To some extent; 1 = To a little extent; 0 = Not at all.

	Very great extent	Great extent	Some extent	Little extent	Not at all
DOMAINS OF PRACTICE	4	3	2	1	0
<p>Domain 1: Clinical Care Practice in this domain includes activities carried out on behalf of individual patients/clients focusing on specific needs, including procedures, assessments, interpretation of data, provision of physical care and counselling. Clinical Care also includes care coordination, care delivery, and guidance and direction to others relevant to a specific patient population.</p>					
<p>Domain 2: Optimising Health Systems This domain includes activities that contribute to effective functioning of health systems and the institutional nursing service including role advocacy, promoting innovative patient care and facilitating equitable, patient-centred health systems.</p>					
<p>Domain 3: Education These are activities that involve dissemination of current scientific knowledge for enhancement of caregiver, student and public learning related to health and illness. This also includes aiding patients and families to manage illness and to promote wellness, informal and formal staff development and formal presentations to healthcare professionals</p>					
<p>Domain 4: Research Activities that support a culture of practice that challenges the norm, that seek better patient care through scientific inquiry and promote innovative problem solving to answer clinical questions. This includes conducting clinical research, identifying funding sources and using evidence to guide practice and policy.</p>					
<p>Domain 5: Leadership Activities and attributes that allow for sharing and dissemination of knowledge beyond the individual's institutional setting. These activities promote nurses, nursing and healthcare and include disseminating nursing knowledge, serving in professional organisations, and acting as a consultant to individuals and groups. Leadership also includes setting directions and modelling standards towards optimising population and patient care outcomes.</p>					

You have now completed the questionnaire.

Thank you for your participation.