

The Practice Nurse Work Survey: Nurses working together with General Practitioners

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Introduction

- Government Practice Nurse (PN) initiatives
- Rapidly growing and evolving workforce
- Significant data gap
- Aim: Describe the services currently being provided by Practice Nurses in Australian general practice

Methods

- National cross-sectional survey of PNs
- Sample: 500 PNs
- Data collection: Paper-based forms:
 - Nurse and practice profile
 - Encounter form
 - Location, duration, date, Medicare rebate
 - De-identified patient details
 - Presenting problem & services provided
 - GP involvement

Progress to date

- Pilot stage
- Pilot data caveat
 - Small dataset
 - Clustered
 - Non-representative sample

Pilot data: The Nurses (n=16)

Location	8 Melbourne, 8 regional city Victoria
Age	2 under 40 6 (15%) 40-49 years 8 (50%) 50 years & over
Time in GP	Average 11.5 years (<i>Range: 6 months - 31 years</i>)
Hours worked	Average 27.25 hours per week (<i>Range: 10-40</i>)
Qualifications	14/16 RNs
Basic training	13/16 hospital-trained

Pilot data: The Encounters (n=90)

	Number (Percent)
Metropolitan location	50 (56%)
Had an appointment with Practice Nurse	66 (74%)
Encounter took place onsite in practice	75 (84%)
Patient seen in person	85 (95%)
Medicare rebate applies for Nurse consult	33 (39%)

GP involvement in PN-patient encounters

	Number (Percent)
GP presence during PN consult	
– All of the time	5 (6%)
– Some of the time	25 (28%)
– None of the time	58 (66%)
No GP involvement in encounter (before, during, after)	24 (30%)
GP after PN (only)	24 (30%)
GP before, during and after	6 (7%)

Conclusion

- Need for complementary data collection of GP activity and PN activity
- Need for PN workforce tracking
- Models of practice – the PN role and ways of working with GPs
- Issues for main study: representativeness

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