

Building Capacity for Cancer Nursing Research and Evidence-Based Practice: the Cancer Nursing Professorial Precinct Initiative

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The demand for cancer care is growing due to the increasing incidence of cancer and the improved effectiveness of cancer treatments. According to the estimates from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the number of new cancer cases is projected to increase from 14.1 million in 2012-21. 4 million in 2030 (IARC, 2016).^[1] This growing demand has presented a challenge for nursing services in relation to workload, work force issues, and most importantly, the need to provide innovative and cost-effective nursing care. Cancer nurses play an important and unique role in responding to the needs of people affected by cancer throughout the continuum of care, from prevention to end-of-life care and bereavement support. It is important that cancer nurses are aware of the expectations imposed upon their specialty while also contributing to improvements in patient outcomes. The objective of this paper is to describe a case report of a

collaborative model that creates capacity for research and evidence-based practice excellence in cancer nursing at the service/organisational level.

The Cancer Nursing Professorial Precinct, a strategic collaboration between cancer nurses at the Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital (RBWH) and Queensland University of Technology, was established in 2013. Cancer Care Services at the RBWH is the largest cancer service in Queensland, Australia. The nursing team comprises 267 nursing staff, providing quality nursing care across the Clinical Haematology and Bone Marrow Transplant Unit, the Department of Medical Oncology, the Department of Radiation Oncology and the Queensland Haemophilia Centre.

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The Precinct aimed to enable:

1. An open channel for collaboration and communication between the managers, clinicians and academics;
2. Regular on-site research consultation clinics with cancer nurse researchers; and
3. Effective strategies for the dissemination and uptake of latest knowledge generated by the Precinct.

The Precinct is guided by eight principles, which were developed by the cancer nurse leaders at the RBWH. The eight principles include:

- Be focused on improving outcomes for people with cancer and their families and carers.
- Conduct work that is informed by key safety and quality standards and priorities.
- Promote the involvement and leadership of nurses at all levels in research and service improvement activities.
- Focus on advancing nursing practices within the service as well as in the practice environment.
- Be inclusive, collaborative and multidisciplinary in its approach.
- Implement effective communication strategies to optimise awareness and engagement of all nurses within the Precinct.
- Incorporate a range of strategies to promote rapid transfer of learnings into practice; and
- Promote consumer involvement in its activities.

From 2013 to 2015, RBWH cancer nurses:

1. Attracted over 3 million AUD of research competitive funding (project grants, fellowships and scholarships);
2. Published 35 peer-reviewed articles in cancer care journals;
3. Gave over 20 research-specific conference presentations, and enabled new enrolments into research higher degree studies (three PhD students and four Masters students).

The presence of researchers and an active research program in the clinical setting resulted in a greater focus on evidence in education, policy, and practice development. In 2014, this initiative was awarded the Queensland Premier Award for Excellence in Leadership.

The Cancer Nursing Professorial Precinct is a feasible and effective means to build research and evidence-based practice capacity at the service level. Appropriate guiding principles and infrastructure were essential to the success of this initiative. This project has demonstrated the successful model of academic health partnership. This required the commitment of the hospital executives and experienced senior researchers in supporting this model. The authors recommend that genuine recognition, moving beyond rhetoric, by nursing leaders in the clinical settings is urgently required. The literature is clear that a supportive infrastructure and environment for evidence generation and utilisation is necessary to inform safe, effective and quality nursing care.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

Reference

1. International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). GLOBOCAN 2012: Estimated Cancer Incidence, Mortality and Prevalence Worldwide in 2012. Available from: http://www.globocan.iarc.fr/Pages/fact_sheets_cancer.aspx. [Last accessed on 2016 Jan 14].