

Models of Care and Practice Frameworks for the Care of Older People: An Industry Based Research Program

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Contemporary health care systems are facing a number of challenges, including changing client profiles, health sector reforms, and scarce financial and human resources. This has motivated service providers, policy makers and researchers to explore and reconsider the organisation of nursing practice and staffing as a key factor in the delivery of high quality yet cost effective care. This presentation details a program of research into the organisation and delivery of nursing staffing and practice within aged care in Australia. This research program is developed around a Workplace Practice Framework that identifies the component parts of complex health care service systems and their relationship to service outcomes. Complex health care service systems are defined as those that consist of multiple sites and service delivery types. Such a framework supports a health service organisation to conceptualise and organise its systems, particularly its workforce, practice, education and research, in a comprehensive and systematic manner and accommodate geographical and service diversity. On-going research within this program will be highlighted, particularly in the areas of models of care, staffing mix and roles, and professional practice models. Discussions will centre on three research projects within this program – Clinical Leadership; Alternative Models of Care; and the evaluation of a non traditional model of care for use in long-term care facilities. The relationship of each of these projects to the broader framework will be explored and a brief overview of the research and scholarship associated with each project will be provided. The value of health services research in the care of older people will be explored and the implications of industry based research and collaborations highlighted. Future research directions will also be discussed.

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