



Introduction to general practice



Introduction to nursing in general practice

Introduction to general practice
Module 1: June 2009

Learning objectives

On completion of this module participants will have:

- an understanding of the Australian health care system
- an appreciation of the role of primary health care in meeting health needs
- an understanding of the multiple role played by practice nurses
- an understanding of the role played by Australian General Practice Network, state based organisations and local divisions of general practice.

The Australian health care system

- an equitable, affordable, accessible system
- rising demands
- spiralling costs
- public hospitals not meeting needs
- workforce shortages.

Responsibilities of government for health

Commonwealth responsibilities

- general practice funding
- some aged care
- pharmaceuticals through the PBS
- grants of funds to the states and territories.

Local government responsibilities

- local environment
- health issues.

State & territory responsibilities

- Hospitals.

Australian health status

- highest life expectancies in the world second only to Japan
- life expectancy
 - 83 years for men
 - 86 years for women
- Australia is also a leader in vaccinating children, and in vaccinating older people against influenza.

Indigenous population

- ABS Life Expectancy data
 - > 59.4 years for men
 - > 64.8 for women
- more than 17 years < than life expectations for all Australians
- there has been considerable improvement in the growth of Indigenous infants and children.

Medicare

- universal health insurance
 - no charge in public hospitals
 - bulk billing for out of hospital medical services.

Primary health care

Primary health care is defined by the WHO as:

“Primary health care is essential health care made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community by means acceptable to them, through their full participation and at a cost that the community and country can afford. It forms an integral part both of the country's health system of which it is the nucleus and of the overall social and economic development of the community”

Primary health care

- health promotion
- early detection
- first point of contact for assessment, referral and treatment
- coordinated care in the community
- public participation

Primary health care and general practice

- accessible, clinically and culturally appropriate, timely, affordable
- patient centred, preventive
- well integrated, coordinated continuity of care
- flexible, responds to local needs
- socially appropriate, universally accessible, scientifically sound first level care
- effective and nurturing work environments.

General practice in Australia

- members of the practice team include doctors, practice nurses, practice managers, receptionists and in some practices allied health professionals
- 85% of the general population will visit a general practice annually: it is the most frequent point of entry to the health system
- practice arrangements vary from solo, small or large, in a variety of settings: rural, remote, urban, metropolitan.

Who is a practice nurse?

- a registered nurse (Div 1) or enrolled nurse (Div 2) who is employed or otherwise contracted to undertake activities in or for a general practice
- the practice nurse (PN) must be appropriately qualified and trained, including compliance with any state or territory requirements, to provide particular nursing care services.

Practice nursing in Australia

- practice nurses are vital members of the general practice team
- dynamic, vibrant, exciting, multi skilled specialty
- almost 8000 practice nurses in 2007 (compared to 5000 in 2005)
- 58% of general practices employ one or more nurses
- 80% are registered nurses
- 75% work part time (increasingly more are full time).

Practice nursing dimensions

- **Clinical care:** clinically based procedures and activities
- **Clinical organisation:** management, coordination and a high level administration of clinical activities, particularly the use of a systems approach
- **Practice administration:** administrative support to the general practice as a business enterprise
- **Integration:** effective communication channels within the practice and between the practice and outside organisations and individuals.

Nursing in general practice (NiGP) Program

Aim:

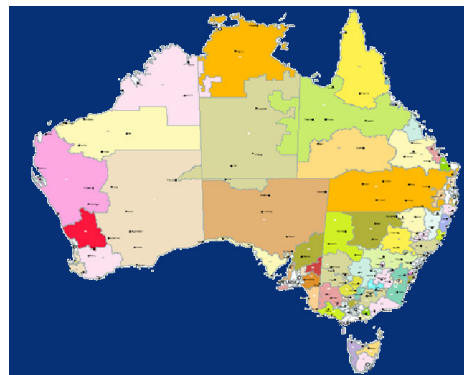
- relieve workforce pressure in general practice
- improve the prevention and management of chronic disease
- improve access to, and the quality and integration of patient care.

Supports for general practice

- Australian General Practice Network (AGPN)
- state based organisations
- 111 network member organisations
- special interest networks
- individual practices.

The network

- AGPN national body
- 111 network member organisations
- eight state based organisations
- all incorporated and accredited to ISO (or equivalent) standards
- cover the whole of Australia.



Network NiGP support

- run local network meetings
- provide education and training
- assist with recruitment and orientation
- mentoring
- networking
- development of special interest groups.

Your local network member organisation

- add details of your network member organisation
- geographical area
- number of practices
- number of general practitioners
- number of practice nurse.