

The Alfred/Deakin Nursing Research Centre

The research activities of the Alfred/Deakin Nursing Research Centre have focused on the evaluation of quality and safety of nursing care delivery and the development and implementation of interventions to improve patient outcomes. The active doctoral research program has continued under the direction of the centre staff. PhD projects in progress are investigating symptom management in the oncology context, patient participation and preferences for participation in recovery after cardiac surgery, the quality of care of frail elderly in acute care to reduce functional decline and the trajectory of pulmonary dysfunction following cardiac surgery. Rochelle Wynne successfully completed her PhD titled 'Antecedents to postoperative pulmonary dysfunction in adults having cardiac surgery' in 2010.

Current Projects

- Evaluating quality of care in an oncology setting: symptom management and practices (Emma Cohen)
- Evaluating the quality of 24 hour acute care delivery: describing functional outcomes of older people using a model of best practice (Lenore Beddoes)
- Defining patient participation in treatment in acute care context (Lauren McTier)
- Predictors of hospital admission of patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in the emergency department (Dr Julie Considine)
- Video analysis of interprofessional communication and decision making to manage sedation therapy in intensive care (Associate Professor Judy Currey)
- Living with an artificial heart: experiences of patients and carers (Associate Professor Judy Currey)
- Managing patients with a ventricular assist device: an exploration of international models for community-based care (Associate Professor Judy Currey)
- Enhancing medication safety in hospitals: development of a core dataset and an exploration of factors influencing nurses' decisions (Associate Professor Judy Currey)

Vicki White was awarded the Kathleen AB Smith Memorial Prize in Nursing for her publication on mechanical ventilation weaning.



- The effect of improving quality of heart failure programs on patient outcomes (Elizabeth Oldland)
- Mapping the trajectory of post-operative recovery for octogenarians following transcatheter aortic valve implantation (Roxanne Johnston)
- Increasing critical care nurses' diagnostic accuracy of atrial electrograms by using an innovative education program (Julie Preston)
- Correlation between ET_{CO₂} and PaCO₂ in spontaneously breathing emergency department patients (Elaine Killeen)
- Presentation to emergency departments due to chemotherapy-induced complications: opportunities for improving service delivery (Associate Professor Trish Livingston)

La Trobe/Alfred Clinical School

A collaborative research project was undertaken between La Trobe/Alfred Clinical School of Nursing and the Department of Endocrinology and Diabetes led by Geraldine Lee and Sue Wyatt. The aim was to evaluate whether improvements would be seen in patients with diabetes who were undergoing cardiac surgery if they participated in a pre-operative education and intervention program compared to patients in the usual care group.

The intervention group was assessed by a diabetes nurse consultant, dietitian, and endocrinologist during a pre-operative visit. Specific diabetes questionnaires were administered, education delivered, and protocol-driven changes to the medical regimen instituted, including insulin commencement if appropriate. Length of stay, incidence of post-operative complications, and the number of post-operative inpatient review endocrinology visits required were assessed.

A total of twenty-four patients with a pre-operative HbA_{1c} greater than 6.5% were studied (17 males and 7 females). The majority of participants were having bypass surgery and in the intervention group, HbA_{1c} fell significantly by 1.9% (to 8.2%) compared to 7.0% in the usual care group. Improvements in patients' self-care and efficacy were seen in the intervention group. In terms of complications related to cardiac surgery, there was a trend for usual care patients to require more post-operative endocrinologist visits and to have more acute diabetes-related complications. Although only a pilot study, it suggests a potential benefit of acute optimisation of diabetes treatment before elective cardiac surgery. Following these results, a larger study evaluating this intervention in elective surgery and medical patients at The Alfred will be undertaken.

The Masters of Nurse Practitioner course was re-accredited until 2015. This is the first Victorian Masters program to be re-accredited and the internship model, developed by Geraldine Lee, has become an integral part of all Masters programs throughout Australia.

Postgraduate Students

6 PhD Students
16 Masters Students

Publications

7 Journal Articles