Nurse practitioners views on leadership and research

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Nurse Practitioners views on leadership and research
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Aims:
To explore the ways in which Irish and Australian Nurse Practitioners (NP) implement leadership and research in their roles.

Design:
A qualitative inductive research methodology, using interpretative descriptive approach.

Methods:
Inductive methodology was used to bring meaning to the phenomena through the subjective views of participants. Semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data analysis used Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis method.

Background:
The original concept of the NP role was to expand nursing practice in order to provide high quality, accessible healthcare to patients. This placed NPs at the crux of changes to healthcare delivery. Implementing these changes requires leadership. Research demonstrates the effects of these changes to healthcare delivery and contributes to healthcare knowledge from the nursing profession.

Results:
10 participants, 5 NPs each from Ireland and Australia were interviewed. Four themes emerged from the analysis:

1. Innovative Leadership
   - Leadership activities
     - Capabilities at adapting skills and experience to change services and effect changes to models of healthcare delivery
   - The work of NPs
     - Clinical focus that is independent and autonomous “I have total autonomy, I see my own patients, I make own diagnosis, I prescribe my own medication” (AUS 4)
   - Trailblazers
     - Developed a role that was uniquely different from traditional nursing and medical roles. Required to break the traditional mould for nurses to follow in their wake.

2. Optimism
   - Pride
     - Continued innovation

3. Research
   - Research Leadership: “I don’t think we’re there yet (AUS 1)
   - Research Challenges: “The fear of actually starting” (IRL 5)
   - “I will blink up the courage” (IRL 2)
   - NP research role: “It comes hand in hand that you will be doing research it’s not all about hands on patient care” (AUS 1).

4. Resilience
   - Recover resistance
     - “Nurses have a reputation for eating their own young” (AUS4)
     - “In some cases they can been seen as a troublemaker, seen as pushing the boundaries” (IRL 3)
     - “Once they got to know me and know what I actually did, then that very much changed” (IRL 4)
     - “We don’t fit into typical management structures” (AUS 4)
   - Isolation
     - “I think initially coming off the floor and that you are, you haven’t got that comradelship” (IRL 2)
     - “Professionally very isolating” (AUS 1)
   - Seek positive support
     - Seeking constructive support from medical and nursing colleagues
     - “I suppose it makes us feel better talking when we get together and network, you realise you are not alone...the NP role can be quiet an isolated role” (AUS 1)

Conclusion:
NPs are clinical leaders focused on improving healthcare delivery for patient populations. The NP role is misunderstood. NPs lack confidence to be independently research active. Research by NPs requires support from nurses in academia. The NP role is similar in Ireland and Australia.