

2006 profile of postgraduate critical care nursing research in South Africa



Department of Anaesthesiology, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
 Juan Scribante, M Cur

Aim. The aim of the study was to compile a profile of postgraduate critical care nursing research completed during 2006 in the nursing departments of South African universities, and to determine the extent to which this research contributes to the development of a unique body of specialist South African nursing knowledge.

Method. The critical care nursing programme leader at each university completed an electronic questionnaire.

Results. A total of 16 critical care master's projects (but no doctorate projects) were completed. Completed projects came from only 7 of the 10 universities that offer a postgraduate programme in critical care nursing. To date, only 1 of the projects (6.3%) has been published and 3 (18.8%) have been presented at a national critical care congress.

Conclusion. The number and focus of the 2006 projects are comparable with the 2000 - 2005 profile. Research dissemination from South African postgraduate critical care nursing research remains poor.

A significant number of critical care nursing research studies are undertaken each year at postgraduate level in South Africa. However, no generally available profile exists of this research, nor is it generally known if and where this research is published and/or presented. Given the current challenges to critical care, it is important that the profile of critical care nursing research, the extent to which this research is communicated to the critical care community, and the communication channels used, are determined. One of the objectives of the Clinical Trials Group of the Critical Care Society of Southern Africa is to establish and maintain a database of postgraduate critical care nursing research.

Method

The aim of the study was to compile a profile of postgraduate critical care nursing research completed during 2006 in the nursing departments of South African universities, and to determine the extent to which this research contributes to the development of a unique body of specialist South African nursing knowledge. The objectives were therefore to:

- document the number of projects completed at master's and doctorate levels, respectively
- compare the 2006 completed projects with the 2000 - 2005 profile of completed postgraduate critical care nursing projects
- document at which national and international forums the research was presented

- document in which publications the research was published.

A quantitative research design was used. Ethics approval to conduct the study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the University of the Witwatersrand.

A purposeful sampling method was used in this study. The sample consisted of all universities that offer a postgraduate programme in critical care nursing, and all postgraduate research projects that were completed during 2006. The respective critical care nursing postgraduate programme leaders at each university were asked to complete a 'Participant's Information and Consent' form. Only the nursing departments that consented were included in the study.

The critical care nursing programme leader at each university completed an electronic questionnaire which requested the following information:

- title of each research project completed during the study period
- final submission date
- whether the research completed was for a master's or doctorate programme
- focus of the research (e.g. clinical, education, management)
- whether the research was published and details thereof
- whether the research was presented and details thereof.

The data were entered into a database and analysed using descriptive analysis techniques.

Results

During 2006, a total of 16 critical care master's projects and no doctorate projects were completed. The titles of the completed projects are listed in Table I. The number and focus of the 2006 projects are comparable with the 2000 - 2005 profile (Fig. 1). Completed projects came from only 7 of the 10 universities that offer a

postgraduate programme in critical care nursing. The majority (9 out of 16) of the completed projects was from one supervisor. To date, only 1 of the projects (6.3%) has been published and 3 (18.8%) presented at a national critical care congress.

Discussion

In a previous publication,¹ concern about the number of completed postgraduate critical care nursing projects was highlighted. Another concern evident from the

Table I. Completed master's projects 2006

University	Title of project	Published	Presented
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University	The knowledge of registered nurses in public hospitals related to prevention of HIV/AIDS transmission	-	-
University of Cape Town	The critical care nursing workforce in Western Cape hospitals – a descriptive survey	SAJCC 2006	CCSSA congress Bloemfontein 2006
University of the Free State	Dokumenteringsvorm vir gebruik tydens die versorging van pasiënte met epidurale pynbeheer	-	CCSSA congress Bloemfontein 2006
University of Johannesburg	Veilige draaiprocedure vir pasiënte vanaf 'n Nimbus na 'n ProNimbus en weer terug	-	-
University of Johannesburg	Lifestyle adaptations of patients with coronary artery disease who underwent coronary artery bypass graft, angioplasty or a coronary stent	-	-
University of KwaZulu-Natal	A description of the forensic nursing role in the emergency departments of the Durban metropole	-	-
University of Pretoria	Cardiac patients' experience of music therapy	-	-
University of Pretoria	Cardiac surgery patients' experiences of music therapy in an ICU of a public hospital in Gauteng	-	-
University of Pretoria	Critical care nurses' knowledge regarding legal liability issues	-	-
University of Pretoria	Critical care nurses' knowledge regarding patients with pulmonary embolism in the critical care unit	-	-
University of Pretoria	Experiences of nurses regarding a structured debriefing programme	-	-
University of Pretoria	Intensive care nurses' knowledge regarding pneumonia patients in ICU	-	-
University of Pretoria	The knowledge of critical care nurses working in a private hospital in Gauteng regarding the interpretation of 12-lead ECGs	-	-
University of Pretoria	The level of knowledge of critical care nurses regarding intra-aortic balloon counterpulsation	-	-
University of the Witwatersrand	A comparison of patient outcomes in the ICU after endotracheal suctioning with and without normal saline instillation	-	-
University of the Witwatersrand	Knowledge of intensive care nurses in selected care areas commonly guided by protocols	-	CCSSA congress Sun City 2007

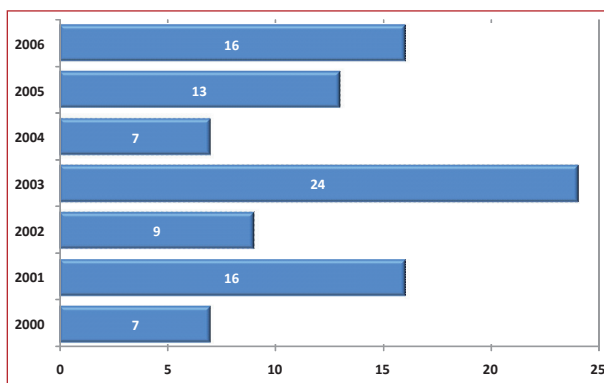


Fig. 1. Number of completed postgraduate projects.

results of this study – and the previous profile – was that completed research is not disseminated to the critical care community nationally or internationally. Only 1 project (6.3%) was published in the *South African Journal of Critical Care*. This journal is not indexed by international databases and therefore has a limited exposure. Three of the completed projects (18.8%) were presented at an annual national CCSSA congress. It is of concern that none was presented internationally.

As nurses in South Africa, we are tasked in our current Scope of Practice² and new proposed legislation (The Nursing Charter)³ to undertake and implement research in our clinical practice.

Communication (publication and presenting) of research results is the first step in research dissemination. However, the real challenge of successful research dissemination is its implementation in practice.^{4,5} Translating research results into practice is the basis

of evidence-based practice.⁶ A vast amount of valuable international multidisciplinary critical care research is available that can be incorporated into South African critical care nursing practice. However, it is essential that local practice should include evidence from South African research to address the country's specific needs.

A question that arises – and which was not addressed in this study – is that, if postgraduate research is so poorly communicated to the critical care community, to what extent have the results from these projects influenced, and been implemented in, practice?

Conclusion

The value of research without dissemination of the findings is questionable. Research dissemination from South African postgraduate critical care nursing research remains poor. This study is an attempt to facilitate partial dissemination of completed research to the South African critical care community.

Note. The information presented in this article was provided to the author by the respective universities. If any of the information presented is not fully correct or up to date, I apologise in advance and ask that readers assist me in updating the respective data.

1. Scribante J, Bhagwanjee S. A profile of postgraduate critical care research in South Africa. *S Afr J Crit Care* 2006; 22: 78-84.
2. Regulation 2598: Regulations Relating to the Scope of Practise of Persons Who Are Registered or Enrolled Under the Nursing Act 1978. Pretoria: South African Nursing Council, 1991.
3. Draft Charter of Nursing Practice 2004. Pretoria: South African Nursing Council, 2004.
4. Fitch MI. Beyond publication (editorial). *J Adv Nurs* 2004; 48: 1.
5. Oerman MH, Galvin EA, Floyd JA, et al. Presenting research to clinicians: strategies for writing about research findings. *Nurse Researcher* 2006; 13: 66-74.
6. Pearson A. Getting research into practice (editorial). *Int J Nurs Prac* 2004; 10: 197-198.