

Fact Sheet: The Nursing Workforce

National
Review of
Nursing
Education 2002

What are the studies and who conducted them?

- ***Job growth and replacement needs in nursing occupations*** by Dr Chandra Shah and Professor Gerald Burke from the Centre for the Economics of Education & Training (CEET), Faculty of Education, Monash University
- ***The nursing workforce 2010*** by Dr Tom Karmel and Dr Jianke Li, Department of Education Science and Training
- ***An overview of issues in nursing education*** by Emeritus Professor Richard Johnson and Ms Barbara Preston

What does the research say?

Job growth and replacement needs in nursing occupations analyses the changing environment of the nursing workforce - that is, those who do nursing work, from directors of nursing to personal care assistants, as well as aged and disabled person carers who are found in a different category from nursing workers. The report examines the trends across the period 1987-2001 and uses this information to make a range of projections for the period 2001-2006, including job openings for new entrants which give an estimate of training requirements.

Nursing workers:

- For the five years up to 2001 employment grew at an average rate of 0.8 per cent, half the rate for all occupations, to 248,000 in 2001.
- Not all states recorded growth in this group of workers.
- Changes in the relative proportion of the three main groups – nursing professionals, enrolled nurses and personal care and nursing assistants – has advantaged the nursing professionals.
- Growth forecasts of employment in nursing occupations are 0.4 per cent on average across the five year period 2001-2006 compared to 1.4 per cent for all employment.
- The total job openings for new entrants into nursing occupations across the five year period 2001-2006 is expected to be about 31,000 – average annual growth rate of 2.5 per cent compared to 3.9 for all occupations.

Aged and disabled person carers:

- There were 71,000 aged and disabled person carers in 2001.
- Growth forecasts of employment are 4.9 per cent across the five year period 2001-2006.
- The total job opening for new entrants across the five year period 2001-2006 is expected to be about 21 000 - average annual growth rate of 5.8 per cent.

The nursing workforce 2010 develops and uses a methodology to examine the factors which influence the demand for nurses. It compares supply and demand for nurses using projections based on different scenarios that indicate there is likely to be considerable undersupply of nurses by 2010 regardless of the scenario. The study is interesting as it distinguishes between different work contexts hospitals, nursing homes and community care to see what drives the changes in nurse numbers in each of these contexts. It finds that the strength of the factors vary between the sectors.

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An overview of issues in nursing education examines and synthesises recent Australian reports and government commissioned studies in relation to nursing. It identified the themes and findings of these reports and also highlighted any topics that were not covered. It categorises the reports as falling into six broad categories dealing with:

- the changing context of nursing
- dissatisfaction with conditions of work
- transition from university to employment
- clinical education
- nursing specialisation
- the supply of nurses

The majority deal with labour force issues which is why this report is included in this volume.

Issues the authors identify as absent from the reports include leadership development, on-line education of nurses, Indigenous issues, education of nurses in a multicultural context, issues of rural and remote area nursing, the trend toward specialisation, the quality of graduates, teaching quality in schools of nursing, the expectations of incoming students, links between nursing and non-traditional medicine and the evaluation of double-degree programs.

Is the research available?

Yes - all the research along with the review report *Our Duty of Care* is available on the review website at www.dest.gov.au/highered/programmes/nursing/ or on request by telephoning (02) 6240 7604 or (02) 6289 7543.