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Long-term Evaluation of Research Utilisation Consultation

Preliminary Report Wales



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Background

In 1994/5 the Foundation of Nursing Studies (FoNS) responded to the now widely recognised need for practitioners to base their practice on sound evidence of clinical effectiveness (Department of Health, 1996a) by organising nine workshops focused on the utilisation of research. The workshops involved 206 participants (Registered General Nurses, Registered Mental Nurses, Health Visitors and Midwives), spanning all clinical grades, from seven NHS trusts.

The primary evaluation of these workshops was reported in May 1996 in *'Reflection for Action'* (Foundation of Nursing Studies). The results were encouraging. The workshops had: strengthened practitioners' skills in critical appraisal; raised their awareness that research varied in its quality; and consolidated their prior knowledge, experience and confidence. However, fears were expressed that these effects 'wore off' with time, and that organisations needed to commit time and resources to enabling their staff to achieve research based practice. As a result of these concerns FoNS considered it necessary to undertake a long-term evaluation during 1997/98.

Two questions guided the second evaluation. What effect had the workshops and the association with FoNS had **in the long-term** on:-

- facilitating participants to critically evaluate research and apply it in practice?
- enhancing a research culture in the organisation?

The results of the second evaluation were presented in a consultation paper and this was distributed to senior nurses, practice developers and nurse educators in Trusts

and academic institutions across the UK. The first phase of the consultation invited recipients of the paper to respond to the findings in the light of their own experiences. They were also asked to comment on the impact clinical governance has had on getting research/evidence into practice and provide information on the kind of resources/support that have, and/or would, help get evidence into practice. The same people were also invited to attend one of four consultation events held in Northern Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales. The overall aims of the consultation were to validate the findings of the long-term evaluation of research utilisation and to explore specific needs in terms of supporting and sustaining the use of research in practice.

At the consultation events we were delighted to have the support of the Chief Nursing Officers to open the events in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland and a Deputy for the Chief Nursing Officer in England. Each day included presentations on the challenges of getting research into practice in each of the four countries. During the day participants were divided into small discussion groups and asked to focus on 4 areas:

1. Developing knowledge and skills to support research utilisation
2. Establishing organisational structures to support and sustain research utilisation
3. Creating and maintaining a culture for research utilisation
4. The role of the Foundation of Nursing Studies in supporting and sustaining research utilisation

Workshop discussion group guidelines were provided for areas 1-3 and participants were asked to record as much as possible of their individual thoughts, views and experiences from and about current practice in individual response sheets. Flip charts were also provided for recording information. Participants were given an individual questionnaire to complete during the day that focused on area 4. The individual and group notes, questionnaires and flip charts were all collected from each group and have formed a large part of the data collected from each of the four days.

An individual preliminary report has been prepared for each country and participants have the opportunity to comment on and verify the content of the report. These four reports contribute to an overall UK-wide publication.

Introduction to the Wales Consultation

Thirty people attended the consultation event for Wales held at the St David's Hotel, Cardiff on 11th July 2000. We were very pleased to welcome Miss Rosemary Kennedy, Chief Nursing Officer, Wales to open the day. Miss Kennedy talked about the work that is underway to strengthen nursing developments in Wales. She welcomed this opportunity to explore the utilisation of research in nursing practice and used the example of pain management to highlight the fact that so much research and evidence still does not reach or influence the care of patients. We were also pleased to have two keynote presenters from Wales to set the scene for the workshop activities. Mary Hodgeon, Director of Nursing, Pembrokeshire & Derwen NHST helped focus the morning's activities with a very thought-provoking presentation about the barriers to using research in practice and the demand the current agenda for change places on nurses in the clinical setting. She also shared with the group some examples of the ways R&D is being taken forward within her Trust. In the afternoon, Dame June Clark, Professor of Nursing, University of Wales provided a stimulating presentation that encouraged participants to look more closely at the purpose of research in nursing and its role in developing knowledge for practice. She also called for a simplification of language; for example, exchanging the word 'utilising' for 'using' (research) so as to make our intentions clearer. A further challenge was to consider our personal concepts of nursing and move beyond traditional definitions.

For the purpose of the focused workshop discussions, participants were divided into three small groups. Each group identified a facilitator and ad hoc external facilitation was provided where needed. A vast amount of data was collected from the groups

representing both individual viewpoints and group consensus. The data have been transcribed, reviewed and where possible key issues and themes identified. The reviewed data are presented in four sections under the workshop/questionnaire headings and an overall summary and interpretation provided.

Data Presentation

Workshop 1: Developing Knowledge and Skills to Support Research Utilisation

Activity 1.1 Participants were asked to comment on ‘What triggers the use of research?’

The following data represents the common individual responses to this question under four broad headings:

Individual/personal factors

- General interest, being motivated, compulsion
- Need to keep up to date
- Reading
- Part of role to get theory into practice
- Being a professional
- Accountability ‘A real understanding of the code of conduct (accountability) would lead you to need to be using evidence based practice (clinical governance)’
- In response to service delivery problems and practice problems
- Wanting and/or needing to improve services and care
- Making best use of resources
- Search for best practice

Internal organisational factors

- Clinical governance, clinical audit, standards, protocols, policy benchmarks
- Complaints
- Pressure from leader, a real clinical leader – not a general manager
- Active encouragement – top down
- Specialist nurses sharing information
- Research co-ordinators
- Awareness, access and understanding of evidence
- Seeing others putting research into practice

- Having a role model
- Funding

External factors

- Competition, media, pressure groups
- New treatments and trends

Educational factors

- Staff development and educational courses
- Projects and assignments
- Greater links between educational and clinical environment

Participants were then asked to share and discuss their individual responses and draw together the common and most important themes which trigger the use of research in practice.

The following themes were found in all three groups:

Research culture

The use of research in practice is influenced by:

- The attitude of staff and the culture of the organisation towards research, i.e. research seen as integral to practice and engaging people at all levels
- Positive support from senior nurses
- Individual motivation of staff, personal accountability and desire to read and keep up to date
- Ownership
- Opportunity for clinical supervision and reflection on practice
- Sharing and networking
- Encouragement
- Knowledge acquisition valued
- ‘Obstruction to research’ was recorded by one group e.g. ‘people perceiving that it’s not their role to apply research’.

Clinical governance and risk management

The role of clinical governance (as an overall structure) did not come through as strongly in the group discussions. However, the following linked structures/activities were recorded:

- Policy development
- Risk management
- Clinical audit
- Standard setting

- Cost effectiveness/best use of resources
- Complaints system
- Patient groups

Education

- Development of a pre-registration curriculum where research is integral
- Nurses undertaking education/study generates research interest and inquiry
- Staff development opportunities
- Assertiveness skills – described as a ‘big issue’

Improving patient care

- Dealing with problems/complaints and/or improving patient care and services was recorded by all groups

Funding

- The need for additional funds for research and other initiatives was recorded by one group

Multi-disciplinary working

- The value of multi-disciplinary working was recorded by one group

Activity 1.2 What knowledge and skills do you/your colleagues need to support research utilisation?

Participants were asked to consider the kind of knowledge and skills needed.

The responses from participants have been grouped under the following key headings:

Leadership

- Skills in creating a supportive culture for research and its use
- Knowing who and how to influence
- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Being able to maintain commitment through highs and lows
- Understanding human nature and team dynamics
- Able to ‘make it happen’
- Valuing experience
- Negotiation skills

Management of change

- Assertiveness
- Time management
- Diplomacy
- Focused approaches to dissemination

- Making things simple
- Use experts effectively
- Knowledge of practice development

Basic research skills

- Knowledge of the research process
- Critical appraisal skills – ‘fundamental skills in the graduate profession’
- Development of individuals to do and use research
- Proposal and report writing skills
- Awareness of how research fits into clinical governance
- Dissemination skills

Skills in searching for information

- IT skills
- Library skills
- Knowing who to access for expert IT support and information
- IT compatibility across an organisation
- Able to make sense of information and knowing what’s appropriate
- Easy access to information

Multi-disciplinary Working

- Adopting a multi-disciplinary approach to research
- Knowledge of other professions’ roles and skills
- Awareness of inter-professional boundaries, i.e. managing and crossing them

Other

- Awareness of transcultural issues was recorded by two groups

Participants were also asked to consider who needs the knowledge and skills and how loss of knowledge and skills can be prevented.

Who needs the knowledge and skills?

This question elicited the following broad responses:

- Everyone
- All need to know basics
- All carers need to be aware of skills
- All nurses at different levels as well as other professionals

How can loss of knowledge and skills be prevented?

There was limited information recorded in relation to the above question, the following key points were made:

- Knowledge, skills and research needs to be relevant to practice
- Networking and communicating information
- Reserved resources
- Needs to be an integrated approach

Quotes from two groups in response to above the question:

‘There are two levels of responsibility; the profession’s in creating the culture, influencing the agenda, policy and the individual professional’s responsibility for developing skills.’

‘Need to take the fear of research away from ‘grass roots’ nursing, nurses are intimidated and undervalue their work/contribution... they view research as ‘academic’ and we need to get across that it’s OK to use an existing evidence base and they don’t have to always generate new research.’

Workshop 2: Establishing Organisational Structures to Support and Sustain Research Utilisation

Activity 2.1 The consultation report identifies that practitioners quote a lack of organisational support to use research in practice

Bearing in mind the knowledge and skills identified in workshop one, identify the specific organisational support required to achieve the development of skills and sustain the use of research in practice. Also consider how this could be achieved, where it would fit into the overall organisational structure and who would/should take responsibility.

The response to this question seemed to group naturally under the following four headings:

Creating an infrastructure to generate and use research in practice

- Acceptance of R&D as part of the Clinical Governance agenda

- Research generated for practice with everyone involved (needs to be top down and bottom up), but with key people identified to make sure it happens at all levels in the organisation
- R&D lead role established to take responsibility, although one group felt this responsibility should cascade down through the organisation
- ‘Clear Structure for R&D, i.e. number of researchers with structured roles and clear line of responsibility, most engaged in development and some with responsibility for dissemination’
- Protected time for R&D activities

Collaboration to ensure research undertaken is relevant for practice

- Cross-fertilisation and links between academic institutions, educational providers, research units and clinical areas. The link with clinical areas will ensure the evidence/research is implemented.
- Links between Lecturers and Researchers will help to ensure education and teaching is research/evidence based

Role development

Clear nursing roles are required to help develop research for practice, sustain the use of research in practice and reduce the gap between research/theory and practice, including, research facilitators, joint appointments (between universities and Trusts) and Consultant Nurses. These appointments should have clear dedicated time and be supported at Trust Board level.

Initiatives to increase research awareness:

Local level:

- Local groups i.e. clinicians’ network, research interest groups, multi-professional forum, links with RCN
- Small contributions valued within and across organisations
- Research generated by nurses in practice
- Encouragement of locally focused initiatives

National level:

- Co-ordinate R&D activity in Wales
- Several references to the development of systematic reviews for Wales generated by universities and/or collaboratively

with a national group such as FoNS, the Centre for Reviews & Dissemination, York. A suggested starting point was basic care, e.g. nutrition, hygiene, catheter care

- Improve use of current information
- Academy of excellence for Wales supported by the National Assembly

Workshop 3: Creating and Maintaining a Culture for Research Utilisation

Activity 3.1 What creates a culture that promotes the utilisation of research?

Participants were asked to describe a characteristic or element that creates the culture and where possible give an example from practice.

The following broad themes and specific activities have been drawn from the data:

Equal, easy access to information and commitment/valuing of sharing and dissemination

- Making evidence useable, e.g. easy to read, user friendly format
- Access to library facilities
- Register of 'live' work to help co-ordinate activity across clinical areas and the Trust
- Journal clubs
- Newsletters
- Notice boards
- Innovation days
- Use of external opportunities for dissemination e.g. forums, journals, conferences

Organisational commitment and responsibility for research and practice development

- Reviewing, setting and updating standards based on best evidence/research developed by 'grass roots' working groups
- 'Make research part of everyday practice and a commonplace phenomenon'
- Multi-disciplinary working and sharing across the organisation
- User involvement
- R&D integral to everyone's role
- Nursing development initiatives.
- Developing resource centres in Directorates.
- Commitment and resource to

enable/implement change

- Creation of 'beacons' of good practice
- Autonomy in practice
- Leadership development

Funding & resources (Local & National)

- Equity in distribution of research funding professionally and geographically
- Ring fenced funds
- Easier access to funds
- Streamline bodies that support R&D to provide clarity for everyone
- Funding and resources should be focused on putting research into practice.

Recognition and reward of good research based practice locally

- Feedback
- Quality awards
- Valuing small successes

Effective leadership

- Clinical leaders with dedicated time, expertise and commitment to getting research into practice

Awareness of barriers/solution seeking

These seemed to relate to the additional demands it was felt the R&D agenda and evidence based practice may place on staff

- Increase stability of workforce
- Flexible working patterns
- Make sure people know what they are doing and why
- Positive reinforcement

Multidisciplinary working

- Multi-agency focus to care
- Patient care and R&D viewed across professions to increase effectiveness of activity
- Information sharing across professions

The responsibility for creating a culture for sustaining the use of research in practice seemed to be seen at all levels. Individual nurses were described as having an integral role and it was suggested that accountability for practice influenced their involvement. Ward sisters and managers had a role in 'engendering enthusiasm' for research utilisation and dissemination and also being committed to processes highlighted in the aforementioned data that enable this. Research co-ordinators and specialist nurses were mentioned by two groups as those

who make sure information is gathered and gets to nurses in practice. Finally, the Trust Board commitment and support across the organisation is an essential driver. One suggestion for making the Trust Board's support visible at practice level was to involve the Board in congratulating and rewarding staff, e.g. a Chairman's award for good practice.

Questionnaire: The Role of the Foundation of Nursing Studies in Supporting and Sustaining Research Utilisation

Participants were asked to provide information on the kind of activities the Foundation should continue to support in order to fulfil its aim of getting research into practice. The finding from our long-term evaluation has identified workshops as a valuable means of developing skills for using research. We wanted to find out more about the value of workshops and also about other things that might be useful.

Four key areas of activity were identified:

Focused and targeted dissemination

- Co-ordination and support for local networks, focusing on local needs
- Research interest groups
- Dissemination of existing research and development of systematic reviews. Information should be disseminated electronically and in print
- Research Database, web based with email and printed updates
- FoNS newsletter valued
- Information sharing days for clinicians to share and hear about developments
- External facilitation of practice development projects
- Acknowledgement of FoNS' willingness to disseminate non-effects and process issues in relation to getting evidence into practice

Activities to increase knowledge and awareness

- Easy access to research/evidence
- Seminars, research awareness, implementation and dissemination
- Awareness seminars for everyday nurses,

helping nurses to understand R&D and clinical governance, how they are part of it and how it should influence practice

- Education re dissemination and implementation rather than doing research
- Suggested approach is short sessions including skills development, time to discuss own work and opportunity for follow up sessions to explore progress
- FoNS Roadshows
- Workshops like this one
- FoNS described as having a pioneering role in working collaboratively across Trusts and academic institutions to disseminate and implement research
- Strong message from one group not to expect all nurses to do research, but to give them skills and confidence to use and implement research
- IT skills to make effective use of information

Securing funding

- Funding for development activities
- Funding for part-time not just full-time PhD

'Agenda pushing'

- Organisations such as FoNS and the RCN working collaboratively with the Welsh Assembly and Trust Executive Nurse Directors to identify strategic priorities and provide national and local co-ordination

Overall Summary & Interpretation

This summary intends to review and highlight the key issues raised by participants in each of the workshops and in the questionnaire. In workshop one, participants were asked to focus on two areas, triggers for research use and the knowledge and skills required to support research use. As with the other consultation days, this workshop resulted in the longest discussions and yielded the most data. The individual factors identified as triggers for research use ranged from the personal desire and motivation to use research, to feeling it was part of being accountable or perceiving it to be part of one's role. Improving care/service delivery and seeking best practice were also identified as individual triggers.

Within an organisation, other knowledgeable nurses including nurse specialists, research

co-ordinators and role models were identified as triggers for research use. The reference to pressure from a leader was interesting in relation to whether a nurse would feel encouraged or coerced into using research. The clarifying statement that leader means 'real clinical leader' rather than general manager perhaps implies the pressure is perceived positively. The important role of individuals' attitudes to research also came through in the discussion both in terms of enhancing and inhibiting the use of research in practice. Clinical governance and the activities linked to it such as audit, benchmarks and protocols also influence the use of research as did availability of funding. Several references were made to external factors, in particular media and pressure groups, as well as new treatments and trends.

When asked to consider the knowledge and skills required to support the use of research in practice, leadership and change management skills came through very strongly as being needed. In terms of basic research skills, being able to critically appraise research was still seen as important together with a knowledge of the research process. Equally important was the acquisition of IT skills and being able to find and make sense of information. All the groups felt that the knowledge and skills identified were needed by everyone, but in order for them to be sustained they needed to be relevant. The two quotes presented represent many of the general comments which call for demystification of research and making clear that evidence based practice is not just about doing research its about using research.

Workshop two asked participants to think more broadly about the organisational structures that support and sustain research in practice. Creating the right infrastructure in organisations was top or near the top of the list from all three groups. This included seeing R&D as part of clinical governance and therefore everyone's business. Having a R&D lead role but seeing the responsibility cascade through the organisation seemed to be important as was having clear roles for researchers that involve both doing and disseminating research. Collaboration between educationalists, clinicians and researchers was also encouraged to ensure research was relevant and has a smoother pathway to practice. The was also reference

to the differing roles of researchers and lecturers and the value of linking them together more in order to enhance evidence based teaching. The final area identified was the development of initiatives to increase research awareness and two levels of activity were suggested. Locally, research and good practice need to be valued and shared and a number of ideas for achieving this are put forward. On a national level, a more co-ordinated approach to R&D in Wales was asked for and perhaps linked to this was the need for improved dissemination of information. Two proposals worth further exploration are the development of systematic reviews for Wales and the idea for an 'Academy of Excellence'.

Strategies for creating a culture that promotes research utilisation were put forward in workshop three. The two most important strategies identified were in relation to disseminating information and commitment to research and practice development. The idea of a 'live' register seemed particularly positive and need not, with the use of technology, be restricted to one Trust. The involvement of all nurses in R&D, which has been a feature throughout the workshop, is again stressed here with an emphasis on the value they would add to developing standards for best practice. Funding and resources of course make a difference, and here it is important to note the need for funding to be available to support putting research into practice. The need to recognise the increasing demands placed on staff was also acknowledged in this workshop, together with the suggestion that the implementation of recognition and reward schemes locally can help encourage and value initiatives.

The last piece of data presented was that from the questionnaires about the role of FoNS in supporting and sustaining research. There was a strong focus on supporting the sharing, disseminating and implementing research/evidence to nurses in practice. This included activities which would increase the dissemination of research locally and across Wales, for example, support and co-ordination of local networks and interest groups. FoNS already supports a number of UK-wide networks and these have proved a useful way of nurses exchanging information. The use of electronic means of communicating information was seen as

effective, but the need to continue with paper and print is also important for many people. The second area of activity suggested was that which increased knowledge and awareness, including seminars, workshops and roadshows. It is suggested these focus on dissemination and implementation skills rather than 'doing research'. It is interesting to note the ongoing need for information on clinical governance and R&D by nurses and whilst this may not be

an area for FoNS it is one that can be addressed locally and nationally. It was also useful to know that the collaborative work FoNS undertakes is valued. The issues raised around funding and pushing forward the R&D agenda are both areas where FoNS can continue to be influential.

In conclusion, this report present a review of data collected from the one-day consultation

in Wales. The data from this report together with that collected in Northern Ireland, England and Scotland provides great insights into 'where have we come from?' and 'where are we going to?' in terms of getting research and evidence used in practice.

Theresa Shaw
Professional Development Officer
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Attendance List

Name	Title	NHST/Company
Davina Allen	Lecturer/Research Fellow	University Hospital of Wales NHST
Judith Allen	Education and Development Officer	Royal College of Nursing Wales
Ruhi Behi	Deputy Head & Sub-Dean	University of Wales
Roz Bevan	Senior Nurse	Pembrokeshire & Derwen NHST
Jenny Bowen	Asst. Director of Nursing	Camarthen & District Community NHST
Donna Clack	Fundraiser	Foundation of Nursing Studies
June Clark	Professor of Nursing	University of Wales
Jacquie Corbett	Lecturer Community Nursing Studies	University of Wales
Carol Cotterell	Associate Director of Nursing	Camarthen & District Community NHST
Esther Curry	Senior Nurse, Practice Development	Swansea NHST
Ben Hannigan	Lecturer	University of Wales NHST
Peter Hirskyj	Lecturer	University of Wales NHST
Mary Hodgeon	Director of Nursing & Human Resources	Pembrokeshire & Derwen NHST
Linda Jennins	Pain Nurse Specialist	Bro Morgannwg NHST
Lorraine Jones	Asst. Director of Nursing	Ceredigion & Mid-Wales NHST
Sian Jones	R&D Co-ordinator	University of Wales NHST
Rosemary Kennedy	Chief Nursing Officer	Welsh Office
Maggie Kirk	Senior Lecturer	University of Glamorgan
Sandy Kirkman	Principal Lecturer	University of Glamorgan
Lesley Lowes	Paediatric Diabetes Specialist Nurse/Lecturer	University Hospital of Wales NHST
Tom Mason	Senior Research Fellow	Bro Morgannwg Hospital NHST
Miles Maylor	CNS Tissue Viability	Pembrokeshire & Derwen NHST
George McWhirter	Lecturer	University of Wales
Gail Mooney	Research & Development Officer	Camarthenshire NHST
Carol Mosely		Swansea NHST
Patricia Osborne	Senior Lecturer	University of Glamorgan
Angela Perrett	Librarian & Info. Services Manager	Royal College of Nursing Wales
Martine Price	Asst. Chief Nurse	Cardiff & Vale NHST
Morag Prowse	Lecturer	University Hospital of Wales NHST
Sally Rees	Nurse Lecturer	University of Wales
Grace Sansom	Quality & Professional Development Senior Nurse	Swansea NHST
Theresa Shaw	Professional Development Officer	Foundation of Nursing Studies
M Smith	Senior Lecturer	University of Glamorgan
Rachel Swinglehurst	Acute Pain Nurse	Pembrokeshire & Derwen NHST
Vicky Warner	Head of Nurse Education	Gwent Community Health NHST
Tony Willis	Lecturer	University of Wales
Karen Wilson	Director of Nursing Development	Swansea NHST



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