Development of specialist and generalist roles in primary health care nursing

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Value of advanced roles in primary health care nursing

- Value of extending nurses professional roles into expert spaces traditionally occupied by doctors
- UK has growing number of patients with non-communicable diseases
- There is an important role for advanced nurses and specialist nursing roles to meet these needs
Value of advanced roles in primary health care nursing

- Dedicated to particular area of nursing
- Support for patients in the community with long-term conditions (e.g. cancer, diabetes, Parkinson’s, chronic heart failure and dementia)
- Direct patient care
- Vital role in educating patients
Types of advanced roles in the UK

- **A**: Specialist Community Public Health Nurse
- **B**: Community Specialist Practice District Nurse
- **C**: Others – numerous titles
Examples in practice

- Deliver, prioritise, lead, manage and support health and social care in a range of settings

- Evidence-based practice

- Exercise high levels of judgement, discretion and decision-making
Examples in practice

How they are trained/educated

- Continuous Professional Development (CPD) with academic and clinical programmes
- Integrated theory practice
- Deliver key public health priorities
- Leadership and research skills
Dr Peter Carter, RCN Chief Executive & General Secretary:

“... Specialist nurses are a unique lifeline for patients and families, who are unequivocal in saying that the specialist nurse is the key factor in preserving their quality of life ...”
Evidence

- RCN publication: *Specialist nurses – Changing lives, saving money:*
  - Highlights cost effectiveness and improved patient experience.

- OECD review of nursing specialist roles (2010) across developed countries.
  - Development of new nursing roles varies greatly.
Leading the delivery of care

- Reduces hospital admissions
- Reduces costs of treatment
- Improves patient satisfaction
Challenges

- Multiple professional titles and roles
- Inconsistencies
  - scope of practice
  - education and training across hospital providers and higher education institutions
  - career progression
RCN View

- All patients with long term conditions should have **access** to a specialist nurse
- Specialist nurses should be allowed **time** to care and accomplish the vital aspects of their role
RCN View

- Increasing **funding** for specialist nursing roles and supporting other providers
- Commissioners to understand the **wider cost implications** and **health improvements** to be gained in continued investments in both the medium to long-term
RCN Work

- Specialist nursing workforce group.
- District nurses survey – RCN in the process of analysing feedback from a range of community nurses