

How Nurse Unit Managers Support the Wellbeing of Nurses in the ICU

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ANZICS/ACCCN Intensive Care ASM

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Background

- Shortfall of **10,500** ICU and emergency nurses in Australia by 2030 (1)
- Nurses who experience high levels of **workplace wellbeing** remain in their job longer (2,3)
- **Wellbeing** of nurses crucial for quality care (4,5)
- **Literature review** (6)
 - **NUM behaviors** affect nurse wellbeing
 - Nurses experience **lack of leadership support**
 - Voices of **NUMs** are absent

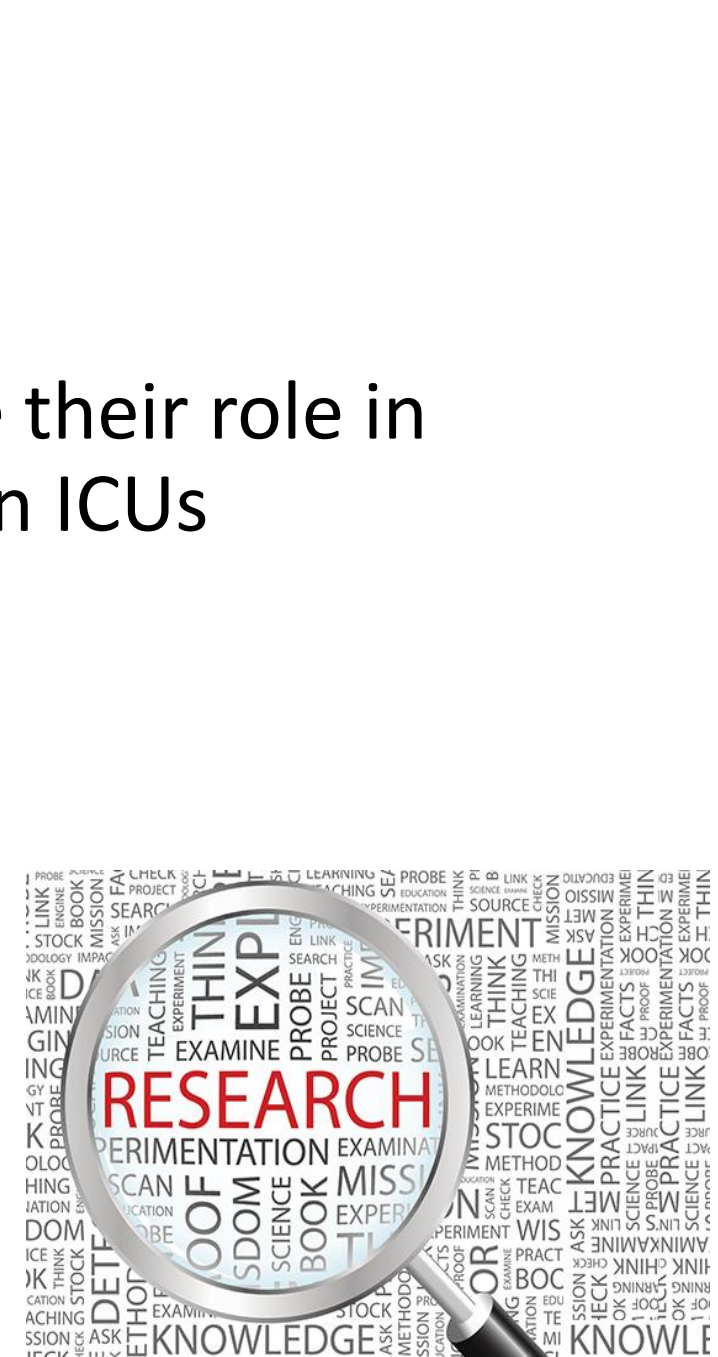


Aim

To explore how NUMs perceive and experience their role in supporting the wellbeing of nurses in Australian ICUs

Methods

- Qualitative Case Study
- Ethics approval through SBREC (Flinders University)
- Recruitment through ACCCN and Nursepath
- In-depth interviews (March - April 2018)
- Thematic Analysis



Participant profile

- 12 participants (10 women, 2 men)
- 32-60 years old
- 1-35 years as a NUM
- Managing between 25 - 300 nurses



Overall findings

Five themes:

1. The NUM supportive strategies
2. Lack of upper management support
3. Lack of knowledge in how to support nurse wellbeing
4. The subjective nature of the role
5. Nurse Unit Manager wellbeing

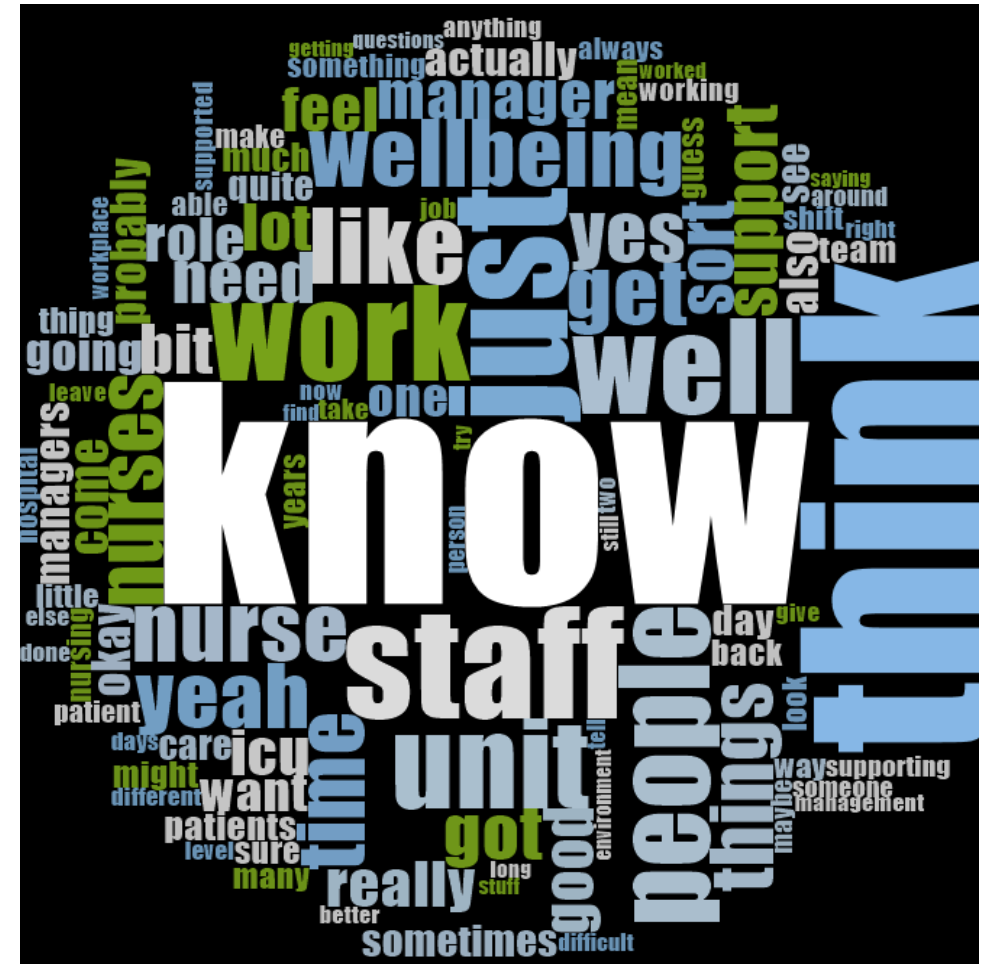


Image source: NVivo word cloud during analysis

Theme 1: The NUM supportive strategies

Building trusting relationships and understanding nurses

*I've been trying to understand where people are coming from
...what drives them (Claire)**

Creating supportive, safe and meaningful work environments

... providing good, clear, honest and transparent explanations (Jill)

Supporting personal growth

I also like to tailor things individually... (Thomas)

Theme 2: Lack of upper management support

Lack of understanding of the ICU environment

*A lot of people in executive have never worked in PICU.
So they don't really understand what is happening and
what stress is for staff (Susie)*

Lack of autonomy

I feel they don't support us in making decisions (Abby)

Lack of time, support and resources

*I don't think there's enough time allocated in the day
to manage people's wellbeing (Liz)*

Theme 3: Lack of knowledge in how to support nurse wellbeing

Four of twelve with qualifications within management and leadership

...just because you're a good nurse doesn't mean that you are a good manager...I try very hard to think of the wellbeing of the staff...I'm not really sure how to do it (Jill)

The training on how to promote staff wellbeing - there's nothing, targeted (Claire)

Theme 4: The subjective nature of the role and role conflict

The subjective nature of the role

As a nurse unit manager of 200 people, I can't physically do the doing [support wellbeing]. I see my role as advocating support of staff, in terms of getting professional support to help them... (Susie)

Role conflict

There are so many other things... that sometimes take priority. Most of the time it [support of wellbeing] is done when you can, and unfortunately sometimes it is reactive thing rather than being proactive and working on wellbeing (Jill)

Theme 5: Nurse unit manager wellbeing

Do I feel supported, no, not at all! My workload is enormous... my working week is anything between 50 and 60 hours. I do have a family too, I'm tired too. So the question is: how long can you be in a role like this? I don't know... But clearly the resources for me to manage staff wellbeing are non-existent, and also the training on how to promote staff wellbeing, there's nothing, there's nothing targeted (Claire)

Recommendations

For practice

- NUM role needs clear definition
- Time, resources and leadership support
- Training to support nurse wellbeing
- Identify traits and skills needed to support wellbeing during NUM recruitment

For research

- Larger quantitative study to verify findings
- Robust investigation of leadership support needs of ICU nurses
- Explore how upper management team see their role in supporting NUMs

Limitations of this study

- Small non-random sample size cannot be generalised and applied to a larger population (not the aim of qualitative research)
- Personal involvement and subjectivity of the researcher can affect data collection and analysis (reflexivity was used)
- Self-selection may bias the sample (purposive sampling allows insight-rich cases)

References

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Thank you!

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