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A four-round Delphi approach survey was conducted over a 6-month period by researchers representing four district nursing organisations that form an alliance in Australia, these organisations being RDNS (in Melbourne, Victoria), RDNS South Australia Inc. (in Adelaide, South Australia – and in one remote rural town in South Australia), Silver Chain (throughout Western Australia) and Blue Care (throughout Queensland - and in some parts of northern New South Wales), plus also one university, La Trobe University (Melbourne, Victoria).

This study sought the opinion of a panel of district nurses about what should be research priorities for district nursing in Australia. Initially, as Round 1 of the survey, questionnaires were sent to all registered nurses (Division 1 registered nurses in Victoria) working as district nurses in the four organisations. This questionnaire asked them to identify and word what should be (from their own reflection on practice) the research foci for district nursing in Australia. A maximum of six suggestions could be listed and the nurses were asked to briefly provide reasons for the suggestions. The 320 registered nurses who responded, thereby accepting the offer to participate, formed the self-selected panel for participation in the following three rounds of the study.

From the analysis of first round responses, 419 discrete research foci were identified, there being multiple similar suggestions of some foci. These foci were worded into research questions, the rationale provided for each summarised, and both the questions and summarised reasons were then listed within a questionnaire circulated to the panel as Round 2. The panel members were requested to indicate on a 4-point Likert scale their opinion as to the importance of each suggestion. The top 15% of prioritised research questions (68 research questions) resultant from an analysis of responses from Round 2 were listed in the questionnaire for Round 3. The panel was asked to rate, according to personal opinion, and again on a 4-point Likert scale, the level of importance of each of the 68 research questions.

The final result is a list of the top ten research priorities overall, four lists of top ten research priorities according to panel members from each of the four district nursing organisations involved in the study, and additionally the top 68 priorities categorised into 20 areas/themes that are either specialties of district nursing practice, or issues that impact upon district nursing practice. The research priorities are all either direct clinical research questions or indirect clinical research questions. Summarised results were forwarded to panel members as Round 4 of the study.

The top ranked research priority overall was *How to improve hospital discharge planning re district nursing care?* Research questions related to discharge planning are dominant over all three types of lists of results, with documentation issues the second most common focus for the research priorities. The other areas/themes featuring in the top ten priorities overall are staffing, aged care, palliative care and assessment. Additionally the organisation-specific lists of top ten research priorities focus on wound care, funding, education and communication issues.

The four chapters of the report sequentially and comprehensively introduce the study, detail and justify the method, present the results, and discuss the findings. Extensive appendices supply copies of the major documents pertaining to study processes and steps.

Through identifying and prioritising research foci relevant to district nursing in Australia according to a panel of district nurses over a wide geographical spread of the nation, it is anticipated that scarce human and financial research resources will be directed to pertinent research foci, and that resultant research programs will productively seek evidence for best practice. Hopefully, the prioritised, clinically-relevant research questions will, when researched, lead to an improvement in, and an enhancement of, health status for district nursing clients in Australia.