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Letter to the Editor

Regarding “Development of a postgraduate interventional cardiac nursing curriculum” by Currey et al.

Dear Editor,

We read with interest the article by Currey et al., “Development of a postgraduate interventional cardiac nursing curriculum”.¹ The authors argue that there is a need for a graduate level education programme for interventional cardiac nurses and describe the development of a programme.

The authors acknowledged that using the ACCCN Competency Standards² as a basis for clinical practice assessment is problematic, as the Standards were a) not designed to be used for clinical assessment and b) do not describe the practice of post graduate critical care students. Currey et al. do explain how the Standards have been amended locally for the purpose of assessing postgraduate student practice. Despite a further iteration of the “Standards” having been released since,³ this shortcoming continues to be identified.

We too have previously highlighted how the inconsistent interpretation and adaptation of the ACCCN Competency Standards by critical care course providers has contributed to the variation in graduate practice outcomes in Australia.⁴ The work we have published in developing critical care nurse education graduate practice standards and an assessment tool (SPECT) now provide the opportunity for course providers to standardise practice outcomes.^{5,6} The standards and assessment tool reflect the views of critical care stakeholder groups including health consumers, nurse educators, course coordinators, nurse managers and clinical nurses. Whilst the focus of the standards and assessment tool was critical care, with core business being adult intensive care, we suggest that several elements of practice will be common to interventional cardiac nurse practice. If an interventional cardiac nurse programme is to fit within a suite of critical care nursing programmes and contribute to producing ‘qualified’ critical care nurses, we urge the authors and others involved in curriculum development of graduate critical care courses to consider these practice standards when defining minimum outcomes for course graduates.

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