



National Institutes of Health
Clinical Center

Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner Role in a Clinical Research Environment: Overview & Case Studies

Caitlin W. Brennan, PhD, APRN
National Institutes of Health Clinical Center
Nursing Department
Research and Practice Development Section

Objectives

- By the end of this talk, attendees will be able to:
 - Understand Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) educational requirements and role in the United States
 - Articulate similarities and differences of Nurse Practitioner and Clinical Nurse Specialist roles
 - Describe unique characteristics of NP and CNS roles in a clinical research environment
 - Summarize a “day in the life” of each role
 - Apply the content to two case studies and contribute to group discussion



NIH Mission



- To seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability.



NIH Clinical Center

Mission

The NIH Clinical Center provides a model environment for:

- clinical research
- patient care
- training

Vision

- As America's research hospital, we will lead the global effort in training today's investigators and discovering tomorrow's cures

<http://clinicalcenter.nih.gov/about/welcome/mission.shtml>



National Institutes of Health Clinical Center



Current position

- Clinical Center Nursing Department (CCND)
 - Research and Practice Development Section
- Program Director for Outcomes Management
 - Lead CCND Quality & Patient Safety program
 - Patient acuity & outcomes research
 - Nurse Practitioner, Pain and Palliative Care Service
- Improving systems of care



Background on APRN

- APRN:
 - CRNA (certified registered nurse anesthetist)
 - CNM (certified nurse midwife)
 - CNS (clinical nurse specialist)
 - NP (nurse practitioner)
- Licensed as a Registered Nurse first by education and exam
- Then certified as an APRN by exam by certifying organization
 - Then licensed as an APRN at the state level (tied to RN license)



Both NPs & CNSs

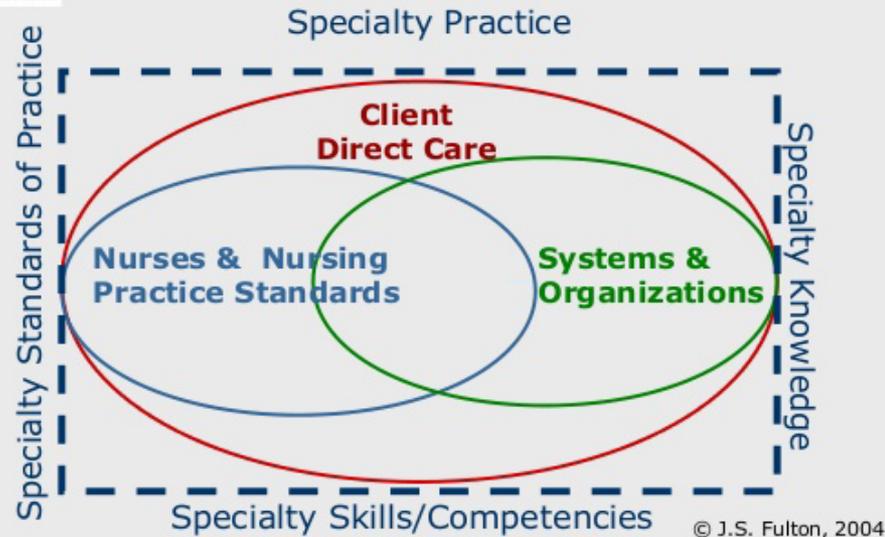
- Work collaboratively with members of interprofessional team to ensure high quality, safe care for patients
 - Education: MSN (minimum); PhD or DNP
 - Certification
 - Generalist first (e.g., Adult, Pediatric, Family) (required)
 - American Nurses Credentialing Center
 - American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
 - Specialist second (e.g., oncology) (optional)
 - Advanced Oncology Clinical Nurse Specialist
 - Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse Practitioner



Distinction: NP & CNS

- CNS
 - Clinical expert (e.g., oncology, critical care, endocrine)
 - Nursing care focus on patient needs
 - Resource for RNs
 - System focus: quality/process improvement, evidence-based practice, peer review, implementation of patient safety programs
 - Scope of practice varies by state
 - Mainly focused on billing/reimbursement for services with some prescriptive authority

<http://www.nacns.org>



CNS practice conceptualized as core competencies in 3 interacting spheres actualized in specialty practice, and guided by specialty knowledge and standards.

CNS Spheres of Influence

National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists APRN Consensus Conference (2004)

Distinction: NP & CNS

- NP

- Individual patient and medical care focus: Assess, diagnose, treat
 - Can bill insurance companies & be reimbursed for services
- Collaborate closely with physicians, other interprofessional team members
- Scope of practice varies by state (level of independence)
 - Collaboration agreements
 - “Practice independently, yet not in isolation”



Day in the Life: CNS

- Round with medical team(s), focus on most vulnerable and complex cases
- Communicate with RNs about patient needs, “just in time” educational needs of RNs
- Mentor RNs in evidence based practice, quality improvement, problem-solving
- Attend meetings (quality improvement, interdisciplinary team meetings, discharge planning, Institutional Review Board, shared governance, leadership)
- Lead or participate in conducting research
- Ensure any unanticipated problems or adverse events are reported to the primary team, principal investigator, institutional review board
- Submit and follow up on events in Occurrence Reporting System



Day in the Life: NP

- Review charts of patients from last 24 hours
- Round with one medical team (e.g., stem cell transplant; critical care)
- Assess, diagnose, treat
- Communicate with consultants, Clinical Research Nurses, Research Nurse Coordinators, etc, and make changes to plans of care
- Update medical orders in Electronic Health Record
- Continue to monitor patient status, adjust orders as needed
- Attend noon conferences (grand rounds, journal club, morbidity & mortality, quality improvement)
- Provide handoff for evenings, nights, and weekends
- Ensure any unanticipated problems or adverse events are reported to the primary team, principal investigator, institutional review board
- Submit and follow up on events in Occurrence Reporting System



Case Study 1: Clinical Research Setting

- CA is a 22 y/o female with aplastic anemia admitted two months ago
- Enrolled in phase I clinical trial (exhausted standard therapies in academic medical center settings)
- Day 5 after receiving stem cell transplant
- Pancytopenic
- Pain & Palliative Care Service consulted for symptom management, social support
 - Main symptoms: bleeding, pain, mucositis
 - Hobbies: movies, crafts, pets
 - Psychosocial: Mother at bedside, lives out of state; sister unable to visit; no health insurance; completed high school
 - Spiritual/existential: grew up Christian, prayer very important



Case Study 1: Clinical Research Setting

- Pain & Palliative Care Service NP
 - Daily: visit patient and family, assess symptoms & make treatment recommendations (adjustments in pain medication regimen), communicate with primary team (who orders medications in EHR) and nurses, provide support to patient & family
 - Engage with pastoral care, recreation therapy, social work, recreation therapy
- Oncology CNS
 - Attend daily rounds, assess symptoms and nursing care needs, communicate with RN (falls risk status, pressure injury prevention, education needs for patient & family, specific unique research therapies)



Clinical Research Environment: General Themes

- Younger population
- First in human trials with unknown s/e
- Longer length of stay
- International status
- PPCS: add extra layer of support to ensure high quality of life of patients
- Highly complex cases
- Risk of therapeutic misconception
- Manage both clinical and research goals



Case Study 2: Veterans Affairs Medical Center Setting

- SP is a 68 y/o Vietnam Veteran admitted 3 days ago with increasing SOB, DOE, pain. H/o stage 4 lung cancer, smoking (50-pack year)
- Palliative Care Team consulted by primary medical team for symptom management, goals of care discussions
- Main symptoms: SOB, DOE, pain
- Psychosocial: 35 y/o daughter at bedside, patient lives with her locally
- Spiritual/Existential: religion is not important; survival guilt; regretful about smoking
- GOC Discussions:
 - What have the doctors been telling you?
 - If information about your prognosis is available, would you like to know?
 - What is most important to you right now? For the future?
 - What brings meaning to your life? Purpose?



Case Study 2: Veterans Affairs Medical Center Setting

- Palliative Care Team NP
 - Lead GOC discussions with patient, daughter
 - Communicate goals to medical team, nurse
 - Incorporate goals into discharge planning
 - Match meaning/purpose to plan of care
- Oncology CNS
 - Serve as clinical expert available to nurse when Patient Controlled Analgesia pump initiated for pain and symptom management
 - Conduct audits for quality improvement effort on pain reassessment following intervention



Resources

- APRN Consensus Model
 - <https://www.ncsbn.org/736.htm>
 - <http://www.nursecredentialing.org/Certification/APRNCorner>
- National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
 - <http://www.nacns.org/>
- American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
 - <https://www.aanp.org/>
- International Association of Clinical Research Nurses
 - <http://iacrn.memberlodge.org/>
- Advanced Oncology Certified CNS, NP
 - <http://www.oncc.org/certifications/advanced-oncology-certified-clinical-nurse-specialist-aocns>
 - <http://www.oncc.org/certifications/advanced-oncology-certified-nurse-practitioner-aocnp>

