Press Release

19 Jan 2016

Major new report on General Practice Nursing published

The Queen’s Nursing Institute (QNI) today launches a major new report on the General Practice Nursing profession.

The report is based on an online survey completed by over 3400 General Practice Nurses (GPNs) during 2015. The report, ‘General Practice Nursing in the 21st Century: A Time of Opportunity’ summaries some of the key challenges affecting the profession today. It is the largest and most up to date survey of GPNs, and the first carried out by the community nursing charity.

Dr Crystal Oldman, QNI Chief Executive commented: ‘This survey validates the role of the General Practice Nurse and the support provided by nurses in General Practice at every point during a person’s life, from infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood, to middle and older age. They are a vital part of the healthcare system in every part of the UK.

‘The findings of the survey indicate some major challenges and opportunities which need to be addressed. The role of nurses in General Practice is expanding rapidly, and many of today’s nurses are now undertaking roles traditionally the reserve of GPs. There is a huge opportunity for increased investment in the General Practice Nurse workforce, to build the capacity of primary care, move more care to the community and closer to people’s own homes, and ease the pressures on A&E.

‘The survey findings will be useful to policy makers and workforce planners as they explore new models of care and meet the challenges of an older population with multiple and complex healthcare needs. The number of nurses planning to retire should be of major concern and we need to ensure that enough nurses are attracted to the profession so that patients can continue to receive high quality nursing care for themselves and their families when they attend the GP’s surgery.’

Headline findings of the survey:

Workforce
33.4% of General Practice Nurses are due to retire by 2020
Men are under-represented, comprising only 2.0% of the General Practice Nurse workforce
43.1% did not feel their nursing team has the right number of appropriately qualified and trained staff to meet the needs of patients
At the time of the survey, 78.8% had considered preparation for NMC re-validation

Education
53.0% reported that their employer always supports their professional development
10.6% hold an NMC recordable specialist practice qualification in General Practice Nursing
32.6% of General Practice Nurses are independent prescribers
Just 27.0% of the employers offered placements for pre-registration nursing students, compared to 61.5% offering placements to medical students
Employment
22.8% of nurses working in General Practice have two jobs.
32.6% of General Practice Nurses reported working evening sessions (after 6pm) and 18.5% work weekends.
Over 38.3% indicated that they undertook visits to patients at home.
Only 35% felt that their salary reflected their role within the practice.
Salary and other terms and conditions such as annual leave entitlement vary widely.

The QNI is developing a range of resources to support nurses working in General Practice. On 19 January it will launch a free online learning resource to support nurses who are new to General Practice, ‘Transition to General Practice Nursing’ based on the knowledge and expertise of nurses and educators working in the profession.

During 2016 the charity will also work with QNI Scotland to produce new Voluntary Standards for General Practice Nurse Education and Practice, which will enhance the existing Nursing and Midwifery Council specialist practice standards for General Practice Nursing.

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Notes: The full report can be downloaded from the QNI’s website at: http://www.qni.org.uk/campaigns/general_practice_nurse_survey
The QNI is a charity founded in 1887 and originally trained District Nurses to treat patients in their own homes. Today it offers a wide range of support to all nurses who work in the community, through financial assistance and scholarships, policy, campaigns, events and publications. We believe that high quality nursing should be available for everyone, where and when they need it.

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