A case study of the development of a clinical academic nurse practitioner role

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Plan

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Background to the case study

• I was awarded a Royal College of Nursing Trevor Clay Major Scholarship in 2001 on the basis of my innovative application proposal for the creation of an advanced nurse practitioner role combining education, practice, and research functions.

• At this point in my nursing career I had been a registered nurse for 10 years and I felt a call to work in an academic role yet I did not want to relinquish my clinical practice role.
Educational preparation

• The Trevor Clay Major Scholarship enabled me to undertake a part-time MSc Nursing at City University, London, following the Advanced Nurse Practitioner pathway.

• I combined this study with my work as a nurse practitioner at a NHS Walk-in Centre.
Transition to a clinical academic role

• By summer 2003 I had completed the taught component of my MSc degree and I started my dissertation research.
• At the same time a part-time senior lecturer-nurse practitioner post was advertised at London South Bank University.
Transition to clinical academic role

• I was appointed to this role as a 0.6 (3 days per week) post in December 2003.
• I combined this role with my continuing work as a nurse practitioner in clinical practice for 2 days per week.
Clinical academic duties and responsibilities

• Unit Leader for LSBU clinical examination and applied research units.
• Deputy Course Director for BSc Nurse Practitioner.
• Joint co-ordinator of advanced nursing OSCEs.
Clinical academic duties and responsibilities

• MSc Nurse Practitioner dissertation supervision.
• Deputy Chair of LSBU Faculty of Health & Social Care Research Ethics Committee.
• Contributor to non-medical prescribing programme.
Clinical academic duties and responsibilities

• I work 2 days (19 hours) per week in practice.
• Currently working in a nurse practitioner-led general practice clinic as a nurse practitioner seeing patients presenting with both acute and ongoing problems.
Practical arrangements for clinical academia

• I have 2 discrete, but complementary part-time jobs.
• I have 2 separate salaries, 2 pension schemes, and 2 tax/NI deductions.
• I also have 2 separate pro-rata annual leave entitlements.
Practical arrangements for clinical academia

• 2 line managers to liaise with.
• 2 diaries to co-ordinate.
• 2 sets of email to check.
Is the extra hassle worth it?

Advantages:
1. Able to bring recent case examples to class.
2. Current experience of using the clinical skills I teach.
4. Credibility with students.
5. Direct awareness of contemporary issues in everyday clinical practice.
Is the extra hassle worth it?

Disadvantages:
1. The joint role co-ordination can be difficult and is more stressful than having just one job.
2. Different levels of remuneration between the two jobs.
3. No ‘official’ recognition of the role within the university.
4. Sometimes having a sense of never quite being on ‘top of things’.
5. Striking the correct balance of commitment between the roles.
Evolution of nursing clinical academia

• Disparity between nursing as a practice-based discipline and its senior representatives most often having no current clinical involvement.

• This is in contrast to the medical model of joint clinical academic/managerial appointments at senior levels.
Evolution of nursing clinical academia

- In the context of the Modernising Nursing Careers (2006) initiative, the United Kingdom Clinical Research Collaboration (UKCRC) published recommendations in 2007 on careers in clinical research for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals.
UKCRC (2007) policy initiative

• A clinical academic educational and training framework focused at 4 levels.
  1. Masters in Research or Masters in Clinical Research
  2. Doctorate Research (not Professional Doctorate)
  3. Clinical Lectureship
  4. Senior Academic Clinical Lectureship
Proposed Clinical Academic Nursing Training Pathway

All Registered Nurses

- Qualified non-graduate nurses
- Nurses working in Clinical Research Environment
- Masters Level
- Doctoral Level
- Post Doctoral Level
- Senior Clinical Academic Nurse

Training Opportunities:
- Exposure to research in clinical practice
- Training programmes provided by networks & clinical research facilities etc.

Source: UK Clinical Research Collaboration
Why support the development of clinical academics in nursing?

1. Recent emphasis at a national level on the need for translational, applied, patient-focused research.
2. It is hoped that the opportunity to simultaneously combine practice with an academic role will lead to the generation of clinically focused and clinically informed research questions, which will in turn enhance the potential for nursing research to directly inform practice.
3. Clinical academic nurses will be a source of research and clinical credibility to qualified nurses in practice settings and act as role models for future clinical academics.
What has actually happened so far?

- **NIHR Clinical Academic Training Pathway for Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health Professions: 2009 NIHR Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship.**
- 15 Fellowships were awarded, 3 to nurses, the rest to allied health professionals.
Examples of Doctoral Fellowships

• ‘The development of an intervention of follow up care for patients with inflammatory bowel disease’. (Nursing)

• ‘Predictors of long term functional capacity in patients recovering from critical illness in ICU’. (Physiotherapy)

• The epidemiology, aetiology and clinical importance of forefoot bursae in patients with rheumatoid arthritis’. (Podiatry)
My unsuccessful Fellowship application / future PhD

- ‘A comparative case study of nurse practitioner consultations in primary care’.
- My research aim is to explore the links between patients' expectations, nurse practitioner-patient communication, and nurse practitioner educational preparation, in relation to patient satisfaction, enablement, and treatment adherence.
- I hope to be supported by the research mentorship scheme of The Academy of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting Research.
Looking towards the future

• Hopefully more nurses will be more successful in applying for Doctoral Research Fellowships.
• Clinical academic roles in nursing education will become the norm, rather than exception.
• I very much hope that nurse practitioners with their current examples of clinical academic working will be pioneers in this field.
Contact details / Further reading

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Websites:
- www.ukcrc.org.uk
- www.nihrtcc.nhs.uk
- www.researchacademy.co.uk