

**Awareness and Establishment of Clinical Nutrition Nurse Specialists and Home PN Centre's in Melbourne, Australia: Empowering Clinical Nurse Specialists to undertake a Fellowship**

**Project team** Naomi Rogers Clinical Nutrition Nurse Specialist

**Contact** naomi.rogers@uhb.nhs.uk



**Description of the initiative**

**Background/Context**

Intestinal failure (IF) is described as the inability to absorb nutrients, water and electrolytes leading to the need for intravenous therapy. Home parenteral nutrition (HPN) is needed for patients with acute or chronic IF.

The nutrition nurse specialist (NNS) is integral to a wider multidisciplinary team including consultant gastroenterologists, dietitians, clinical psychologists and pharmacists. The NNS is responsible for the management of patients with complex nutritional requirements or those who need artificial nutritional support. A nutrition support team (NST) is recommended by several national bodies. In turn this has been shown to reduce costs and help ensure patients receive appropriate nutritional support.

**Rationale for the initiative**

It is commonplace for doctors to undertake clinical fellowships, particularly those in surgical subspecialties. There is little funding and opportunities for clinical nurse specialists to practice in their area abroad and it is rarely funded. There is also little research on the benefits to NNS undertaking a fellowship. During discussions with HPN Centre's in Melbourne it became clear that the role of the NNS is not widely recognised even though it is recommended by several national bodies including National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2017) in the UK and the American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (ASPEN). This project will aim to increase the awareness of the educational benefits of a nutrition nurse fellowship and influence national nutrition policy. As a NNS I will be undertaking observational practice at two National HPN Centres in Melbourne, Australia. This project will aim to compare NST's abroad, identify knowledge gaps and educational benefits to improve nutritional provision

**Objectives and scope**

- 1) To identify benefits and limitations of NHS and private care in the context of Home PN
- 2) Identify if the role of the NNS is well recognised in Australia
- 3) Compare National HPN frameworks and Nutrition Support activity such as, nutrition steering committee
- 4) Identify knowledge gaps and educational benefits in working with NST's abroad

**Planned activities & deliverables**

**Outline steps to be taken**

- 1) Evaluate current nutritional knowledge and education in Melbourne, Australia
- 2) Identify similarities and gaps in nutritional provision
- 3) Analyse the impact and examine the educational benefits of a NNS undertaking a fellowship

**What are the concrete deliverables of the project?**

- 1) Evidence of improved patient outcomes
- 2) Improving health economic benefits
- 3) Advance nutritional care in clinical practice

**What achievements are possible in the next 12-24months?**

2024-2025: Data collection and analysis

2025- 2026: Observational practice at two National Home PN Centres in Melbourne

**Resources & enablers**

**Describe personnel, financial needs**

40,000 euros are requested for the duration of the project to enable time spent with two National Home PN Centres as they are unable to fund a position for the educational research project.

**Specify how the grant will be spent**

As the position is not funded time will be spent undertaking observational practice with the two NST's, identifying the structure of the team and team demographics, data collection, researching and comparing national nutritional frameworks. This will help identify knowledge gaps and increase awareness of the importance of NNS working abroad with NST's to positively impact clinical nutritional practice.

**What factors will make it successful?**

The involvement of two National HPN hospitals in Melbourne, Australia over the course of 2025-2026.

**Results/outcomes & expected impact**

**• How will the findings be implemented?**

Implementation of NNS's undertaking educational research with NST's abroad will be recommended as a standard procedure to improve nutritional knowledge. It will also be encouraged as part of education in other clinical nurse specialities.

**• How will this project advance patient care / contribute to optimal nutritional care?**

It will aim to identify strategies to implement and advance nutritional care in clinical practice. The outcome of this research project will be freely available to all healthcare professionals who are wanting to undertake time working abroad within their clinical speciality to help prioritise nutritional patient care.

**• What makes the project innovative?**

There is little educational knowledge and research on the benefits of working abroad at Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) level and there is minimal funding to support CNS'. This fellowship and research project will influence nutritional policy, improve the structure of the NST, identify historical gaps, education and research. In turn this will enable leadership and demonstrate health economic benefits.

**Will the project be likely to influence national nutrition policy?**

I plan to disseminate the final findings to other CNS's and NST's at National Conferences, official societies of clinical nutrition and enteral and parenteral homecare companies. This project will aim to start discussions on national recommendations for Nutrition Nurse's gaining work experience abroad with NST's. It will also encourage NST's abroad to review their national nutritional policies and structure of the team.

**Is the project transferable to other settings / countries?**

This approach could be adopted in other CNS areas where there is the evidence of knowledge gaps and educational initiatives.



**Please tick to confirm the PEN letter of endorsement is attached.  
Incomplete submissions will not be considered.**

