

# Practice Standards for Nurse Continence Specialists

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## Background:

In 2000, the Continence Nurses Society Australia (CoNSA) commissioned the development and validation of a suite of competency standards for nurses specialising in continence promotion and the management of incontinence. The resultant document was titled 'Australian Nurses for Continence Competency Standards for Continence Nurse Advisors'. In 2015, the CoNSA Management Committee initiated a project to review and revise these standards for practice.

## Aim:

The aim of the project was to revise and seek structured feedback from CoNSA membership on the relevance of the 'Practice Standards for Nurse Continence Specialists' draft document.

## Methods:

The project was undertaken in two interrelated stages.

**Stage 1:** Stage one commenced in 2015 with ethics approval from Deakin University.

- A written questionnaire was constructed with general demographic questions and a comments section to determine relevance of each item in the first draft standards document.
- A purposive sample of RNs was recruited during attendance at a workshop convened by the research team at the 2015 Continence Foundation of Australia, 24th National Conference on Incontinence.

First draft revised *Practice Standards* document was updated to reflect the 2006 NMBA 'National RN Competency Standards'<sup>1</sup>

Purposive sample of workshop participants (n=33) group work & individual responses

Analyse quantitative & qualitative data

Second draft revised *Practice Standards* document

## Methods (cont.):

**Stage 2:** Stage two commenced in January 2017 with ethics approval from Alfred Health.

- An on-line questionnaire was developed for participants to indicate their level of agreement with the third draft which included the new NMBA 'RN Practice Standards'<sup>2</sup> and the application of the standards to continence nursing practice.

Second draft *Practice Standards* document was updated to reflect the 2016 NMBA RN Practice Standards<sup>2</sup> & international developments in the role<sup>3,4</sup>

Third draft document emailed to all CoNSA members (n=287) with an on-line survey

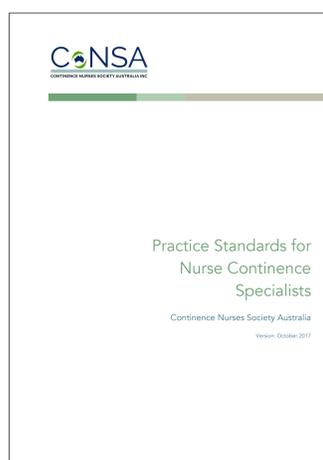
Analyse quantitative & qualitative data

Fourth and final draft revised *Practice Standards* document

## Results:

### Stage 1:

- The questionnaire was completed by 33 participants.
- The mean age was 53.5 years, with an average of 28.6 years since being qualified as a registered nurse, and 15 years of experience in continence nursing practice.
- Most (66.7%) came from Victoria, 16.7% from South Australia, 8.3% from NSW and 8.3% from Tasmania.
- Almost 90% of respondents indicated the standards were written in a way that was simple, straightforward, and relevant; however, there were many suggestions for improvements.



## Results (cont.):

### Stage 2:

- One hundred and sixty-five CoNSA members (57%) reviewed the revised document and completed the on-line questionnaire.
- Levels of agreement with all items were very high (97-100%).
- The number of qualitative responses per questionnaire varied from 1-10.

CoNSA

STANDARD 1: Thinks critically and analyses clinical practice  
 The NCS uses a variety of thinking strategies and the best available evidence in making decisions and providing safe, quality nursing practice within person-centered and evidence-based frameworks.

NMBA practice standard	Application of NMBA standards to continence nursing practice
1.1 Accesses, analyses, and uses the best available evidence, that includes research findings, for safe, quality practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses research appraisal skills to assess and critique research literature and applies this knowledge to improve continence nursing practice.</li> <li>• Demonstrates an understanding of national and international trends in bladder, bowel and/or floor research and knowledge.</li> </ul>
1.2 Develops practice through reflection on experience, knowledge, actions, feelings and beliefs to identify how these shape practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops and implements processes for critical self-reflection and for obtaining client, peer and interdisciplinary feedback on all aspects of continence nursing practice.</li> <li>• Participates constructively in performance review processes to optimise continence nursing skills and address learning.</li> </ul>
1.3 Respects all cultures and experiences, which includes responding to the role of family and community that underpin the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people of other cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides culturally appropriate continence care that demonstrates respect and understanding of people's culture, beliefs and preferences about the assessment and treatment of their bowel, bladder and/or pelvic floor dysfunction.</li> </ul>
1.4 Complies with legislation, regulations, policies, guidelines and other standards or requirements relevant to the context of practice when making decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies legal and ethical decision-making in the planning and implementation of care for people with bladder, bowel and/or pelvic floor dysfunction.</li> <li>• Critically evaluates policies and guidelines that influence continence promotion, assessment, care and management.</li> </ul>
1.5 Uses ethical frameworks when making decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentors other nurses and health professionals in the application of specific standards, guidelines, regulations and/or legislation with a focus on continence-related health issues.</li> </ul>
1.6 Maintains accurate, comprehensive and timely documentation of assessments, planning, decision-making, actions and evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes the accurate and comprehensive exchange of information between multidisciplinary health care team members regarding all aspects of a person's continence care plan.</li> </ul>
1.7 Contributes to quality improvement and relevant research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies, designs and participates in research and quality improvement activities related to continence care to develop new knowledge and skills or evaluate service delivery according to level of knowledge, skill and expertise.</li> </ul>

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## Summary:

This poster describes an iterative approach to reach consensus about standards for Nurse Continence Specialists' practice in Australia. The standards align with the updated *NMBA RN Standards for Practice*<sup>2</sup>. They apply to Australian RNs who have a defined responsibility for the promotion, assessment, management and education related to the care of people who have bladder, bowel and/or pelvic floor dysfunction and/or continence health issues.

The CoNSA *Practice Standards for Nurse Continence Specialists* will serve a range of purposes, including: (i) for future credentialing or benchmarking; (ii) to inform education and training (curriculum development, teaching, re-education, new graduate training); (iii) for workplace management (position description, career progression), and (v) to inform and/or improve practice.

## References:

1. Nursing & Midwifery Board of Australia. (2006). *National competency standards for the Registered Nurse*. Available at: <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Professional-standards.aspx>.
2. Nursing & Midwifery Board of Australia. (2016). *Registered Nurse standards for practice*. Available at: <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Documents/standards.aspx?record=WD16%2F192524&dbid=APR&sum=R5Prr8yVpb9bJvtpTR8y%3d%3d>
3. Wagg, A., Newman, D.K., Leichsenring, K. & van Houten, P. (2014). Developing an internationally applicable service specification for continence care: Systematic review, evidence and expert consensus. *PLoS ONE*, 9(8), e104129 1-11
4. Paterson, J., Ostaszkiwicz, J., Suyasa, I. G. P. D., Skelly, J., & Bellefeuille, L. (2016). Development and validation of the role profile of the Nurse Continence Specialist: A project of the International Continence Society. *IJCOCN*, 43(6), 641-647