

---

## Abstract

Advanced Nursing Practice has become a well-established discipline internationally with an increasing presence noted in both developed and developing countries. This increased visibility places the evolving nature of ANP at a turning point. As an emerging and vital field of nursing in the healthcare workforce a look to the future implies a need to strengthen the focus on understanding the role and practice level of the advanced practice nurse. In addition, it is up to the profession to meet diverse worldwide healthcare challenges by developing pathways and services corresponding to countries' healthcare needs and resources. This chapter discusses aspects of preparing for a future healthcare workforce that increasingly includes advanced practice nurses providing care and healthcare services. Proposed topics to strengthen the international advanced nursing practice agenda are identified. Topics for the future include consensus building on terminology relevant to advanced nursing practice, workforce planning when integrating the levels of advanced nursing practice, capacity building by removing barriers to practice and enhancing the research agenda.

---

## Keywords

Consensus • Terminology • Capacity building • Healthcare workforce • Removing barriers

Advanced Nursing Practice (ANP) has become a well-established discipline internationally with an increasing presence noted in both developed and developing countries. This increased visibility places the evolving nature of ANP at a turning point. As an emerging and vital field of nursing in the healthcare workforce a look to the future implies a need to strengthen the focus on understanding the role or level of the advanced practice nurse (APN). In addition, it is up to the profession to meet diverse worldwide healthcare challenges by developing pathways and services corresponding to countries' healthcare needs and resources. This chapter discusses aspects of preparing for a future healthcare workforce that increasingly includes

APNs providing care and healthcare services. Proposed topics to strengthen the international ANP agenda are identified. Topics for the future include consensus building on terminology relevant to ANP, workforce planning when integrating the levels of APN practice, capacity building by removing barriers to the full potential of advanced nursing practice and enhancing the research agenda.

---

## **10.1 National and International Organizational Views for the Future**

The Institute of Medicine in the United States collaborated with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to conduct an investigation of the healthcare concerns of the country and the situation of nursing within the healthcare workforce. The resultant report [6] calls on nursing, individually and as a profession, to transform itself into a relevant force for solutions to meet the future healthcare needs of diverse populations. The report emphasized that nurses must be allowed to practice in ways that are consistent with their professional education and that the education they receive must better prepare them to deliver patient-centered, equitable, safe, high quality healthcare services. In referring specifically to APNs, a top recommendation is to remove scope of practice barriers to allow APNs to practice to the full extent of their education. In addition, the report concluded that the power for healthcare reform and change rests not only with nurses but also with governments, healthcare institutions, professional organizations, researchers, citizen advocacy groups, and other healthcare professionals.

The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes that nursing and midwifery delivery of services take place in partnership with other professionals and that future strategies should incorporate interprofessional education and collaborative practice. WHO also notes that removing barriers to practice and education can help nurses and midwives practice to the full extent of their education and training in order to address contemporary health challenges. Governments and relevant stakeholders should ensure that the nursing and midwifery workforce is appropriately prepared and enabled to practice to their full scope. It is on this platform that the WHO Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery (SDNM) 2016–2020 is built [13]. Based on work done for previous SDNMs 2002–2008 and 2011–2015, these recommendations provide policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders at every level of the healthcare system with strategic directions for broad-based, collaborative action to enhance the capacity of nurses and midwives.

The strategic intent of the International Council of Nurses (ICN) 2014–2018 is to enhance the health of individuals, populations, and societies by (1) championing the contribution and image of nurses worldwide, (2) advocating for nurses at all levels, (3) advancing the nursing profession, and (4) influencing health, social, economic, and education policy [5]. As a federation of more than 130 national nursing associations, ICN represents more than 16 million nurses worldwide. The ever-increasing networks and global links provided by ICN reinforce the importance of connections with national, regional, and international nursing and nonnursing

organizations. Building positive relationships internationally helps shape an agenda for the future of nursing including advanced nursing practice. As has been mentioned in earlier chapters, ICN has been instrumental in actively supporting and promoting an increased visibility for APN roles (see Chap. 2 for further discussion on international support for ANP and the ICN APN Network).

The attention by national and international organizations highlighting nursings' capacity to contribute to worldwide healthcare is noteworthy. However, this wide-ranging awareness mandates translation into a strategic agenda along with a call for APNs to step forward in a more influential and proactive manner. To facilitate this dialogue and promote action, the following sections provide topics to consider for the future.

---

## 10.2 Consensus Building Around Terminology

Literature and previous chapters in this monograph have underscored the substantial uncertainty, confusion, and ambiguity surrounding many features of ANP. The vagueness and lack of clarity has an effect on identification of titles, role definition, scopes of practice, standards for education, and policies meant to address APN practice. In addition, this uncertainty leads to a level of misunderstanding as to the APN role and its potential in the healthcare workforce. Lack of comprehension exists not only in geographical regions and from country to country but within countries as individuals and diverse entities attempt to interpret what advanced nursing or the advancement of nursing means in the provision of healthcare services. The dissimilarities are incompatible with a perspective that a systematic approach to ANP development internationally would be helpful, especially to those country initiatives that are in their infancy.

In an effort to provide a benchmark for international dialogue ICN has provided an APN definition, scope of practice, and characteristics [3,4]. Emphasizing that role development is sensitive to country context, this point of reference can be utilized by governments, institutions, countries, and regions in the process of realizing the complexities of ANP. The ICN definition and profile of ANP can be found in Chap. 1 (see also Sect. 1.1.3 for assumptions that form the foundation for ANP wherever nursing exists). In addition, Chap. 3 provides a discussion of titles, role characteristics, scope of practice, and competencies. Illustrations in Chap. 2 offer examples of how specific countries approached issues associated with terminology and definitions. A continued approach to some level of consensus building is imperative for the future.

As evidenced in the literature and this publication, the concept of consensus building is fraught with difficulties. The challenge is to identify effective and sustainable mechanisms that encourage periodic updating of an international focus around core components of the APN role and advanced level of practice. As a move to consensus building evolves, there is a need to acknowledge the diversity in nursing practice worldwide that has contributed and continues to contribute to a global identity for advanced nursing practice.

### **10.3 Integrating Advanced Nursing Practice into Healthcare Systems**

As healthcare planners, policymakers, and administrators face the escalating challenges of providing cost-effective, accessible healthcare services, they are pursuing options for not only expanding hospital-based care but also strategies for becoming less reliant on the hospital sector. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, nurses and in particular nurses in advanced levels of practice and roles are in an ideal position to participate in reshaping healthcare strategies. This participation will likely include APNs as first point of contact in primary care, coordinating and managing care for chronic conditions and home care as well as establishing themselves as nurse entrepreneurs leading to a greater degree of independence in practice.

As evidenced in country scenarios and profiles in Chap. 2, healthcare reform and/or improved utilization of the nursing workforce has caught the attention of ministries of health and healthcare planners. Ideally, to approach workforce planning and inclusion of APN roles, a regulatory/legislative framework that includes title protection, scope of practice, and agreed to standards for education and practice needs to be in place. Planning and assessment of financial and human resources that coincide with establishing a framework can ensure that the APN will become not only successful but also a sustainable healthcare provider for the future. Examples of frameworks to review can be found in Chap. 5. See Chap. 6 for an in-depth discussion of professional regulation relevant to ANP.

National healthcare policies and priorities, the maturity of the nursing profession, access and basic preparation for advanced education, social trends, as well as funding sources will determine the rate or possibility of progression toward ANP. Research that provides evidence of the effectiveness of APNs in meeting health systems goals and champions that advocate for the creation of clinical positions as part of career pathways can strengthen the appeal for inclusion of APN roles [10].

---

### **10.4 Capacity Building**

The increase in literature and publications associated with ANP implies an enthusiasm for capacity building activities related to nursing worldwide. Challenges and limitations have been discussed in earlier chapters. At times there is a lag between interest in implementing APN roles and establishing the foundation and processes that support such a change in the capacity of nurses to gain additional education plus function at a new level of nursing practice. However, to be clearly understood, capacity building refers not only to the individual but also to strengthening links and development in healthcare environments and within institutions to establish an environment conducive to advanced nursing practice. Capacity building optimally increases the range of people, organizations, and decision makers with the ability to identify concerns or problematic issues and develop solutions and subsequent actions.

For a strategic approach and a futuristic agenda, APNs and representatives of the ANP agenda must gain an understanding of the key roles of leaders within and outside of nursing as well as the nuances and complexities of making policy changes to remove regulatory and organizational obstructions in order to integrate APNs into the healthcare workforce. Capacity building for the future APN must include increasing the capacity to not only understand policy and the policy process but also attain the capability to produce appropriate, effective, sustainable strategies for implementing the policies for future healthcare professionals and systems.

An example of global nursing capacity building is provided by ICAP (access <http://icap.columbia.edu/>) with the implementation of the Global Nurse Capacity Building Program (GNCBP). Its aims are to improve population health by fostering individuals, institutions, and networks to expand, enhance, and sustain the nursing and midwifery workforce by achieving three objectives:

- Improve the quantity, quality, and relevance of nurses and midwives to address essential population-based healthcare needs, including HIV and other life-threatening conditions
- Identify, evaluate, and disseminate innovative human resource for health models and practices that are generalizable for national scale-up of nursing and midwifery education
- Build local and regional partnerships to provide technical and capacity building support for nursing and midwifery policy, regulatory and faculty development, curricula reform, continuing professional development and retention, and high impact nursing leadership

There appears to be a shortage of experienced, knowledgeable nurses capable of thinking and acting strategically and effectively in the policy and regulatory environment. The future for ANP requires increased capacity of nursing leaders to create sound models for APN practice and to set up APN services consistent with healthcare needs. This agenda item for the future invites the nursing profession to be both innovative and practical in participating in actions that increase the capacity of healthcare systems and the profession to promote ANP.

---

## 10.5 Additional Research

Although a core focus of ANP is clinical expertise, there is increasing emphasis on the development of a research component as a characteristic of ANP [1,7,9]. In addition, as mentioned earlier, as healthcare and reform in services evolves, the need to demonstrate the position and value of ANP is becoming increasingly important. In order to respond to the interest in clinical outcomes associated with APN services and confirm the diversity in APN roles, nurses practicing in advanced roles and advanced levels must develop a receptive attitude to the research process, participate in research, and document the research

findings. Readily available evidence supporting the role is increasingly important as key stakeholders, decision makers, managers, administrators, and other healthcare professionals request data clarifying the role and clinical outcomes [8]. (see Chap. 9 for further discussion of research and Sect. 9.2.1 for a description of The Canadian Centre for Advanced Practice Nursing Research (CCAPNR)).

As a unique and new professional in the healthcare workforce, the APN is increasingly called upon to portray a clear image of professional nursing as it is exhibited at an advanced level of practice. Not only is evidence and data helpful, but there is also a need to focus on aspects specific to APN practice rather than continually comparing APN practice to medical care. Outcomes and contributions of ANP need to be specifically attributed to the APN role to enhance the accuracy of research that is conducted [8]. All too often the impact of APNs is invisible in medically driven healthcare systems that lack ANP-sensitive indicators [1]. In the future, confirming the value ANP brings to healthcare will require specific and accurate appraisal of the healthcare delivery systems, settings, and structure in which they practice.

However, evidence in itself is not enough. As APNs increasingly participate in research, they will also be called upon to assess the quality of the research conducted and translate findings into practice. Even though overall research reporting on the impact of ANP is favorable, Kleinpell and Alexandrov [8] point out the need to be cautious in reviewing results as studies have the potential for respondent bias, questionable substantiation of what is reported and participants included in studies that are unfamiliar with the role and services being studied. In addition, if the APN of the future is expected to include research as a role component in clinical practice, they will be expected to optimally use and implement the evidence. Healthcare systems and employers will need to acknowledge that this is a legitimate component of the APN role and make provision accordingly, e.g., resources, access to research funding, recognition that research is part of the role, and time to conduct research projects (see Chap. 9 – Sect. 9.2.1 for a model of research mentorship). Gerrish et al [2] demonstrated that APNs are not only able to take up research but that they can be instrumental in “knowledge brokering” as a means of utilizing evidence in clinical settings with other nurses.

Even though international literature increasingly substantiates positive data supportive of ANP, the descriptions and evidence continue to mainly originate from developed countries and from those countries that have a longer history of success with APN roles. Chapter 2, in describing a growing presence of ANP, provides a glimpse of initiatives in their infancy from China, Kenya, Latin America, Oman, Pakistan, and South Africa; however, research describing the presence of ANP outside of developed countries is scarce. Future research that includes a broad spectrum of countries has the potential of not only documenting outcomes but also comparing differences and similarities as to the motivation, development, and critical strategies relevant to advanced nursing roles. Research based on diverse development may

confirm or reject the notion of possible consensus building around ANP as mentioned earlier in Sect. 10.2.

---

### Conclusion

The prospects for advanced nursing practice to flourish in the future in diverse capacities worldwide are encouraging. This chapter discusses topics that require attention as this trend in professional nursing evolves. With increased attention from national and international organizations, ANP representatives and leaders will be called upon to a greater extent to provide a clearer profile of the ANP concept and its value to healthcare systems. From hospital-based positions to first point of service in primary care, evidence of practice outcomes and worth in healthcare provision continues to be needed to build a strong case supportive of the distinctive nature of ANP. Gaps in accessible education and opportunity for career progression exist thus reinforcing the urgent nature for capacity building. Finally, policies that limit and block APNs from practicing to their full potential require amendment and alteration. The agenda for the future is not only a challenge to forward thinking for nursing leaders but to others who acknowledge and support this dynamic change for the nursing profession.

---

### References

1. Flanagan JM, Jones DA, Harris A (2013) Advanced practice registered nurses: accomplishments, trends, and future developments. In: Joel LA (ed) *Advanced practice nursing: essentials for role development*, 3rd edn. FA Davis, Philadelphia, pp 429–438
2. Gerrish K, McDonnell A, Nolan M, Guillaume L, Kirshbaum M, Tod A (2011) Factors influencing advanced practice nurses' ability to promote evidence-based practice among frontline nurses. *Worldviews Evid Based Nurs* 67(9):2004–2014. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.2011.05642.x
3. International Council of Nurses (ICN) (2002) Definition and characteristics of the role. <http://www.icn-apnetwork.org>. Accessed 19 Feb 2016
4. International Council of Nurses (ICN) (2008) The scope of practice, standards and competencies of the advanced practice nurse, ICN regulation series. International Council of Nurses, Geneva
5. International Council of Nurse (ICN) (2014–2018) [http://www.icn.ch/images/stories/documents/about/ICN\\_Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.icn.ch/images/stories/documents/about/ICN_Strategic_Plan.pdf). Accessed 15 May 2016
6. Institute of Medicine (IOM) (2011) *The future of nursing: leading change, advancing health*. The National Academies Press, Washington, DC
7. Kilpatrick K, Harbman P, Carter N, Martin-Misener R, Bryant-Lukosius D, Donald F, Kaasalainen S, Bourgeault I, DiCenso A (2010) The acute care nurse practitioner role in Canada. *Can J Nurs Leadersh* 23(Special Issue):115–139
8. Kleinpell R, Alexandrov AW (2014) Integrative review of outcomes and performance improvement research on advanced practice nursing. In: Hamric AB, Hanson CM, Tracy MF, O'Grady ET (eds) *Advanced practice nursing: an integrative approach*, 5th edn. Elsevier Saunders, St. Louis, pp 607–644
9. McGee P (2009) The future of advanced practice. In: McGee P (ed) *Advanced practice in nursing and the allied health professions*, 3rd edn. Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, pp 243–254

10. Schober M (2013) Factors influencing the development of advanced practice nursing in Singapore. Doctoral thesis, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield Hallam University archives. <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/7799/17>. Accessed May 2016
11. Villeneuve M, MacDonald J (2006) Toward 2020: visions for nursing. Canadian Nurses Association, Ottawa
12. World Health Organization (WHO) (2010) Strategic directions for strengthening nursing and midwifery services 2011–2015. WHO, Geneva. Access from [http://www.who.int/hrh/nursing\\_midwifery/en/](http://www.who.int/hrh/nursing_midwifery/en/)
13. World Health Organization (WHO) (2015) Strategic directions for strengthening nursing and midwifery services 2016–2020. WHO, Geneva. Access from [http://www.who.int/hrh/nursing\\_midwifery/en/](http://www.who.int/hrh/nursing_midwifery/en/)