

Walking research paths together: a story of nurse clinicians and nurse researchers

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The path between work practice environments and research environments is not always well-worn in the health sector, particularly in nursing. In Australia, a case study research project in a busy regional hospital has provided a way in to research for its clinical champions and improved academics' access to and knowledge of the hospital

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and its people. The project was sparked by concerns at the hospital that newly-registered nurses were leaving the profession soon after they entered it. Nursing managers approached the university to gather evidence and develop strategies. Case study was chosen as the most appropriate methodology to meet both the hospital's and the researchers' needs. Data were collected from participants (n=30) during focus groups and face-to-face interviews. Involvement of senior management helped to maximise response rates. Nurses were invited and encouraged to participate in the sessions during paid work time, contributing to a healthy 51.7 per cent response rate. The key themes identified during analysis were finding your place and support. Nurses talked often about the need to 'find a niche'. The research partnership resulted in ongoing practical and intellectual benefits for academics and clinical managers. One of the strategies developed by the study team - lunchtime leadership sessions - is now the subject of an action research project being led this time by the nurse manager in collaboration with university academics. The project, therefore, continues to build evidence and research capacity as well as strengthening pathways.