

iCAHE JC Critical Appraisal Summary

Journal Club Details

Date of submission	March 2012
Journal Club location	Modbury Hospital
JC Facilitator	Deb Harvey
JC Discipline	OT

Clinical Scenario

The number of allied health staff working in the acute care setting in different hospitals around Australia. We would like to know how this level of staffing impacts on the length of stay for patients.

- P Allied health staff working in the acute care setting in Australia
- I Allied health services
- C Acute care facilities in Australia
- O Length of stay/ satisfaction of patients

Article/Paper

Cartmill L, Comans T, Clark M, Ash S & Sheppard L (2012) Using staffing ratios for workplace planning: Evidence on nine allied health professions, *Human Resources for Health*, 10: 2

Please note: due to copyright regulations CAHE is unable to supply a copy of the critically appraised paper/article. If you are an employee of the South Australian government you can obtain a copy of articles from the [DOHSA librarian](#).

Article Methodology: Systematic Review

Returned JC on: 2012



CONTACTS
www.unisa.edu.au/cahe
 karen.grimmer-somers
[@unisa.edu.au](mailto:karen.grimmer-somers@unisa.edu.au)
 Telephone (08) 8302 2769
 Facsimile (08) 8302 2766

University of South Australia
 GPO Box 2471
 Adelaide SA 5001
 Australia

CRICOS Provider Number
 001218



University of
 South Australia



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Ques No.	Yes	Can't Tell	No	Comments
1	✓			<p>Did the review ask a clearly-focused question?</p> <p>Yes, the objective of this systematic review was to identify what workforce ratios have been used in nine allied health professions and to identify whether these measures would be useful for planning allied health workforce requirements.</p> <p><i>Population:</i> nine allied health professions identified included: audiology, dietetics and nutrition, exercise physiology, occupational therapy, podiatry, physiotherapy, psychology, social work, and speech pathology.</p>
2	✓			<p>Did the review include the right type of study?</p> <p>Yes, all articles which met the inclusion criteria were included. Articles were excluded if they were outside a developed world setting, conducted in a setting other than health care, were not in the English language, or were a paper concerning professions outside the nine identified allied health professions.</p> <p>The study design of all included studies is reported among other details including a quality appraisal score, country, setting and a description in Table 1 (Page 4).</p> <p>Is it worth continuing? YES the studies which have been included are relevant in addressing the study aims.</p>

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3	✓		<p>Did the reviewers try to identify all relevant studies? Yes, a thorough search strategy was used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The databases examined included: Medline, CINAHL, ABI/Inform, Apais Health, Business Source, Embase, Meditext, OT Seeker, Psychinfo, and Pedro. • Electronic searches were conducted of Australian Health Review, Cochrane Library Economic Evaluation Database, website of Public Health Research Unit for the United Kingdom National Health Service (NHS), and the Service Delivery and Organisation Programme of the National Institute for Health Research-a research institute associated with the NHS website for the Joanne Briggs Foundation. • Requests were made to the professional bodies of the nine professional associations in Australia for any written documentation on workplace ratios and their web-sites were checked for published information • A reference group for the project included six of the nine professional groups and members were asked to search informal and grey literature (e.g. government reports and profession specific reports) relevant to their profession • Manual searching of reference lists of key articles and items recommended by informal professional contacts and peers produced three additional relevant references
4	✓		<p>Did the reviewers assess the quality of the included studies? Yes, a version of the CriSTAL checklist for evaluating the quality of various research designs was used to appraise included papers for their quality.</p>
5			<p>If the results of the studies have been combined, was it reasonable to do so? Studies were summarised under the identified methods which were applied in developing the ratios, these included: consensus, experimental trial, current clinical practice and those developed using staff classifications. No meta-analysis was performed.</p>

6			<p>How are the results presented and what is the main result? The results were presented in text and using a figure and tables.</p> <p><i>Bottom line result:</i> Use of staffing ratios to determine appropriate staff numbers can be a useful tool to guide service planning and delivery with this tool previously successful when used in nursing, particularly in the acute care setting. The evidence for use of staffing ratios for allied health practitioners is scarce with only one study providing a link between staff FTEs and clinical outcomes.</p>
7		✓	<p>How precise are these results? Precision of results could not be determined based on the analysis done in this systematic review.</p>
8 9 10	Journal Club to answer		<p>Can the results be applied to the local population?</p> <p>Were all important outcomes considered?</p> <p>Should policy or practice change as a result of the evidence contained in this review?</p>

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