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Florence Nightingale Grants and Award Recipient Report

The Lung Cancer Nurse Specialist: co-designing the role with patients and carers

Receiving the Returned Sisters memorial Grant in 2017 has allowed me to progress with my research. My study is focussed upon optimising the health care experience of lung cancer patients in Tasmania. The impetus for the research was provided by my desire to provide exemplary nursing care to patients in my role as a lung cancer nurse specialist (LCNS) at the Royal Hobart Hospital. I want to improve the care patients with lung cancer receive. In addition I want to add to the body of knowledge surrounding the role of lung cancer nurse specialists to promote and facilitate provision of gold-standard nursing care. The study is being undertaken as the research component of a Professional Doctorate in Health (through the University of Tasmania).

The study is designed to firmly place lung cancer patients and their carers at the centre of their nursing care and reflects recognition of the patient as the expert in their care needs. The study is based upon a co-construction of the lung cancer nurse specialist role by patients with lung cancer and their carers.

After initially gaining ethics approval to use experience based co-design as a way of gathering data, I did not have any participants volunteer to take part. Feeling that the research question is important, I then changed my methodology to group concept mapping to allow participation to be easier for patients and their carers.

Group concept mapping is a practical participatory collaborative process; it uses a mixed methods approach. Qualitative techniques collect thoughts, knowledge and beliefs; these are then represented visually in a series of maps using quantitative methods. It values and pursues the expertise and experience of those that are most enmeshed in the phenomenon being studied (Kane & Rosas 2018). Group concept mapping allows participants to be involved at every step of the research process, data gathering is possible from diverse groups of people in many locations because it can be done via the internet.

The Returned Sisters memorial Grant has allowed me to purchase group concept mapping software to carry out this research. The change of methodology required a new ethics application and ethics approval was granted in June 2019. The research and data collection has now commenced and participants nationally are able to login in via the internet to take part.