

Policy Research Brief

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DESIGNING ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR GENOMICS-INFORMED ONCOLOGY NURSING: A COMPARATIVE CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL POLICY ANALYSIS [DESIGN: POLICY]

Lead researcher: Dr. Jacqueline Limoges, PhD, RN, Athabasca University

Lead policy maker: Dr. Don Flaming, PhD, RN, Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing

Lead knowledge user with relevant lived experience/expertise: Dr. Lorelei Newton, PhD, RN, Health care practitioner, Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology

Team members: Dr. Kathleen Leslie, Dr. April Pike, Dr. Lindsay Carlsson, Dr. Nicole Letourneau, Rebecca Puddester, Dr. Patrick Chiu, Andrea Gretchev, Dr. Kathleen Calzone, Dr. Emma Tonkin, Dr. Sarah Dewell, Dr. Ann Meyer

Research area studied: Health systems & policy

Keywords: Genomics, policy, oncology, nursing, workforce development

For more information, please contact Dr. Jacqueline Limoges, jacqueline.limoges@athabascau.ca

KEY MESSAGES

- Nurses are critical to meet the growing demand for genomic services.
- Enhancing the genomic literacy of oncology nurses is crucial to enable the safe and equitable integration of genomics-informed practices.
- Immediate action is needed to develop policy infrastructure to guide the integration of genomics in nursing education and practice.
- Collaboration with interprofessional partners is a priority to develop a nursing-focused position statement, competencies, and educational frameworks.
- Addressing policy gaps will ensure the Canadian population has timely access to genomics-informed nursing services, aligning with the quintuple aim.

Policy issue

Precision healthcare, including genomics, offers a cost-effective way to enhance cancer prevention, treatment, and health outcomes. As 44% of the healthcare workforce, nurses can significantly contribute to integrating genomics with proper knowledge and support. Nurses are vital for advancing precision healthcare, achieving the quintuple aim, and transforming health systems. This project developed evidence-based policy recommendations for CANO and CASN to facilitate the safe and equitable integration of genomics in oncology nursing.

Policy research approach

This study consisted of a comparative policy analysis of genomics nursing policies in the US and UK, a qualitative study with Canadian oncology nurses and patient representatives, a policy dialogue and workshop. An international, interdisciplinary committee of subject matter experts acted as consultants.



Policy research findings

- 1) Genomics nursing policy documents in the US and UK include position statements, competency statements, scope and standards of practice, and education frameworks that support integration.
- 2) Drivers that influenced genomics policy development in the UK and US included: sustained involvement from nursing leaders, health service organizations, and the government; nurses recognizing the necessity for comprehensive infrastructure to address gaps in knowledge and skills; and demand and expectations from the public.
- 3) Canadian nurses view policy documents as essential to guide practice.
- 4) Immediate action is needed to enhance nurses' genomic literacy and clarify nurses' roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities within interdisciplinary genomics services teams.
- 5) Policies should be developed in collaboration with interdisciplinary partners and existing policies should be leveraged to expedite development.
- 6) Recognition of genomic literacy by accrediting bodies can be leveraged to support education and clinical integration.
- 7) Government agencies should prioritize genomic nursing research and knowledge mobilization.

Evidence-informed policy options

- 1) Develop a joint position statement with CANO clarifying the role of oncology nurses in genomics-informed care.
- 2) Co-develop competencies and educational frameworks with CASN to guide nursing education, considering how existing policies from other jurisdictions can be adopted or modified to facilitate developing infrastructure for the Canadian context.
- 3) Create a strategic plan to encourage ongoing collaboration and sustainability of initiatives.

Implications for research, policy, and practice

Genomic nursing policy is urgently needed to ensure the nursing workforce provides the Canadian population with timely access to genomic services, aligning with the quintuple aim. Investment from funding bodies, government, and health organizations is crucial to integrate genomics into policy. Strong nursing leadership and advocacy are essential to galvanize action for accelerated genomics integration. Achieving this integration requires a harmonized interdisciplinary collaborative effort. Proactive measures are essential to ensure Canada remains a leader in healthcare service delivery and innovation.

OUTPUTS & PRODUCTS

Output 1: Phase one paper: a comparative policy analysis - <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.16099>

Output 2: Phase two paper: an interpretive descriptive study - <https://doi.org/10.1177/08445621241252615>

Output 3: Opinion Editorial: <https://www.healthing.ca/wellness/opinion/opinion-nurses-need-genetics-in-their-dna-to-improve-patient-care?>

