

The status and evolution of virtual nursing practice: A comparative case study in primary care

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Introduction

- **Virtual care (VC)** involves remote interactions between patients and providers using digital technology (e.g., telephone, video)
- VC can improve access and convenience, enhance continuity, and reduce healthcare costs in areas such as **primary care (PC)**
- PC is the delivery of day-to-day healthcare services by providers (e.g., physicians, nurses) in settings such as clinics and health centres
- **Research question:** What roles and responsibilities do nurses in PC carry out virtually, and what has influenced these roles across PC practice models?

Patient Engagement

Patients will assist with:

- **Preparing the study** by providing feedback on review and case study protocols (invited to be co-author);
- **Recruiting** individuals for the case study;
- **Analyzing and interpreting data** from the review and case study; and
- Developing material for conferences and publications to **share research findings**.

Methods

1) Scoping review

- Explore literature that discusses the roles of nurses in delivering VC in PC settings; and what PC environments (e.g., collaborative teams, physician-led clinics) support nurses in these roles
- Rural and urban comparisons will be made to see if nurses are involved in different capacities across regions
- We will include content related to nurse practitioners (NPs), registered nurses (RNs), and licensed practical nurses
- International literature will be included to compare what is known about virtual nursing practice in PC in Canada with other countries

2) Comparative case study

- Explore virtual roles of nurses in PC in Canadian provinces; identify the barriers/facilitators that influence nurse roles; and the influence of COVID-19
- Interviews and document review
- **Interviews will include:**
 - ✓ RNs and NPs in PC
 - ✓ Administrators in PC
 - ✓ Nurse regulators
 - ✓ Policymakers
- Across NL and Nova Scotia (NS)
- **Document review** will examine sources (e.g., policy, practice guidelines) that are relevant to PC nursing in NL and NS

Planned Knowledge Translation

1) Publications:

- Four (4) **manuscripts** (minimum) – Publish review and case study protocols, review findings, and case study findings in journals with global audiences (review protocol published in September 2022)

2) Conferences:

- Present findings alongside patient partners at conferences in Canada and globally to reach individuals, groups, and organizations who will use findings to promote change

3) Information webinars:

- Invite individuals from case study to join an **information webinar** (delivered by researchers and patient partners) to learn about project findings and encourage them to share findings through professional networks

Potential Impacts

Knowledge translation activities will lead to the following potential impacts:



Practice: Support and integrate nurses in VC within PC settings to **enhance access and quality** of PC in NL and NS



Policy: Outline how nurses can contribute to VC to inform policy development as VC evolves



Research: Support future research to expand upon VC-related knowledge in PC nursing research

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