Data, Advocacy and Policy: A Powerful Trio for Change

This issue brings us face to face with the leadership challenges we must address to navigate a future that – in many ways – is already here. It begins with a special focus on nursing data standards with a paper focused on one of nursing's long-standing issues – our invisibility in data systems. For that data to matter and be usable for the purposes of organizing, informing and evaluating the nursing work-force and its processes and outcomes, it must be standardized.

As Nagle and White (2025), the authors of the lead paper in this issue, note, this is not a new realization. They and other nurse scholars have been writing about it and taking action to move forward on achieving standardized data for several decades.

Understanding the barriers and facilitators to progress is important but the urgency of the clear call to action is reflected in their title – "Clinical Data Standards: It's Now or Never for the Nursing Profession." This is not just a catchy title. It is a sobering reality check. We all know how fast the world is evolving in its use of artificial intelligence and the importance of accurate, reliable data to inform decisions in an increasingly complex world.

Nagle and White (2025) are recognized leaders in the evolution and development of clinical data standards for nursing. They share their experience with the devel-opment and evaluation of the Canadian Health Outcomes for Better Information and Care (C-HOBIC) tool. C-HOBIC enables standardized data about patient care that can be used to evaluate and refine new models of care and enables transitions of care from one care environment to another that are safe and seamless.

Yet, despite the documented value of C-HOBIC, it has not been integrated into electronic medical records/electronic health records (EMRs/EHRs). Nagle and White (2025) offer a perspective on why this integration has not occurred and the resulting invisibility of nursing. They point out the opportunity created by the

federal government's 2024 funding announcement of $25 billion for shared health priorities, including the development of standardized health data and digital tools to equip the health system to respond to contemporary health challenges. Hence, the title and the challenging crossroad of now or never.

Following Nagle and White's (2025) paper, there are two insightful commentaries written by nurses in senior executive leadership positions about this very important and pivotal opportunity. Pagliaroli's (2025) commentary expands on the question of why C-HOBIC has not been integrated into EMRs/EHRs, identifying barriers such as the absence of mandatory reporting, documentation burden and lack of interoperability. Pagliaroli (2025) also provides a helpful example of how C-HOBIC was integrated into a health organization with multiple sites, and the resulting benefits to patients, nurses and healthcare organizations.

Grdisa's (2025b) commentary reinforces the urgent need for Canadian nursing to embrace the reality of the pervasive influence of data and how it is driving our decisions. Anchored in their previous experiences with the application of C-HOBIC, Grdisa shares how data were used to demonstrate the value proposition of implementing a nurse practitioner model of care, an evaluation that can only happen with measurable data. Another example Grdisa (2025a) describes is the utilization of standardized data in simulation testing optimized nursing roles for the purpose of health human resource planning.

The absence of a common data set to track and understand what nurses do should set off alarm bells in all of our minds. Without data, there is no measurement, and without measurement, there are only best estimates, and that is a path to invisibility. It is a wake-up call to be reminded of the concerning reality that most health human resource planning is not informed by evidence but by historical patterns and available resources.

Importantly, both commentaries stress the importance of collaboration to achieve consensus on a national data system for nurses and nurse practitioners.

Leadership Perspective

Thorne et al. (2025) wrote a compelling commentary on behalf of the Fellows of the Canadian Academy of Nursing and at the request of the Canadian Academy of Nursing Advisory Committee. The committee recognized the importance of this advocacy given the nearing end to the initial term for the chief nursing officer of Canada and the opportunity created by the federal election. Their commentary is an explicitly strategic document of advocacy for the permanence of the chief nursing officer of Canada.

Leadership in Nursing Practice

Bhauruth et al. (2025) present a case study that describes the development of an Indigenous cultural safety, cultural humility and anti-racism practice standard that the British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives developed and implemented in collaboration with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia. The first of its kind in Canada, the Indigenous cultural safety, cultural humility, and anti-racism *practice standard* (British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives 2022) applies to all nurses, midwives, physicians and surgeons in British Columbia. This case study describes the standard development process, outcomes and lessons learned.

Nursing Research

This issue of the *Canadian Journal of Nursing Leadership* concludes with a discussion paper by Chung-Lee et al. (2025) titled "People at the Core: Soulful Quality Improvement and Reflexive Nursing Leadership." The title of the paper provides an intriguing and accurate glimpse into the paper. This paper provides a fresh perspective on why nurses do quality improvement (QI), what is the chosen focus and how QI is done. It is a paper that radiates the joy and purpose in doing QI work. The authors discuss the important role of nurse leaders in celebrating the impacts of QI on improving health outcomes and health equity for patients and families.

In closing, this issue is very similar to the spring season that we are welcoming across Canada. There is a fresh hope and energy that comes with the promise of new growth and beauty – but for growth to occur, the seeds need planting and tending. And everyone knows that many hands make light work.

Ruth Martin-Misener, NP, PhD, FAAN, FCAN
Director and Professor, School of Nursing
Assistant Dean, Research, Faculty of Health
Dalhousie University
Affiliate Scientist, Nova Scotia Health
Affiliate Scientist, Maritime SPOR Support Unit
Halifax, NS
Co-Director, Canadian Centre for Advanced Practice Nursing Research
Hamilton, ON

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