



Research Networking Programme

**Researching Complex Interventions
for Nursing (REFLECTION)**

Standing Committee for the Medical Sciences
(European Medical Research Councils, EMRC)





The REFLECTION Research Network Programme, funded by research councils and

academies from eight European countries, is leading the drive to re-focus nursing research activity and develop knowledge for nursing that is both useful and that can be readily translated into practice. REFLECTION is bringing together leading European researchers in nursing and other multidisciplinary experts to work within an overarching complex interventions research framework.

REFLECTION is developing:

- An interdisciplinary European Faculty network of researchers in nursing, equipped to design, plan and implement programmatic, mixed methods and complex interventions research in nursing.
- Programmes of translational research in nursing which are multi-state, multi-disciplinary, and directed at improving the evidence base of nursing to meet European health and social care concerns.
- Shared knowledge and expertise by running summer schools for early stage researchers in Europe using a complex interventions research methods curriculum.

Through summer schools, masterclasses and seminar programmes, REFLECTION is disseminating cutting-edge research methods of critical importance for developing the scientific evidence base for nursing practice. The network includes current nursing researchers and the new generation of early stage European researchers.

The running period of the ESF REFLECTION Research Networking Programme is for five years from March 2011 to March 2016.

Background

The Evidence Base for Nursing

Nursing has a critical role in meeting health and social care challenges such as an ageing population, chronic diseases and new endemics, at the fore of European health concerns. Increasingly, nurses engage in a wide range of activities, many of which are highly complex and take place in multiple care environments. These include acute medicine, chronic care facilities, mental health, primary care, and residential care homes.

Changes in health care organisation internationally (including short hospital periods, growing responsibility for patients to self-care) are placing more health care in the hands of nurses, increasing the scope, the overall need for nursing care and for that care to rest on solid evidence. However, the evidence base for nursing is undeveloped with a very significant 'translational gap'. Only a minority of examples of research in nursing can be readily transferred to practice.

Reviews show that between 2000 and 2006, studies from the top ten scientific nursing journals were mainly descriptive and did not report the impact of nursing interventions on patients. Of 210 papers published in two international nursing science journals in one year, only 15% were addressing '*research that may carry strong evidence for practice*' (Hallberg, 2006)¹.

Institutional reviews of nursing research also show a lack of coherence and coordination. This limits the international impact of nursing research activity. Despite some examples of experimental nursing research which have demonstrated the feasibility of complex intervention research, most nursing research is descriptive, cross-sectional, context specific and



introspective rather than experimental, longitudinal, generalisable and implementation/translation focused. This situation must change if nursing is to realise its potential for making a secure evidence-based contribution to European health and health care.

1. Hallberg, I.R., 2006. Challenges for future nursing research: providing evidence for health care practice. *Int. J. Nurs. Stud.*, **43** (8), 923-927.

Aims and Objectives

The REFLECTION network will deliver a step change in the quality and focus of research in nursing throughout Europe to the benefit of European citizens in meeting their health and social care needs. The REFLECTION network is providing the leadership for the next phase of research in nursing. The network aims to move European research in nursing to an experimental, longitudinal, generalisable and implementation/translation focused position.

REFLECTION will:

- increase translational research reports in scientific (nursing) journals;
- ensure that mixed- and multi-methods in nursing research become the norm, linking quantitative and qualitative research traditions;
- lead to the development of step-wise research programmes in nursing involving linked series of studies which are descriptive, test, develop and refine theory, explore possible explanatory models, and translate nursing activities and practices in clinical trials;
- increase the number of doctoral studies within programmatic and multi-national studies addressing complex health issues;
- lead to more multi-national applications for European research funding from nurse researchers and their colleagues investigating relevant nursing interventions;
- refocus nursing research to develop knowledge which improves the evidence-base for routine nursing care internationally.

The Scientific Context

Nursing is a classic example of a ‘complex intervention’ – an activity that contains a number of component parts with the potential for interactions between them. When applied to the intended target population these produce a range of variable outcomes. Modern guidance on research methods recommends that the knowledge base for complex interventions in health care should be investigated through a process of development, feasibility/piloting, evaluation and implementation, where there is a dynamic interchange between stages (MRC, 2008).

REFLECTION Activities, Targets and Milestones

Activity 1

- Develop a European Faculty network of researchers in nursing, equipped to design, plan and implement programmatic, mixed methods and complex interventions research in nursing.

Target

- Experienced researchers in nursing from European states attend workshops and seminars in complex interventions research methods.

Milestones

- 2011–2015: annual REFLECTION expert seminars and workshops.
- Summer 2012: at least one publication in a peer review nursing research journal illustrating the application of complex interventions methods.
- 2013–2015: further papers published.

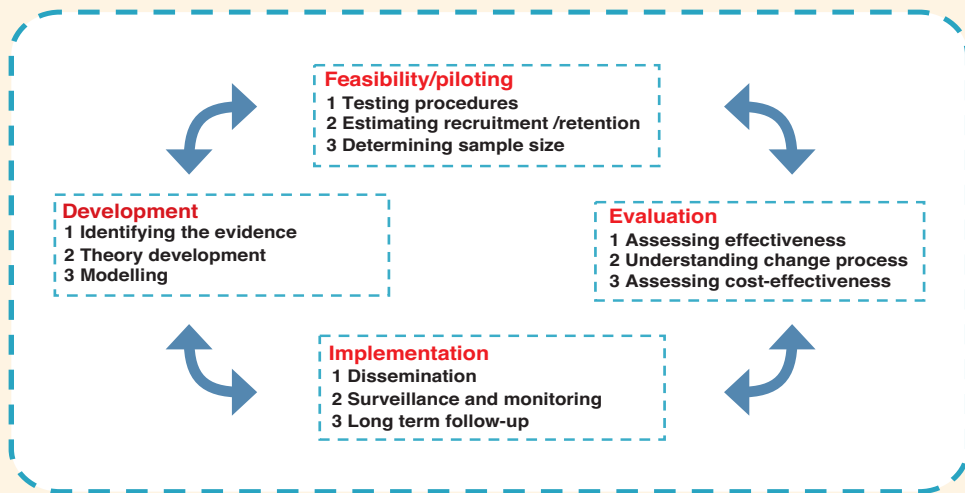


Figure 1. The Medical Research Council Complex Interventions Research Framework

Activity 2

- Share knowledge and expertise by running summer schools for early stage researchers in Europe using a complex interventions research methods curriculum.

Target

- 120 early stage researchers attend annual summer school programme.

Milestones

- 2011–2015: summer schools run by established faculty trained in complex interventions research methods.

Activity 3

- Develop programmes of translational research in nursing which are multi-state, multi-disciplinary, and directed at improving the evidence base of nursing to meet European health and social care concerns.

Target

- Experienced researchers in nursing who wish to collaborate across Europe meet as part of REFLECTION activities and develop programmes of European collaborative research activity.

Milestones

- 2011-2015: at least one European multi-national research programme funding bid submitted annually by REFLECTION network members.

Core Literature

- Campbell N. *et al.* Designing and evaluating complex interventions to improve health care. *BMJ*, 2007.
- Chalmers I. & Glasziou P. Avoidable waste in the production and reporting of research evidence. *Lancet*, 2009.
- Grol R, *et al.* *Improving Patient Care*. 2005, London: Elsevier.
- Hallberg I. Moving nursing research forward towards a stronger impact on health care practice? *Int. J. Nurs. Stud.*, 2009.
- MRC. *Developing and evaluating complex interventions: new guidance*. 2008.
- Richards D, Borglin G. Complex interventions and nursing: Looking through a new lens at nursing research. *Int. J. Nurs. Stud.*, 2011

The REFLECTION Network

Nurses, health scientists and other health and social care professionals including medical professionals are welcome to join the REFLECTION network. Network members will be those who want to develop effective nursing interventions by using integrated and programmatic mixed methods. Network members are committed to developing, testing and translating research evidence into nursing practice. We also welcome members who are consumers of nursing care, or their carers.

Current REFLECTION network members are all leading researchers in nursing, many of whom are members of the European Academy of Nursing Science (EANS). REFLECTION Research Network members collaborate within their respective countries and with other European states on research of relevance to the nursing care of European citizens. Collaborations are multi-state, multi-disciplinary and extensive.

Join the REFLECTION Network now!

Networking opportunities with other interested researchers can be accessed on: **www.reflection-network.eu**

Official information on REFLECTION activities can be found on the European Science Foundation website: **www.esf.org/reflection**

For further information on European nursing research: **www.european-academy-of-nursing-science.com**

Summary

The REFLECTION network has been established at a critical time in the development of nursing as nurses take a greater responsibility for the health and social care of people in the 21st century. REFLECTION aims to change the nature of research in nursing so that translational research – research which transforms research findings into clinical applications – becomes the norm. REFLECTION is doing this through developing an international faculty of researchers in nursing and by providing masterclasses and summer schools on complex interventions and mixed research methods. Anyone can join the REFLECTION network. REFLECTION members all share the belief that rigorous and integrated development and testing of nursing interventions is required before they are implemented.



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For the latest information
on this Research Networking Programme
consult the REFLECTION website:
www.esf.org/reflection

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