

29 November 2016

The Australian College of Nursing concerned about high rate of drug-related deaths by suicide of nurses

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is deeply concerned by the findings of a new study, 'Drug-caused deaths in Australian medical practitioners and health-care professionals', by researchers from the Department of Forensic Medicine at Monash University.

The study examined more than 400 drug-related deaths of Australian health care workers between the years 2003-2013. A total of 404 drug-caused health care professional deaths were reported to Australian coroners during this timeframe, averaging 37 deaths per year.

The study highlights that the highest number of deaths were amongst nurses at 62.87%.

ACN CEO, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN said, "Nurses are the pillars of the health system and carry a burden of responsibility on their shoulders. The daily pressures nurses face are well known. We need to look for solutions and raise awareness of professional and voluntary support to help keep our nurses safe."

Drug related deaths commonly involved females in their mid-40's, with a mental health condition, intent to self-harm and professional and/or personal stress.

Adjunct Professor Ward said, "Nursing is a female dominated profession. The tragedy of nurse suicide is that it can be avoided. We must educate colleagues and families to recognise the warning signs. Workplace environments should be focused on building positive cultures and investing in leadership capabilities to support all health professionals. As nurses we have to take care of our patients, but we also need to take care of each other."

ACN encourages anyone that needs help to contact any of the following helplines:

- Lifeline on 13 11 14
- MensLine Australia on 1300 789 978
- Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467
- Beyond Blue on 1300 22 46 36
- Headspace on 1800 650 890

Ends _____



For interviews, please contact Narelle Barrie, Executive Assistant to CEO on 02 6283 3459, 0450 908 920 or email narelle.barrie@acn.edu.au

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Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward, CEO of ACN.

Notes to the Editors:



Australian
College of
Nursing

Advancing nurse leadership

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is the national professional organisation for all nurse leaders and its aim is to ensure that the Australian community receives quality nursing care now and in the future. ACN is a membership organisation with members in all states and territories, health care settings and nursing specialties. ACN is also the Australian member of the International Council of Nurses headquartered in Geneva.

ACN, an organisation not afraid to intelligently challenge industry issues affecting the nursing profession or Australia's health care, is a well-connected and educated national body that drives change with people of influence to enhance the delivery of health services to the Australian community. ACN advances the skills and expertise of nurses to provide leadership in their contribution to the policy, practice and delivery of health care.

A membership organisation with members in all states and territories, health care settings and nursing specialities, ACN's membership includes many nurses in roles of influence, including senior nurses, organisational leaders, academics and researchers.

What is the role of ACN to media?

- ACN provides trusted, well supported information about Australia's health care system, the delivery of health care, nursing leadership and the nursing profession.
- ACN has a number of media-savvy spokespeople within the organisation who can comment on Australia's health care system, the delivery of health care, nursing leadership and the nursing profession.
- ACN offers media with an alternative voice to that of an industrial relations perspective.
- ACN is in-the-know and can comment on health care matters of interest.
- ACN can respond to media requests in a timely manner and with subject/clinical expert's available on-hand for further discussion.
- ACN regularly responds to government updates pertaining to Australia's health care system.

What role does ACN play?

ACN is here to act and deliver results as agents of change. They are working towards a brighter future through advancing nurse leadership to enhance the delivery of health care to all. The organisation provides nurse leaders with access to relevant information, support and education that will enhance Australia's reputation on the world stage.

Social media channels:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acnursing>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/acn_tweet

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/company/australian-college-of-nursing>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/acn_nursing