

THE SCOPE OF NURSING & MIDWIFERY PRACTICE

Introduction

The Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice is defined as the range of roles, functions, responsibilities, and activities that a registered/licensed professional is educated for, competent in, and authorised to perform (ANMC, 2010; ICN, 2016). It defines accountability and the limits of practice as it provides a framework that standardises nursing general practice and core competencies. The scope of practice shall be used in practice settings as a foundation for nursing roles, professional development, and performance appraisal. External factors such as the environment, including legislation, values, policy, education, standards, specific clinical setting, and population health needs will influence the scope of practice (ANMC, 2010).

The Healthcare transformation, and specifically of the nursing profession under Vision 2030 is expected to have a profound impact on patient care and healthcare outcomes in Saudi Arabia. By investing in the education, development, and leadership of nurses, the country is laying the foundation for a healthcare system that is not only efficient and effective but also compassionate and patient-centred. Empowering nurses and fostering a culture of excellence in Saudi Arabia is poised to achieve an improved patient's outcomes, reduced adverse events, enhanced disease prevention, strengthen primary prevention (Alsufyani et al., 2020). Therefore, a clearly defined scope of practice will serve as a roadmap for nurses, empowering them to practice with confidence, autonomy, and excellence. With a focus on continuous professional development, collaboration, and innovation, nurses in Saudi Arabia are well-positioned to shape the future of healthcare in Saudi Arabia, ensuring that patients receive the highest quality of health care.

The Saudi Commission for Health Specialties (SCFHS) is the regulatory body responsible for registrations and licensing of healthcare practitioners who wish to work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia based on the individual level of education and competence. In addition all registered health care professionals must have valid health practice insurance. Our objective in the Nursing and Midwifery Professional Council (NMPC) is assuring the quality and safety of the provided healthcare services for the citizens and residents of KSA, hence we established this scope to lay the foundation for the practice, based on the education, and regulation in the Kingdome. Aiming to introduce an up-to-date comprehensive Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice, the NMPC has implemented a strategy to undertake the task in successive

stages. After each stage, the council members met to discuss findings, debrief, and plan for the next stage. The NMPC held several meetings between 2019 and the beginning of 2022.

The Process:

In the first stage, the taskforce conducted a literature review to explore contemporary concepts of the scope of practice of nursing. After this activity, the team built an inclusive understanding of that scope and assessed the relevancy to local nursing practice. In the second stage, each team member was assigned to review a particular Nursing Scope of Practice from a different regions and countries. The review included Nursing Scopes of Practice from the American Nurses Association (ANA) in the United States, Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) in Canada, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) in the United Kingdom, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI), the Nursing and Midwifery Board (AHPRA) in Australia, the International Council of Midwives (ICM), UAE Nursing and Midwifery Council, Qatar Council for Health Practitioners and the Nursing Council of New Zealand. After this stage, each team member prepared a synopsis of the reviewed scope of practice, and the taskforce compared and contrasted the documents. In general, there was a huge similarity among the different countries' scopes of practice. In the third stage, the taskforce was divided into two groups to study and review the different levels of scope of practice, one for nurse technicians and the other for nurse specialists. It is important to highlight that nurse specialists and nurse technicians are both registered nursing professionals. However, the SCFHS classifies nurses based on the level of awarded academic qualification; thus, the classification is meant to distinguish the level of education and, subsequently, the scope of practice. In the fourth stage, each group worked on defining the Nurse Technician and Nurse Specialist Scope of Practice based on the national context. Then the teams worked on identifying and defining the domains of the scope of practice for both. In the last stage, each group set the standards and the sets of competencies for each standard that informed each specific domain. This extensive work has revealed eight domains for the nurse technician and specialist inclusive with some special consideration to the nurse technician. Several meetings were held after each stage to discuss, review, and reform the findings. Finally the first draft of the scope of practice was ready to be evaluated and validated by experts in the field, and thus the NMPC conducted a workshop in which individuals from different nursing practice levels, including nurse/midwife specialists and technicians, nursing lecturers/educators, nursing academics/researchers, and hospital-based nursing leaders were invited to review the document. The feedback from experts was considered and reflected in this final document.