

MEDIA RELEASE

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AI has the potential to transform nursing ***ACN Position Statement: Artificial Intelligence (AI)***

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) has developed a new Position Statement on Artificial Intelligence (AI).

This Position Statement aims to provide nurses with an understanding of the core principles to safely navigate using AI, recognising the pivotal and important role of AI, and acknowledging the role AI will play in the contemporary healthcare setting in the future.

ACN advocates for the patient-centred, ethical, and safe use of AI to support and enhance nursing practice, education, and administration. The safe and ethical application of AI in nursing relies on several principles and needs to be supported by strong governance.

These principles include:

- Nurses must always remain the decision maker and continue to use their nursing knowledge and critical thinking in the care they provide to their patients and the broader community.
- Nurses must be cognisant when generative AI is used in nursing. Be cognisant of generative AI in digital tools they use to provide care, including applications with decision support, predictive tools, and automation.
- Nurses must consider the ethical implications of data and algorithmic bias, which may embed gender, race, and other inequalities and inequities due to the inherent limitations of generative AI across various populations.
- Nurses must engage in education on different types of AI and how this can impact the provision of care and understanding of generative AI's safe and ethical applications.

ACN Interim CEO, Emeritus Professor Leanne Boyd FACN, said nurses are uniquely placed to lead in developing, testing, implementing, and evaluating AI in healthcare.

“While AI has many potential benefits in healthcare, appropriate regulations and safeguards must be embedded to not compromise patient safety, nursing care delivery, or the profession more broadly,” Professor Boyd said.

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“AI has the potential to significantly reduce the often-repetitive tasks that nurses perform, as well as assist in solving both our current and future workforce challenges.

“ACN recognises the benefits AI represents and the potential to improve health outcomes for individual patients, their communities, and Australia as a whole.”

ACN recommendations for managing AI in healthcare include:

- The nursing profession asserts its commitment to staying abreast of healthcare advancements, particularly in AI. We advocate for AI education at all levels of nursing, from undergraduate to advanced CPD levels, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of AI products, algorithmic decision-making, and the legal liabilities associated with automated decisions (Reddy et al., 2020).
- The National Nursing and Midwifery Digital Health Capability Framework (Australian Digital Health Agency, 2020) and A National Policy Roadmap for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare (AAAiH, 2023) should be integrated into nursing curricula to facilitate this education effectively. The Australian College of Nursing offers a Graduate Certificate in Digital Health (ACN, 2024).
- Nursing informaticians must be integral to all aspects of AI application, adhering to Australian standards and management protocols. Healthcare organisations must ensure nurses' active involvement in governance models, emphasising principles of fairness, transparency, accountability, and trustworthiness.
- Nurses must play a central role in designing, implementing, and evaluating AI applications, ensuring that ethical and practical considerations align with nursing requirements. AI should only be integrated into nursing practice when ratified evidence demonstrates improved patient outcomes. It is imperative to emphasise that AI is a tool to enhance nursing care and treatment, not a replacement for critical thinking.
- We advocate for the recommendations outlined in A National Policy Roadmap for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare (AAAiH, 2023). We advocate for AI to be developed within a robust safety framework to implement accreditation to assess AI safety and quality practice standards and integrate the national AI ethical framework to support value-based healthcare.
- Nursing should actively participate in developing data governance models based on principles of integrity, transparency, auditability, accountability, stewardship, checks and balances, standardisation, and change management (The Data Governance Institute, 2023).

The ACN Position Statement: Artificial Intelligence is at <https://www.acn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/position-statement-artificial-intelligence.pdf>

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