

# Nurses' Attitudes to working with older persons in acute care

Anne-Marie Mahoney

Doctoral Student University of Melbourne

....

Supervisor

Associate Professor David Beckett

University of Melbourne

---





# My story...

---

- # Ethics approval granted in 2009
  - # Ethnographic study
  - # Purposive sampling – Graduate Nurse Year participants and nurses with > 4 years experience
  - # Two stakeholders – EDON and Bureaucrat
  - # N=15
  - # Four follow-up interviews
-

# Research Question/s

---

- # What are the attitudes of experienced nurses toward caring for older persons in an acute setting?
- # Can an understanding of the impact of immersion in practice on attitude inform an education model focused on improving care of older persons (in acute care)?
- # **Does immersion in practice impact attitudes to working with older people**



# Methodology

---

- # Socially constructed
  - # Ethnographic approach
  - # Semi-structured individual interview
  - # Thematic analysis
  - # Coding of themes to saturation
-

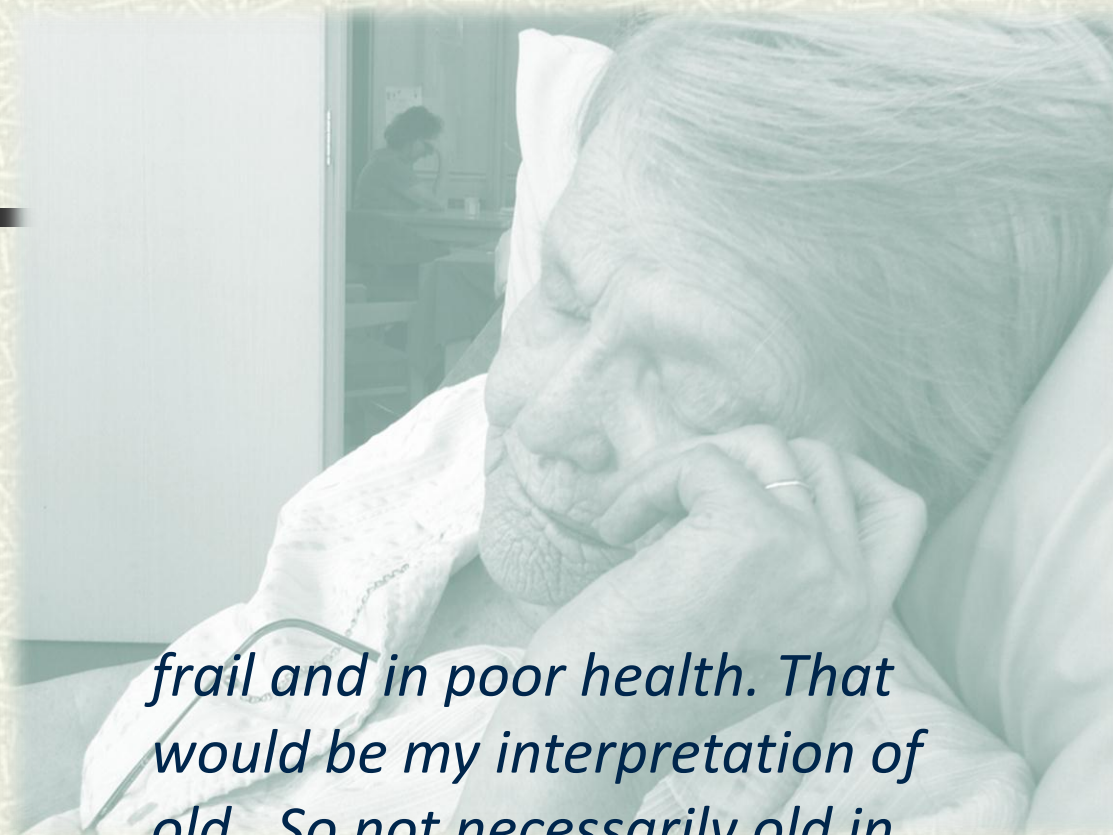
# Images

---

*I see a physical and psychological element to it. Some people age psychologically faster than others. There's a bit in there about whether people are independent or dependent. There's a bit in there about agility and physical cope-ability. (A011)*

---





*frail and in poor health. That would be my interpretation of old. So not necessarily old in number but old in body, worn out, organ failure, unwell perhaps. (A005)*

# Interest

---

*...it's taken me thirty years to feel confident.  
Older patients are much more complex  
than younger patients; you tend to focus on  
the high functional demands of these  
patients [older patients]. (A003)*

---



# Role modelling

---

I still remember my first clinical teacher...who was very passionate about assisting older people...she had a very positive attitude towards older people and it rubbed off. ...I would say that a lot of my focus has been shaped by experts in the field that influenced me when I was a new nurse. (A009)

---

# Findings

---

Three emergent themes:

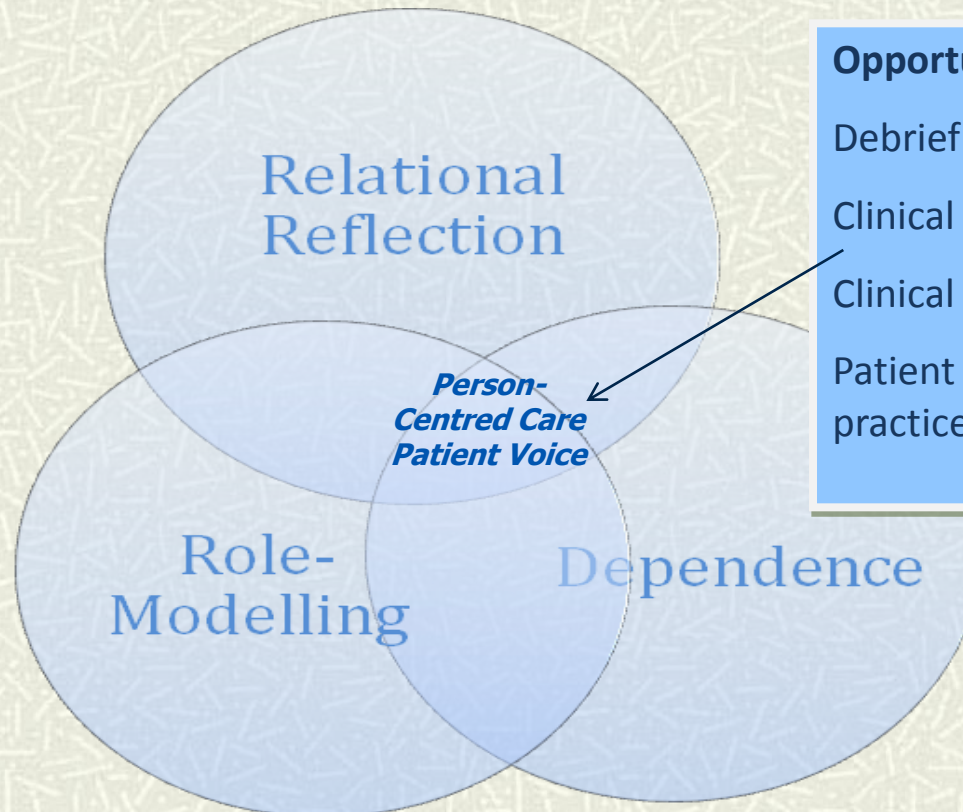
Dependence –  
frailty /  
functionality

Relationality

Role-modelling







**Opportunities for reflection at:**

Debriefing

Clinical Handover

Clinical supervision

Patient engagement – nursing practice

***Improving Care of older persons – Achieving Relational Reflection (Mahoney 2012)***

# Acknowledgements

---

- # Associate Professor David Beckett – an inspiring supervisor
- # My nursing colleagues who participated in this study