

Enpr-EMA- Paediatric Research Nurse Working Group



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European Research Nurse Working Group Membership

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Scotland
England
England/Italy
Poland
Denmark
Sweden
Czech Republic
Spain
Finland
Ireland
Belgium/Dutch
France



Working Group Plan



Survey of both Research Nurse Managers and Research Nurses.

- Understand career pathway, development opportunities
- Understand the employment conditions
- Identify issues that result in vacancies in research nurse positions

Promote and Develop the Paediatric Research Nurse Role within Europe

Present outputs

Members want to use information to lobby their funders

Survey of EU Research Nurses and Managers

2 Surveys: Designed using SNAP 11 Survey software – held on a secure University Server

- 25 Questions –31 Questions
- Aimed at two professional groups - Managers, CRF Directors, Academics and Research Nurses, Nurses doing research.

Translated -English, French, Italian and Spanish.

- Where you work and your professional role
- Grades Training and Career Pathways
- Literacy level in English and access to training education
- Issues affecting retention and recruitment

Responses- 251

Country	Respdners	Manager	Nurse
Austria	1	0	1
Belgium	6	1	5
Czech Republic	5	2	3
Denmark	15	5	10
Estonia	2	1	1
Finland	6	0	6
France	28	3	25
Germany	13	2	11
Greece	6	0	6
Ireland	2	0	2
Italy	10	2	8
Netherlands	23	1	22
Norway	2	1	1
Poland	14	9	5
Portugal	11	1	10
Spain	30	4	26
Sweden	10	1	9
Turkey	1	9	1
UK	66	4	62
Total	251	46	214

Percentage with Degree

Manager 27/46 60%

Nurse 148/241 61%

English	Manager	Nurse
Advanced	7	33
Intermediate	14	81
Beginner	12	43

Perspectives on Recruitment and Retention of Research Nurses

Qualitative Thematic Analysis

- Salary
- Contracts
- Recognition of the specialism, expertise
- Career Opportunities

CONTRACTS

Similarities Across Countries

- **Short-term or temporary contracts** are a widespread problem:
Reported strongly in the **UK, France, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy**.
- Contracts often depend on **project funding**, creating job insecurity.
- Difficulty obtaining **mortgages, planning families** (Denmark, UK) due to instability.
- Many countries report contracts **not specific to research nurses**, leading to unclear role definitions.

CONTRACTS

Differences Between Countries

- **Denmark & Netherlands:** Many research nurses work **part-time in research and part-time clinically** due to structural hiring limitations.
- **Portugal & Poland:** Research nursing is **not recognized as a formal role**; research duties are **added on top** of regular jobs rather than contracted separately.
- **France:** Contracts often funded by **organisation**, not the state.
- **UK:** Extensive comments on the instability created by **fixed-term NHS contracts**.

SALARY

Similarities Across Countries

- **Low salary** is the most consistently mentioned issue across *all* countries.
- Research nurses typically **earn less than clinical ward nurses**, especially where ward work includes unsocial hours pay (e.g., **UK, Sweden, Netherlands**).
- Salary does **not match skill level, responsibility, or education** (Finland, France, Spain, UK).

Salary

Differences Between Countries

- **Finland & France:** High frustration because advanced education (Master's, DU) is **not salary-rewarded**.
- **Netherlands & UK:** Moving into research often means a **pay cut** due to loss of out-of-hours enhancements.
- **Italy, Greece, Poland, Turkey:** Salary problems amplified by **national nurse wage issues**.
- **Belgium:** Salary issues linked to the **low profitability of paediatric trials** and lack of budget.

Professional Recognition

Of Role of Individuals within hospital or CRF and the profession in general

Similarities Across Countries

- Role is **poorly understood** by other healthcare professionals.
Reported across **France, Spain, Netherlands, Austria, UK, Germany, Sweden.**
- Lack of **formal recognition/specialty status** appears in nearly all countries.
- Limited recognition leads to **recruitment challenges, poor funding, and lack of visibility.**

Professional Recognition

Differences Between Countries

France and Spain: Recognition issues are severe — research nursing is *not recognized* in formal training, university programs, or salary scales.

Italy & Portugal: Research is not considered a **priority** within nursing; research nurses often counted as standard ward nurses.

Austria: Strict regulations prevent nurses from participating in clinical trials if not tied to university research structures.

Germany: The profession is “not prominent”; research nurses often inexperienced and trained on the job.

Netherlands: Role is being downgraded from “research nurse” to “research assistant,” further lowering recognition.

UK: Awareness within the NHS is low; nurses misunderstand research nursing due to poor exposure during training.

Career Opportunities

Similarities Across Countries

- The **lack of a clear career pathway** is universal.
- No clear pathway building on expertise in both clinical areas and research – only senior roles in management
- Education and training required for career progression is often **unfunded, unavailable, or not recognised**.

Career Opportunities

Differences Between Countries

- **France, Spain, Italy:** Absence of recognized specialty or qualifications blocks career advancement.
- **Sweden:** Role “research nurse” does not officially exist, making progression impossible.
- **Portugal & Poland:** Research nursing often not a dedicated role, preventing structured progression.
- **Ireland & UK:** Career pathways end around Band 7, with few senior roles.
- **Denmark & Netherlands:** Limited progression due to **temporary/project-based employment**.
- **Belgium:** Career opportunities limited by low profitability of paediatric orphan trials and limited budgets.

Most Common Shared Challenges

Theme	Nearly Universal Problems
Contract	Short-term / temporary, unstable, project-based
Salary	Low pay, lower than clinical roles, no recognition of qualifications
Recognition	Poor understanding of role, no formal specialty
Career Opportunities	No structured pathways, limited progression

Why is this important?

Increase in pressure in clinical service

If research is not separate funding then it will not be prioritised

Need to attract and keep high quality research nurses

Protocols becoming more specialised, increase in new techniques – gene therapies
needs – need right staff to support

Advantages Specialist Nursing Team

Governance and compliance – experienced team – follow protocol, ensure safety of patients, quality and integrity of data, governance compliance.

Manage portfolio of trials in multiple specialities and clinical departments.

Create a welcoming environment and for relationship with patients on intensive trials-
patient experience – improve retention

Why can we as a research community do?

How can we increase the recognition of research nurses and associated professions and their vital role?