

# INPLASY

## To examine the effectiveness of “scope of practice regulation” of healthcare practitioners in improving patient outcomes in the aged care sector

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### ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

**Support** - Not Applicable.

**Review Stage at time of this submission** - Preliminary searches.

**Conflicts of interest** - None declared.

**INPLASY registration number:** INPLASY202510020

**Amendments** - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 6 January 2025 and was last updated on 6 January 2025.

### INTRODUCTION

**Review question / Objective** How does the effectiveness of “scope of practice regulation” of healthcare practitioners in improving patient outcomes in the aged care sector?

**Rationale** In care facilities like nursing homes, residential care homes and homes services, a wide variety of professional services are offered by health care professionals to support individuals who are at the risk of a significant loss of intrinsic capacity to maintain a level of functional ability. A wide range of services are included in long-term care, such as continued nursing care to address the health, social, or personal care of the elderly, rehabilitation, and restorative care. In order to provide the delivery of quality care to residents it is utmost critical to adhere to standards and ensure that the caregiving professionals are adequately trained to adhere to set criteria. (Kalideen, 2022).

The effectiveness of "scope of practice regulation" for healthcare practitioners in improving patient outcomes in the aged care sector is a critical area of investigation, particularly as the population ages and healthcare demands evolves around the world in view of technological advancement and dynamic nature of service require. Healthcare practitioner regulation is one approach used to maintain standards and improve quality of care.

Various literature reviews indicates that scope of practice regulation is a complex and diverse concept and is affected by many factors. (M.M. Feringa, 2018) The regulation of healthcare practitioners in the aged care sector plays a crucial role in ensuring high-quality care for older adults and supporting positive outcomes for both patients and providers. As the population ages and demand for aged care services increases, effective regulation becomes increasingly important to maintain standards, protect vulnerable residents, and support the workforce.

In a systematic review by (Braithwaite J, 2017) a positive association was found between organizational and workplace cultures and patient outcomes. This finding suggests that regulatory frameworks facilitating supportive workplace cultures may enhance the quality of care delivered by healthcare practitioners, including those in aged care facilities. Regulations and the boundaries within which a fully qualified practitioner with substantial and appropriate training, knowledge, and experience may practice in a field of medicine or surgery, or other specifically defined field. Such practice is also governed by requirements for continuing education and professional accountability.

There are inefficiencies such as under and over skilling exist in health care sector across the world and this led to higher health care costs and lower access to care for patients as per one study done by OECD. Under-skilling could lead to health care professionals providing care outside of their training and expertise and endangering patient safety; however, over-skilling can also negatively impact patient care by creating unnecessary barriers to access to care.

Effective regulation not only safeguards patient safety but also enhances the quality of care and supports workforce sustainability. Effective regulation encompasses both legal and professional systems, which work together to maintain standards and protect elderly and vulnerable populations. The regulation of healthcare practitioners operates through legal frameworks (legislative, executive, and judicial branches) and professional systems (professional societies) that establish standards and practices.

While regulation is crucial, challenges remain, such as the need for more evidence on the effectiveness of these systems and their impact on patient outcomes. By analysing existing data and gathering insights from them this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between scope of practice regulation and patient care quality. This review aims to synthesize existing research findings on the effectiveness of such regulations and to find a deeper understanding of the relationship between scope of practice regulations and patient care quality. The findings may guide regulatory bodies, aged care providers, and policymakers in designing and implementing evidence-based approaches to healthcare practitioner regulation that optimize outcomes for patients in the aged care sector.

**Condition being studied** There are a range of health care practitioners involved in aged care setting and every set of Health care Practitioners have their own scope of practices regulations that influence on the outcomes on the patients' wellbeing. The purpose of this review is to examine the effectiveness of various scope of practices regulations of healthcare practitioners in aged care sector on the improvement of patient's outcomes.

## METHODS

**Search strategy** The search strategy will aim to identify published scientific papers in English language across the world from January 2014 to the present. A three-stage approach will be adopted in this review. First, an initial limited search will be conducted on select databases mainly on MEDLINE (OVID) to identify key articles on the topic. The text and keywords terms identified in these articles will be developed further for the main search. The preliminary key words for the search will include scope of practice regulations, healthcare practitioners, patient outcomes and aged care

Second, a detailed search strategy will be developed in consultation with the supervisors and University Librarian. The detailed search strategy will accommodate published academic literature from databases MEDLINE, Web of Science SCOPUS, CINAHL.

Third, the reference list of all identified reports and articles will be searched for additional studies. The time of publication will include from the period of Jan 2014 onward and will continue up to the present year. INPLASY will be searched for ongoing as well as recently completed reviews.

**Participant or population** The population for this study is older adults who are 65 years and above, and require services in relation to home, community or residential care-based settings.

**Intervention** In the research study we would like to examine the effectiveness of scope of practice regulations like activities, procedures, and decision-making that a healthcare practitioner is permitted to undertake within their professional practice in aged care settings through pre identified appropriate metrics to evaluate their impact on patients' outcomes. Furthermore, through SLR we would like to compare studies where outcomes before and after the implementations of the scope of practice regulations or between regions/jurisdictions with

different scope of practice regulations took place or examined.

Moreover, we would like to study researches on the perspectives and experiences of key stakeholders, such as healthcare practitioners, patients, policymakers, and healthcare organizations, to understand the impacts and perceptions of the scope of practice regulations. In the end we would like to examine the effect of contextual factors, such as the healthcare system structure, workforce dynamics, and socioeconomic considerations, that may influence the effectiveness of the scope of practice regulation.

**Comparator** Variations in regulatory models, or absence of specific scope of practice regulations.

**Study designs to be included** Original research articles including quantitative, qualitative and mixed method studies. Reviews, commentaries, editorials and grey literature will be excluded. The components of this review will consider studies that evaluate the various dimensions of scope of practices regulations related to HCPs in aged care sector like- Scope of practice regulations, aged care practice guidelines and standards, Compliance, Legal and Ethical Boundaries, Professional Standards and constraints, Education and training, Legal Regulations, Autonomy, Standards of Practice Legislations, regulations and Laws.

**Eligibility criteria** The review will consider studies focussing on the effectiveness of healthcare practitioner regulation in improving patient outcomes in the aged care sector. The quantitative and qualitative components of this review will consider any studies related to qualified Health care practitioners of any grade/level in the aged care sector and will, therefore, exclude those working in hospitals /emergency department settings. Studies will focus solely on HCP populations and any other stakeholders' study in aged care shall be excluded.

Our focus would be on the systematic reviews, scientific papers and other research articles only including reviews, commentaries, dissertations/ thesis. Information on whether the study designs are qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods will be recorded; as well as information on data collection methods (e.g. interviews, questionnaires, and observations). This will help understand the range of methods employed within these research designs.

- Publication date- since 2014 onwards

- Language - English Only
- Study types- systematic reviews, scientific papers
- Age  $\geq$  65 years old

Document the search process, including

- Databases searched
- Date of search
- Number of results from each database
- Any modifications made to the search strategy

Health practitioner will be defined as any professional with a certificate IV or higher currently employed in an aged care sector and providing services to elderly residents including medical practitioners such as doctors, Nurses, PCWs etc. This will also include practitioners such as physiotherapists, psychologists and occupational therapists. The review will exclude those who are health practitioners that are still in training, tertiary education students on placements, Kitchen staff and non-allied health services providers.

**Types of interventions**

All studies in which the interventions are described by the author/s for health practitioner's scope of practices with matching skills to responsibilities, that might have potential impact on patient outcomes will be considered for this review.

**Information sources** We shall use the detailed search strategy to identify published academic literature from databases of MEDLINE, Web of Science SCOPUS, CINAHL. Our focus would be on published research from 2014 onwards in English Language and limited to scientific papers/ guidelines/ policies only excluding grey literature.

**Main outcome(s)** Our review will examine the impact of SoP regulations of HCP on patients through various identified metrics like Health-Related Outcomes, Quality of Life Measures, Patient Safety Metrics, Patient and Family Satisfaction and Care Process Indicators.

**Additional outcome(s)** N/A.

**Data management** Covidence systematic review software will be used for screening, full text review and data extraction.

**Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis** To ensure that systematic reviews screening is reliable, two reviewers will be included in the title abstract screening and full text screening process and for any doubt /clarification will seek guidance from third reviewer.

**Strategy of data synthesis** The scoping review will be guided by six-staged scoping review methodology framework described in Arksey and O'Malley (2005) <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1364557032000119616#d1e267>: (1) identifying the research question, (2) identifying relevant studies, (3) selecting studies, (4) charting the data, (5) collating, summarising, and reporting the results, and (6) consultation, which is an optional stage. The reporting of the scoping review will follow the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR). The search strategy was developed and refined in consultation with supervisors cum faculty members of College of Business, Governance and Law at Flinders University. The PRESS Checklist (2015) [https://www.cda-amc.ca/sites/default/files/pdf/CP0015\\_PRESS\\_Update\\_Report\\_2016.pdf](https://www.cda-amc.ca/sites/default/files/pdf/CP0015_PRESS_Update_Report_2016.pdf) was used to assist in developing the search strategy. Electronic databases (Medline, Web of science, CINAHL and Scopus), reference list of included articles and scoping or systematic reviews identified from the search.

**Subgroup analysis** Analysis Analyses will be conducted based on healthcare practitioner types, regulatory models, and geographic regions.

**Sensitivity analysis** Sensitivity analyses will be performed to assess the impact of study quality on the overall findings.

**Language restriction** English only.

**Country(ies) involved** Australia - Flinders University, South Australia.

**Keywords** scope of practice regulations, healthcare practitioners, patient outcomes and aged care sector.

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