



Letter to editor

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

We want to thank Professor McMillan for her response (McMillan, 2022) to our Editorial 'We're on mute! Exclusion of nurses' voices in national decision and responses to COVID-19: An international perspective' in *Journal of Advanced Nursing* (Rasmussen et al., 2022).

We are pleased that the editorial which outlined our view of the importance of recognizing the work of nurses and midwives especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and having their voices heard resonated with Professor McMillan. The pandemic has without doubt been an extremely testing and challenging time for senior nursing leaders throughout the world. We thank her for sharing her experiences. We are reassured to hear that as Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer in Australia you played an important role in key advisory committees during the pandemic including co-chairing Australia's Infection Prevention and Control Expert Group, the Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Reference Group, the National Nursing and Midwifery Education Advisory Committee and her media appearances.

We completely agree that the contribution of nurses to public discussion and decision making, particularly at a government level, is of the utmost importance. Many reported the overwhelming powerlessness they felt to influence the clinical environment and their perceptions of being ignored and silenced by managers and leaders. Therefore, the amplification of the nursing voice at national levels was arguably even more important to nurses working through the pandemic. If we as academics and professors of nursing undertaking research with nurses during the pandemic were unaware of the involvement of senior nurse leaders in high-level committees which influenced national responses to the pandemic, then it is likely nurses working clinically were also unaware.

The International Council of Nurses recently surveyed its 130-member National Nursing Associations (NNAs) during the pandemic (International Council of Nurses, 2021). Less than half reported that their government chief nurses had been involved in national health decision-making about COVID-19 and similarly less than half of infection, prevention and control nurses or senior nurses had been involved in government decision-making (International Council of Nurses, 2021). This involvement is less than other health professionals (Anders, 2021; Morone et al., 2022), particularly members of the medical profession, public health experts and academics and reinforces our assertion that the voice of nursing was muted or significantly lowered in many national contexts.

Our hope was for our editorial to generate international discussion about the important role and visibility of nurses and their contribution especially during adverse events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank Professor McMillan for her response and important contribution to this discussion.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Bodil Rasmussen, Bridie Kent, Jill Maben, Ruth Harris, Sara Holton, Janet E. Anderson. *Writing original draft:* Bodil Rasmussen. *Writing: review and editing:* All authors. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

Bodil Rasmussen^{1,2,3} 
 Sara Holton^{1,2} 
 Karen Wynter^{1,2} 
 David J. Phillips⁴
 Jennifer L. David¹ 
 Mette Juel Rothmann^{3,5} 
 Mette Maria Skjoeth^{5,6} 
 Helle Wijk⁷ 
 Kirsten Frederiksen⁸ 
 Linda Ahlstrom^{7,9,10} 
 Janet E. Anderson¹¹ 
 Ruth Harris¹² 
 Anna Conolly¹³ 
 Bridie Kent¹⁴ 
 Jill Maben^{13,15,16} 

¹School of Nursing and Midwifery, Centre for Quality and Patient Safety Research – Western Health Partnership, Deakin University, Geelong, Australia

²Faculty of Health, Institute of Health Transformation, Deakin University, Geelong, Australia

³Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark

⁴Faculty of Health, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Geelong, Australia

⁵Odense University Hospital, Odense, Denmark

⁶Sundhed.dk, Copenhagen, Denmark

⁷Institute of Health and Care Science, Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden

⁸Department of Public Health – Department of Science in Nursing, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark


- ⁹Department of Quality Strategies, Region Västra Götaland, Sahlgrenska University Hospital, Gothenburg, Sweden
- ¹⁰Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden
- ¹¹Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia
- ¹²Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery and Palliative Care, King's College London, London, UK
- ¹³School of Health Sciences, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK
- ¹⁴Faculty of Health, School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Plymouth, Plymouth, UK
- ¹⁵Faculty of Health, University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Sydney, Australia
- ¹⁶Discipline of Nursing, College of Science, Health, Engineering and Education, Murdoch University, Perth, Australia

Correspondence


Bodil Rasmussen, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Centre for Quality and Patient Safety Research – Western Health Partnership, Deakin University, Geelong, Australia.
Email: bodil.rasmussen@deakin.edu.au

ORCID

Bodil Rasmussen  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6789-8260>

Sara Holton  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9294-7872>

Karen Wynter  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4620-7691>

Jennifer L. David  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6297-6429>

Mette Juel Rothmann  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6505-4163>

Mette Maria Skjoeth  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3528-4619>

Helle Wijk  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8799-6856>

Kirsten Frederiksen  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2082-7094>

Linda Ahlstrom  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3372-8722>

Janet E. Anderson  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1452-8370>

Ruth Harris  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4377-5063>

Anna Conolly  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0747-4597>

Bridie Kent  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9550-1913>

Jill Maben  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6168-0455>

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