

**ABNS Research Agenda  
NDNQI Certification Research Project**

ABNS is pleased to present an unprecedented opportunity to sponsor a national research project that will examine trends in specialty certification of RNs in acute care hospitals using a unique nursing data resource – the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators® (NDNQI®). This research proposal fits precisely with the priorities identified in the ABNS unified certification Research Agenda.

This research project will be headed by Dr. Diane Boyle, the NDNQI principal investigator. The proposed study will add significantly to the evidence base on trends in specialty certification, including how the prevalence of specialty certified RNs impact patient safety. Such evidence is fundamental to the profession's ability to demonstrate the utility of promoting specialty certification among RNs and hiring certified RNs.

The study will:

- Identify trends related to specialty certified RNs in acute care hospitals from 2003 to 2009.
- Identify specialty certification trends that are related to the hospital structure characteristics of Magnet® status, staffed bed size, ownership, teaching status, and location.
- Identify specialty certification trends among different unit types.

This study will provide data on hospital inpatient units. For patient care units with at least 5 years of specialty certification data, the study will examine the association between trends in the unit prevalence of specialty certified RNs (defined as unit percent of RNs with national specialty certification) and nursing processes and patient outcomes.

Research questions include: Are changes (increase, decrease – or no change) in the unit prevalence of specialty certified RNs associated with changes in:

- a. Unit processes of autonomy, decision making, and teamwork; pressure ulcer risk assessment and prevention protocol implementation; and fall risk assessment and prevention protocol implementation?
- b. Unit outcomes of total hospital acquired pressure ulcers (HAPUs) and stage 2 or greater HAPUs; falls rate and injury.

These research findings will “raise the bar” for specialty nursing certification because it will show the value of nursing certification on nursing processes and patients outcomes.

The researchers will develop at least three manuscripts for publication from the study results. All project sponsors will have their names included on all published documents.