

**Introduction:** Development of advanced and specialist nursing roles is globally advocated<sup>1</sup>. These roles are being introduced in African health systems. Although global bodies advise adaptation of high level role definitions to local contexts<sup>2</sup> differences between emerging roles in African contexts and globally defined roles have not been systematically analysed<sup>3-3</sup>.

**Objective:** The objective of this phase of a larger mixed methods study was to enable structured comparison of the relationship between an existing global Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) role description and reported characteristics of advanced and specialist nursing roles in Africa.

**Methods:** We used concept mapping<sup>7</sup> to assess the fit between the domains of a global CNS role description<sup>8</sup>, primary data from the qualitative phase of the larger study, and published descriptions of African advanced and specialist nursing roles.

**Findings:** Concept mapping supported identification of similarities and differences between key concepts and characteristics of the global CNS role description and African role descriptions (see Fig. 2). Four modified domains (direct care and consulting; strengthening specialist service; education and teaching; and professional leadership and management) resulted, representing an empirically derived role description for advanced and specialist nurses in Africa at a particular point in time.

**Conclusion:** These modified domains are presented as a transitional role description with implications for ongoing work to develop advanced and specialist nursing roles in Africa. The transitional role description could contribute to ongoing work to develop advanced and specialist nursing roles in Africa, with the goal of increasing role acceptance and reducing role confusion. Further role descriptions are required to improve the empirical basis for African role descriptions.

**Ethical approval:** Ethical approval for the study was provided by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Cape Town (HREC Ref 022/2020), the Research Board of Kamuzu College of Nursing, and the Research Committee of the College of Medicine, Kamuzu University of Health Sciences.

**Funding:** This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

## Compared to global role descriptions, advanced and specialist nursing role descriptions in Africa place:



## Advanced and specialist nurses in Africa are working in a context of:

lower resources (human and material); often challenging infrastructure; lower staffing levels; higher patient volumes; pervasively higher levels of patient acuity and instability; high levels of accountability to communities and society.

**What this study adds:** While influential bodies and institutions which guide and regulate the nursing profession have offered perspectives on international advanced and specialist nursing roles<sup>8-11</sup> these perspectives include very limited input or evidence from African experiences. Our comparison of these 'global' descriptions and African roles found areas of difference arising from the context for practice, professional norms and societal expectations, which have implications for ongoing work to develop advanced and specialist nursing roles in Africa.

