INTRODUCTION
The Nurses Research Group (NRG) was set up 4 years ago in 2011 by Kay Beggan, then Area Director of Nursing in Dublin South East. The group comprised of an ANP, and three nurses known to be interested in research. As we have now been active for a substantial period, we have reviewed not only our activities, but our experiences as participants in the NRG.

THE QUESTIONS – 1: WHAT HAS BEING PART OF THE NRG MEANT TO YOU?

Personal Benefits:
The main theme that emerged was that the group was found to be stimulating and motivating. It was perceived as Educational. The experience of the group was Inclusive, and participants felt comfortable discussing ideas and appreciated each others’ input. They felt their confidence was improved, that their Job Satisfaction had improved, and that their Productivity had increased. They appreciated the opportunity to reflect on clinical experience, practice and how these could be improved.

Only 2 costs were mentioned:
1. It can be difficult to keep track of everything that’s going on as the group sometimes seems like fireworks sparking off in every direction
2. It can be difficult to allocate the time required to achieve tasks/get time off to attend/working on research in off-duty time.


The largest benefit was in the Personal domain. This included topics such as peer support, encouragement, appreciation for each others’ knowledge and input, collaboration. It also included feelings of contributing to the larger world – to the service, and to nursing generally. This was also contributed to by taking part in conferences: presenting papers and posters, and the public affirmation of work done. The personal affirmation was also increased by productivity – the concrete evidence of work produced by the group.

THE QUESTIONS – 3: WHAT DIFFICULTIES DO YOU HAVE TO BE OVERCOME TO PARTICIPATE IN NRG?

FORMAT OF NRG
We meet once a month in person, for two hours. It is not always possible for all members to attend due to service requirement etc so minutes are taken and circulated. Collaboration is often by phone or email, and tasks are often undertaken in off-duty time.

THE QUESTIONS – 4: HAVE YOU PRODUCED MORE RESEARCH AS A DIRECT RESULT OF PARTICIPATING IN THE NRG?

CONCLUSIONS
All members of the group were enthusiastic about their experience of participating in it. They felt that they had derived a great many personal benefits and that they had contributed positively not just to the local service but to nursing in general. They had also been very productive, much more than they could have been working individually.


The main benefit (30% of opinions) was seen to be the development of evidence-based policies and practices, which would then benefit the service user. The next highest at 17% was the promotion and dissemination of research in the area – perhaps as this may have been seen as supporting evidence-based nursing. This was followed by training of nurses (13%). At 9% each was networking with other services and links with academia; involvement of service users and their families; and enhancing staff morale.

Group Members:
Back row (L-R): Pretti John, RK Maruthu
Front row: Fionnula MacLiam
Kay Beggan
Geraldine Carroll

Many thanks to all for their participation in this study.