
AONL Foundation Research Grant Program Impact Report September 20, 2024

The AONL Foundation Research Program has granted more than \$500,000 to influence new knowledge through nursing leadership research, ultimately benefiting all healthcare constituents – from patients and families to communities to nursing leadership and healthcare teams.

The Research Impact Subcommittee interviewed 61% of past grant recipients to answer, “How have AONL Foundation research grants impacted leadership practice, careers, patient care, and leadership and system science”? The research team consisted of 8 individuals. Frequencies and thematic analysis were used to answer the question. Overall, responses demonstrated that the AONL Foundation has impacted careers, enhanced academic practice, developed innovations, and has wide dissemination and adoption. Below are the results using frequencies, themes, and sub-themes.

Career Impact

- Career advancement (transitioned from practice to academia)
- Increased publications
- Improve leadership practice by developing solutions and interventions for clinicians and nurses.
- Recognition of research
- Springboard for larger grants (i.e NIH, RWJF)
- Launchpad for their research career

Academic-Practice

- Facilitated hospital and academic research
- Mentored staff nurses and other research
- Research findings used to create RFP for ASLN and AONL
- Developed new relationships and improved collaborations.

Development of Innovations

- Theories and frameworks.
- A methodology to capture data over time
- Assessment methods
- Competencies for nurse supervisors
- Scales and instruments

Dissemination

- Google Scholar yielded 100s of citations indicating the research's far-reaching impact.
- More than 61 publications, 18 presentations, and 5 posters resulted from AONL Foundation research grants.
- 33 out of 53 past projects (62%) funded by AONL Foundation had at least one publication.

- The papers published largely fell into one of the following categories:
 - Nurse Manager competency and influence
 - Patient safety
 - Behavioral and interpersonal skills
 - Professional practice environment
 - Professional/Shared governance

Adoption

- At least 5 projects reported expansion to other sites, states or systems.
- Multiple citations on many papers indicate interest and expansion of ideas.
- Researchers reported that their work had an impact on their local institutions.
- Findings have been incorporated into book chapters.

Exemplars

- One researcher thanked AONL Foundation for the grant, which enabled him to learn a methodology he did not know to do this research study. The researcher completed his research by measuring the stress level of caregivers over time to address their need for wellness. Later, he procured a \$5 million grant to continue his research on provider wellness. With his new grant, he included family caregivers in at-risk (Latino) population.
- One researcher built a foundation of research, which led her to receive more than \$2.5 million in grant funding for leadership development work for 17 years after the initial research grant from AONL Foundation. It was a catalyst for receiving the AONL Foundation Nurse Leader Researcher of the Year Award in 2018. She developed a consensus process to identify factors influencing younger nurses to pursue or reject nursing leadership positions. She published books about coaching, leadership tools, and nursing care delivery.
- With the AONL Foundation grant, one researcher procured funding for her doctoral study. The research team studied Situational Divergence Theory (SDT) to learn more about "troublesome outcomes" related to poor nursing communication. The study's findings showed that SDT can help explain a number of poor outcomes in patient care due to poor or ineffective nurse communication and also provide an underlying explanation for a number of factors that can predict nursing job satisfaction.
- Titles of innovations resulting from Foundation-funded research include:
 - Adams Influence Model Using Practice, Research and Theory.
 - Situational Divergence Theory – and its effect on troublesome outcomes in nursing communication.
 - Theory to improve NPC alignment with Nursing leadership for effectiveness (The General Effective Multilevel Theory for Shared Governance) GEMS.
 - Practice Environment Scale for Nurse Managers.

In Summary and the Future

This report represents the data from only 37 of the 60+ grant recipients from 2003. The true impact of AONL Foundation grants inevitably goes beyond what could not be captured based on retirements and inaccurate contact information. The work of measuring outcomes from Foundation grants and assessing impact is ongoing, and future iterations of this work will be

informed by following up with each of the researchers periodically over the years immediately post-grant. The current AONL Foundation's guiding priorities are optimizing leadership effectiveness, achieving equity in health care, and improving the health care experience. The above findings align with these priorities.