

Aim: To systematically review current research identifying the non-technical competencies required for UK military nurses to perform their duties at home and on operations.

Design: A search strategy was applied to nursing databases to locate articles identifying specific knowledge, skills and characteristics required by nurses for deployment into the operational environment or their UK based roles.

Data Sources: As the leading nursing databases, CINAHL, MEDLINE and PUBMED were searched using key phrases reflecting the question and aims of the review. A grey literature search was carried out using google scholar, secondary references and library databases to identify other material that could be included in the review.

Review Methods: Articles were systematically reviewed using inclusion/exclusion criteria and the CASP quality assessment tool.

Results: Using the PRISMA framework, a yield of 339 citations were identified but only two articles were applicable to the review. Several non-technical domains for military nurses were identified. Despite the military context, many of these domains could be mapped across to the National Health Service/civilian nurse (NHS) Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF). However, neither article produced a means of measurement or assurance.

Conclusion: The paucity of research into military nursing non-technical competence and corresponding lack of methods for measurement demonstrates the need for further investigation. Use of a framework may offer a means by which future models could be structured but the content needs to reflect the operational, personal and professional requirements of military nurses. Furthermore, the identification of specific non-technical skills will aid in the assurance of the deploying clinical team, ensuring high clinical performance is robustly prepared for and maintained.

Impact: Secondary care nursing within the military is delivered in the NHS or on deployed operations. Both present significant geographical, clinical and organisational challenges in assuring delivery of requisite skills and exposure to clinical practice appropriate for deployment. Identification of the competencies required and their organisation into a usable framework will have a significant impact on how military nursing personnel are prepared and assured in their UK and operational roles.

Key Words: Nurse, military nurse, competence, skills characteristics, non-technical skills.