

Nurses help ease health system pains

A NEW study will look at the changing role of nurses in general practice and offer suggestions on how to improve the delivery of health care.

Funded by the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute at the Australian National University, the three-year study will examine international experiences to develop a best practice model for Australia.

Dr Christine Phillips, senior lecturer at the ANU medical school, will lead a team that includes researchers from the United Kingdom.

"The role of nurses in general practice varies,

depending on the size, model and influences of each practice, but their importance is growing and models about how to best utilise their skills are needed," she said.

Dr Phillips said there was a need for more research on the role of nurses, with past studies focusing on the role of doctors in primary health care.

She said the three-year study will be carried out in two phases.

The first phase will attempt to understand the role of nursing in general practice, while the next phase will develop practical tools for doctors and nurses to use.