

## KEYNOTE 4: Numeracy in Nursing

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### ***Biography***

Ms Kerri Wright is currently writing a chapter for a book on assessing patients for district nursing. Her main interests are Primary Care and in particular continuing care and district nursing and her research interests are in caring for the terminally ill from a district nurses perspective and assessing and decision making.

### ***Abstract***

Numeracy and drug calculation skills are seen as essential skills in nursing. Errors in drug calculations can result in incorrect drug dosages being administered which can lead to adverse and sometimes fatal consequences for the patient. Recent research and media reports along with the political agenda focussing on national literacy and numeracy have led to a renewed focus on this key skill in nursing.

This presentation will briefly discuss the history of drug calculation education and the potential difficulties in the present methods being used to teach and assess this skill. A mathematical problem solving framework will then be used to illustrate and discuss the different types of knowledge and skills required to successfully problem solve which go beyond mathematical knowledge.

The discussion will draw on work from cognitive psychology, everyday cognition, mathematical education, nursing and philosophy to expand and discuss the ideas presented. Examples from my own research and teaching in this area will also be used to illustrate points being raised for further discussion.