INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON INFORMAL CAREGIVING

With our ageing population we are searching for answers to questions about who is going to care for us in our old age. Sydney Nursing School recently explored this topic, together with other issues about caring for people with chronic conditions, through the Worldwide Universities Network Nursing Series.

On 28 April, 2010, Associate Professor Yun-Hee Jeon led a virtual presentation to the University of Southampton on the topic of “Informal caregiving research, policy and practice”. This presentation marks the beginning of a dialogue with others working in the areas of informal caregiving with a view to establishing international collaborative opportunities.

CANCER RESEARCH LINKS IN USA

Sydney Nursing School’s reputation for cancer nursing research was recently highlighted at the International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care conference in Atlanta.

The International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care (ISNCC) conference in Atlanta (USA), March 2010, was an excellent forum for Sydney Nursing School and the Cancer Nursing Research Unit to profile its research in cancer nursing and extend international links for research and clinical care to improve patient care and better outcomes for people with cancer.

Professor Kate White (CINSW Chair Cancer Nursing) co-facilitated the pre-conference workshop with Professor Nancy Kline from the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Hospital, New York, on evidence-based practice to oncology nurses from 12 different countries. Kate White, Helen Gooden (PhD Candidate) and Keith Cox (Sydney Cancer Centre Nurse Practitioner, Clinical Senior Lecturer) also took the opportunity to meet and build links with staff at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Hospital, New York. Kate and Keith visited nursing colleagues and the specialist oncology dermatology unit, where they met with Professor Mario Lacouture, to further develop research collaboration in the area of cutaneous toxicities. It’s hoped Professor Lacouture will visit Australia later this year to further this work.

The breadth of activity undertaken in Sydney Nursing School’s cancer...
INFORMAL CARE GIVING

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Yun-Hee provided an overview of her work on carers of people with chronic illness and introduced a systematic review proposal on comparisons of carer support policies in five OECD countries. She gave a brief summary of a newly developed on-line forum for research higher degree students and staff who have an interest in informal caregiving research (CRPPN: Caregiving Research, Policy and Practice Network).

Associate Professor Kim Foster presented her areas of interest in caregiving research in mental health. Participating PhD students also shared their caregiving research experiences. The virtual forum included an open discussion on informal caregiving research by all participating members including PhD students and academics. According to Yun-Hee, “This was a good opportunity for us to develop ways through which we can build an international collaboration in this area and secure funding for further research. The strong representation of academic staff and students from both universities and lively discussions on various caregiving research topics signalled a potential for research collaborations between the two universities.”

Seminar participants identified a number of areas of interest for possible international collaboration and strategies to maintain dialogues: 1) Developing a repository for a suite of outcome measurement tools relevant to caregiving research; 2) On-going dialogue through Internet (On-line forum) targeting specific areas of caregiving research; and 3) Policy reviews relating to carer identification.


DEAN’S MESSAGE

As we celebrate International Nurses’ Day on 12 May I acknowledge the tremendous work that has gone into preparing national registration and accreditation through the Nurses and Midwives Board Australia. This is very important for all nurses to be able to register once in Australia — to have one single accreditation body and removing differences between State programs.

I also acknowledge the very hard work of our academic staff in preparing research applications to the NHMRC and ARC. Research is a very important part of our future directions and strength.

With Sydney Nursing School going through an exciting period of rapid growth I was naturally thrilled with the student course experience (SCEQ and CEQ) results which showed strong improvements in students’ perceptions about the quality of Sydney Nursing School’s teaching and student learning.

In March, the University of Sydney released a Green Paper on the University’s strategic direction and we have engaged in a faculty-wide response. We are delighted with the positioning of the Green Paper which suggests there is the opportunity for cognate groups, such as health faculties, to work closely together to set the vision that makes sense for these groups and which will influence the collective vision of the University.

Sadly, due to an injury, I won’t be travelling as planned this month to Geneva and London. I was scheduled to work with WHO’s Chief Nurse Scientist at a meeting with Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officers from around the world to continue my work on the roles and responsibilities of chief nurse and midwifery officers. In London I was to meet with the Dean of King’s College London, Professor Ann-Marie Rafferty, to discuss the positioning of nurses and midwives within academic health sciences centres. There will be plenty of scope in this area for the University of Sydney.

From the first political debate on health in March to the COAG meeting in April the health landscape in Australia is moving rapidly. Nurses and midwives’ voices must ring loud and clear to ensure these health reforms are in the best interest of health care delivery and patient care. This will truly be an interesting year. Happy International Nurses Day! — Regards, Jill White

CANCER NURSING RESEARCH UNIT

In an exciting development, the Cancer Nursing Research Unit (CNRU) offices are now established at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPA) Sydney Cancer Centre. The CNRU is a new unit, established in late 2009 and funded by the Cancer Institute NSW, Sydney Nursing School and Sydney Cancer Centre (RPA). The Unit’s aim is to improve patient care and outcomes through cancer nursing research and education in New South Wales.

Two CNRU staff members (Dr Kathleen Scott and Ms Jessica Roydhouse) were among a small group of researchers selected to attend the PROMIS workshop sponsored by the Psycho-Oncology Co-Operative Research Group. The workshop introduces a new international computer-based tool for measuring patient-reported outcomes, developed by quality of life researcher Prof David Cella. The tool has the potential to inform outcome assessment and measurement in clinical trials and is currently being tested in Australia.

Dr Heather McKenzie recently presented a paper on pain and cancer experience at the 1st Global Conference “Making Sense Of: Pain”, hosted by Inter-Disciplinary Net. And the CNRU was well-represented at International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care conference in Atlanta.

The CNRU will shortly commence a series of workshops for clinical nurses, so stay tuned for more news to come in the next few months.
OUT AND ABOUT

RPA NURSES’ PROFESSIONAL DAY
We were pleased to sponsor RPA’s “The Evolution of Nursing... Your Generation” on 22 April 2010. Guest speakers included Professors Jill White, Kate White and Mary Chiarella and Dr Andrea Marshall from Sydney Nursing School. More than 150 nurses and midwives from across NSW attended this fascinating and entertaining event.

ALL TOGETHER BETTER HEALTH CONFERENCE 5
Sydney Nursing School’s Associate Professor Donna Waters, along with Gillian Nisbet from the University’s Northern Clinical School (Sydney Medical School) helped co-organise this landmark conference on 6-9 April 2010.

GRADUATION DAY CLASS OF ’09
On Friday 23 April Sydney Nursing School celebrated the graduation of more than 160 University of Sydney graduands, including 2 PhD students, and students from our Master of Nursing, postgraduate coursework and Bachelor of Nursing (Post-registration) degrees.

The Graduation Oration was delivered by Adjunct Professor Debra Thoms, Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer, NSW Health. We congratulate our students and wish them well shaping the future of health care.

MENTAL HEALTH NURSING
Meet our team of highly experienced mental health nurse clinicians, teachers and researchers contributing to the energy and enthusiasm at Sydney Nursing School.

Sydney Nursing School has revised its advanced learning specialty programs, including mental health nursing. So here we introduce to you our mental health nursing team which is delivering mental health programs at both pre-registration and advanced learning levels to strengthen and develop nurses’ interest, knowledge and practice skills in mental health.

The team now comprises Associate Professor Kim Foster, Dr Jo Patching, Dr Michelle Huws-Thomas, Andrea McCloughen and Cynthia Delgado. A/Professor Kim Foster is very excited by the mental health line-up at Sydney Nursing School: “We are all looking forward to delivering the newly revised mental health program and also introducing many aspects of mental health nursing to pre-registration students. Our programs are informed by the team’s areas of research which include the co-association between physical and mental health, and the issues faced by children, young people and family carers affected by mental illness.”

Dr Jo Patching was recently appointed to the position of Course Coordinator – Advanced Learning (Mental Health) Program. Jo is well-known to many as a Senior Lecturer in the School’s mental health nursing team. She has a strong publication record and her research interests include body image, body products and eating disorders. She currently supervises a number of higher degree research students.

The new members of the mental health nursing team also bring a wealth of experience to Sydney Nursing School. Dr Michelle Huws-Thomas is joining us this month from Cardiff University. She has extensive experience in the fields of drug and alcohol nursing, community mental health, acute mental health inpatient units, child and adolescent nursing and psychological treatment units. Andrea McCloughen joined us in February as Postdoctoral Research Fellow Mental Health Nursing. Cynthia Delgado was appointed to the joint position of Lecturer Mental Health Nursing and Clinical Nurse Consultant in Consultation Liaison Mental Health at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.
CANCER CONFERENCE

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portfolio was reflected in the eleven research papers presented across the four day program: Living with multiple myeloma (Moira Stephens, funded by the Cancer Council); Improving nutritional status in women with gynaecological cancer (A/ Clinical Prof Dr Mary Ryan NICS Fellow); Experience of haematological malignancy and survivorship (A/ Prof Maureen Boughton); Outpatient care of chemotherapy patients (Dr H McKenzie); Cutaneous toxicities (Prof Kate White); Education and skills for clinical trials practice (Dr Kathleen Scott); Decision aids for breast reconstruction (Olivia Hill, PhD Candidate); Meeting support needs of those with pancreatic cancer and undertaking research in vulnerable populations (Helen Gooden); Managing side effects of chemotherapy (Keith Cox).

Sydney Nursing School also sponsored the Poster Awards.

Since the conference we are now working to establish formal links for ongoing collaboration in both clinical care and research that will inform improved approaches to supportive care and recovery for cancer patients in NSW.

NEWS FROM THE LAB

In recent months clinical skills equipment has been updated for our Clinical Simulation Laboratories (CSL) and our pre-registration students are reaping the benefits for clinical practice.

The CSL now feature a large number of medium fidelity (realistic) manikins, including 4 MegaCode Kelleys and 12 Nursing Anne Vital Sims, plus high fidelity manikins, SimMan and SimBaby. The manikins are prepared to simulate real patients and are based on authentic patient scenarios that have their own charts and specific nursing care.

Students are also enjoying using the two new mechanical lifters for manual handling, the biphasic assisted electronic defibrillators and the four new Resusci Anne manikins.

Hands on Health! Sydney Nursing School joined other University of Sydney faculties to host the Year 3 Introduction to University Day on 22 April 2010.