NEW NURSES A WIN FOR TONGA

The Dean of Sydney Nursing School, Professor Jill White, gave the address in Tonga for the graduation of 20 nurses with Advanced Nursing Diplomas in the prevention, detection and management of non-communicable diseases.

The graduation ceremony was attended by Her Majesty Queen Nanasipau'u Tuku'aho of Tonga.

These graduates are Tonga’s first qualified nurses focused on non-communicable diseases. They completed the 30-week course in December 2013 and will be stationed at health centres and diabetes centres across Tonga, including the outer islands.

The nurses aim to identify patients at high risk of developing a non-communicable disease, provide advice, and help those with an already diagnosed condition to manage their illness.

Results from the successful pilot program, which began in 2012 in five health centres, have provided the basis for expanding the non-communicable disease nurse program.

Tonga’s Ministry of Health made the decision to create a new cadre of nurses dedicated to non-communicable diseases because these conditions are so widespread in Tonga. Cardiovascular disease and diabetes are some of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in Tonga. Poor diet, lack of physical exercise, smoking and alcohol consumption are the main factors contributing to the onset of a non-communicable disease. The World Health Organization reported that such diseases accounted for 74 percent of all deaths in Tonga in 2008.

Tonga’s Director for Health, Dr Siale ‘Akau’ola, says the nurses’ graduation is an important milestone for Tonga:

“Not only will it assist in achieving our objective of halting and beginning to reverse the effect of non-communicable diseases, it should also reduce hospital admissions and subsequently reduce the expensive health spend that hospital admissions can create.”

Development of the advanced diploma was financed through the Tonga Health Systems Support Program. The $8.3 million program, funded by Australia, assists with improving health outcomes in Tonga, with a particular focus on reducing risk factors for non-communicable diseases.

“Australia congratulates Tonga on the non-communicable diseases nursing initiative,” Australian High Commissioner Brett Aldam says. “By working with the community, the newly graduated nurses will be at the forefront of efforts to tackle the significant health, social and economic impacts of non-communicable diseases.”

The non-communicable diseases nursing course is accredited by the Tonga National Qualification and Accreditation Board. It was developed by the Ministry of Health with assistance from Professor White, and taught by well-known local medical practitioners, including surgeon specialist Dr Viliami Tangi and Royal Physician Dr Sione Latu.

We have just heard that our first Tongan doctoral scholar ‘Amelia Atuha’amango Tu’ipulotu has been made Chief Nurse of Tonga. We offer her our congratulations.
LAB FAB

We are very pleased to announce a new staff lineup at our clinical simulation laboratories, including some old and new faces.

CLINICAL SIMULATION LABORATORY REGISTERED NURSE
Sarah Harkin
We are delighted to announce that we have managed to convince our Irish colleague, Sarah, to stay and take up a permanent position with us at the labs. Ireland’s loss is our gain.

CLINICAL SIMULATION LABORATORY REGISTERED NURSE
Shanthi Kandasamy
Shanthi is an eminently experienced clinical nurse specialist who until recently worked at Wollongong Hospital as a clinical nurse educator in operating theatres. We are delighted to welcome Shanthi, who brings to our team a positive energy and enthusiasm for nurse education.

CLINICAL SIMULATION LABORATORY TECHNICIAN
Tuan Le
Tuan has more than 10 years experience in clinical simulation; without him we would cease to function. His extraordinary innovation, technical ability and creativity enable us to provide the highest quality simulation-based learning environments. Tuan also brings a commitment to promoting a culture of sustainability and recycling.

CLINICAL SIMULATION LABORATORY MANAGER
Caroline Bolton
Previously working in clinical facilitation of pre-registration nursing students on clinical practice, Caroline has jumped the fence to work on the operational side of supporting students in the development of clinical practice skills and decision-making. She joined the labs in August 2013 and is excited to be heading up a dynamic team that is keen to provide the very best in simulation-based learning environments for Sydney Nursing School students.

TEA AND SCHOLARS

Sydney Nursing School runs a Summer Scholar program each year with five or six current students and alumni chosen to assist leading researchers and participate in major research projects.

In 2014, scholars are working on projects in fields as diverse as dementia care, radiotherapy, gynaecological oncology, mental illness in young people, and spinal-cord rehabilitation. The scholars are based at locations across Sydney including the Royal Rehabilitation Centre in Ryde and the new Chris O’Brien Lifehouse at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Newtown.

The program aims to give students experience in conducting health research. The scholars met for afternoon tea with the Associate Dean (Research) Donna Waters, on 30 January. Supervisors discussed their research projects and the direction of research at Sydney Nursing School. Scholars gained fresh perspectives on possibilities for further work and study in research.
DEAN’S WELCOME

Welcome to another exciting year at Sydney Nursing School. We would like to welcome you all, whether you are joining us as students, alumni, staff, organisation partners, affiliates or friends, to the family of nursing and midwifery at the University of Sydney.

It has already been a busy and successful start to the year. We commenced 2014 with a full complement of nursing students across all our programs including the Bachelor of Nursing (Advanced Studies), Master of Nursing (Graduate Entry), combined degrees, postgraduate, Bachelor of Nursing (Post-registration) and research degrees. Our strong admission numbers continue to demonstrate a demand to attend the University of Sydney, in particular Sydney Nursing School. I would like to thank our directors, coordinators, advisers and professional staff for their hard work in helping us through this busy first part of the year.

We began the year with the student orientation event on the 25th February. What a fantastic turnout – more than 320 students attended. See our full coverage on the following page.

As we welcomed new students, we also celebrated with and bid farewell to our 250 graduates from 2013. I wish them all the best for their bright futures. We ensure that our graduates leave us with the knowledge, skills and qualities that both the profession and the employers are looking for, and we are pleased to see that so many of our graduates are securing roles in a diversity of roles in both public and private hospitals.

I have also had the very special privilege of giving the graduation address in Tonga recently for the graduation of 20 nurses with Advanced Nursing Diplomas. The graduation ceremony was attended by Her Majesty Queen Nanisipauʻu Tuku’aho of Tonga.

It is really wonderful to see the first graduates ready to go out into their community and make an immediate difference in the prevention, detection and management of non-communicable diseases.

Sydney Nursing School encourages and welcomes nursing and midwifery alumni to become actively involved in the school. Our community’s strength is demonstrated in the success of our homeless kit packing day in December last year. More than 350 volunteers came together to help Sydney Nursing School make a difference in the lives of Sydney’s homeless people.

What a fabulous way to end 2013 and I thank you for your generosity in giving your time to such an important initiative.

I love the beginning of a new year – it brings fresh energy and opportunity. I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new staff and students and offer the opportunity to meet with our affiliates, alumni and partners throughout the year. I wish you all the best for a wonderful, positive and productive year.

Warm regards,
Professor Jill White AM
Dean, Sydney Nursing School
HELP FOR THE HOMELESS

More than 350 volunteers came together in December to help Sydney Nursing School make a difference in the lives of Sydney’s homeless people.

St Vincent de Paul Society Executive Officer Matthew Cleary says people prioritise food and shelter over their general health. He says the care packs would not only assist with people’s health once they left the hostel, but were a way of supporting their self-esteem and saying “we value you”. The event was also vital in raising awareness of issues surrounding homelessness, Cleary says.

Of the 28,000 homeless people in NSW, Cleary says 13 percent are children, 17 percent are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, 40 percent are female and 70 percent are under the age of 44. He encouraged participants to share some these facts and figures about “the real face of homelessness” with their friends and families.

This is the third annual aid event hosted by Sydney Nursing School, but the first in support of a local community. In their previous appeals, held in 2011 and 2012, volunteers assembled thousands of birthing kits for the women of Africa and Papua New Guinea. Visit our website to view a video and images from the event: sydney.edu.au/nursing

GETTING ORIENTED

Sydney Nursing School had a fantastic orientation day, with more than 320 students attending.

Students from all degrees were invited, including the Bachelor of Nursing (Advanced Studies), Master of Nursing (Graduate Entry), combined degrees, postgraduate, Bachelor of Nursing (Post-registration) and research students.

Held on February 25, the day commenced with the Early Offer Year 12 (E12) students’ breakfast, to welcome recipients of the E12 scholarships. The Welcome to Country by Aunty Millie Ingram was well received by students, followed by the Dean’s Welcome.

Students gained a great deal of information about life at Sydney Nursing School. Breakout sessions were held for the Bachelor of Nursing (Post-registration), postgraduate and research students.

The adventure of the self-guided tour had the floors and stairwells buzzing with excitement as the students made their way around the faculty gathering stamps for the Passport to Nursing. Prizes were presented at the end of the day, and were gratefully received.

The Information Fair was the day’s final session and had the ground floor humming with activity. Staff and students at the tables responded to a range of student enquiries, ranging from clinical uniforms to University of Sydney Union representation, Sydney University Nursing Society, the Cultural and Linguistic Diversity program, and clinical placement services.
CALL THE MIDWIFE

Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery academics have demonstrated the cost and safety benefits of caseload midwifery care and helped to raise community awareness of the practice.

Caseload midwifery enables women to be cared for by the same midwife throughout their pregnancy, during childbirth and in the early weeks at home with a new baby.

The study, published in the journal BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth, found that pregnant women who see the same midwife throughout pregnancy are likely to experience fewer interventions during birth, and cost the public hospital system less than women who receive standard shared antenatal care or private obstetric care.

The research examined the costs and outcomes for women who experienced each of the three models of care offered at the Royal Hospital for Women: caseload midwifery care; standard hospital care; and care by a private obstetrician in the public hospital.

The research team built on the findings in their last paper, which was published in medical journal The Lancet in 2013. This second study added an assessment of care by a private obstetrician in a public hospital.

Both studies received considerable media coverage, reaching audiences of more than a million on both occasions.

The faculty’s Professor of Midwifery Sally Tracy, the paper’s lead author, says that first-time ‘low-risk’ mothers who received caseload midwifery care were more likely to have a spontaneous onset of labour and an unassisted vaginal birth, representing 58.5 percent of women.

“This is compared to 48.2 percent of women who chose standard hospital care and 30.8 percent with private obstetric care.

“Caseload midwifery patients were also 10 times less likely to have an elective caesarean than women with private obstetric care.”

The study found that over the course of one financial year there was an average saving of more than $1000 per woman for those who chose caseload midwifery care. It is also the first study to calculate the average cost per woman receiving private obstetric care in the public system.

Paper co-author Dr Donna Hartz, from our faculty, said that despite high-quality evidence of the safety and cost savings associated with caseload midwifery care, it has only been introduced in most hospitals as a token service with access to a small proportion of women.

Dr Hartz says that midwifery group practice models could play a major role in reducing the public health burden by increasing normal outcomes and promoting more efficient use of funds.

HIGH POINTS

WOMEN’S PLANS FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

Master of Nursing student Souti Khalil was awarded the 2013 Women’s Plans Foundation scholarship. She received her prize at the National Council of Women’s Australia Day luncheon at Parliament House on 23 January.

Souti volunteered at a maternity hospital in Kenya and has a passion for women’s reproductive health and development.

“My experience was inspiring, heartwarming, eye-opening, rewarding and very challenging,” Souti says of her time in Kenya. “It increased my passion to reach out and teach women that they have the ability to plan the number and spacing of their children and take ownership of their reproductive health.”

VIETNAM HOC MAI SCHOLARSHIP

Over the summer break, four fortunate pre-registration nursing students travelled to Vietnam to undertake an additional clinical placement. Matthew Anderson, Stephanie Lomax, Kathleen Murchie and Susannah Summers received scholarships funded by the Hoc Mai Australia Vietnam Medical Foundation and Sydney Nursing School. We hope to offer these scholarships again in 2014.
RECONSTRUCTIVE RESOURCE

A research team at the University of Sydney, in collaboration with Cancer Australia and Breast Cancer Network Australia, has developed a new online resource that takes women through the process of breast reconstruction after a mastectomy.

The online resource, hosted on the Cancer Australia website, provides a comprehensive guide for women considering surgical breast reconstruction and helps guide them through the challenging decision-making process. It covers essential information on the types of breast reconstruction available, deciding whether to have reconstruction surgery, and living with a breast reconstruction.

“Women are seeking more information about their breast treatment options,” says Sydney Nursing School doctoral candidate Olivia Gallagher, who led development of the resource. “About 40 percent of women diagnosed with breast cancer in Australia require a mastectomy as the principal surgical treatment.

“Making a decision about breast reconstruction is complicated, and has to be taken into context with a breast cancer diagnosis.”

“The factors surrounding the diagnosis impact on a someone’s ability to retain, collate and process the information required to make decisions about their reconstruction treatment.”

This subject has become more prominent recently with Hollywood actor Angelina Jolie choosing to undergo a preventative double mastectomy to reduce her risk of developing breast cancer. After her decision became public, there was a dramatic increase of referrals to genetic clinics around the world, dubbed the ‘Angelina effect’.

“This online resource will fill a gap by providing information and guidance for all Australian women who are considering reconstructive surgery, and assist them to make an informed decision during a difficult time in their life,” Gallagher says.

The resource also provides valuable information for health professionals providing care and support for women following a mastectomy.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

CAREERS IN NURSING EXPO FOR FINAL-YEAR STUDENTS
29 APRIL 2014, 4 – 8PM
Sydney Nursing School

INTERNATIONAL MIDWIVES DAY
5 MAY 2014

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY
12 MAY 2014

OPEN DAY
30 AUGUST 2014
9.30AM – 4PM
Camperdown/Darlington Campus
The University of Sydney

DEAN’S GALA DINNER
18 SEPTEMBER 2014
The Great Hall
The University of Sydney

HOMLESS DAY PACKING
4 DECEMBER 2014
The Great Hall
The University of Sydney

GRADUATION
12 DECEMBER 2014
9.30 – 11.30AM
The Great Hall
The University of Sydney

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