

News Briefs

Membership numbers on the rise

Sigma Theta Tau provided service to more than 134,000 members worldwide last year. What's contributed to this increase? "During the past year, we have introduced some exciting new products and services," explains Nancy Dickenson-Hazard, Sigma Theta Tau Executive Officer. "More importantly, we have expanded our online communication options, improved responsiveness to member requests and enhanced record keeping."

Largest gift in Sigma Theta Tau history

Philanthropist Ruth Lilly has given a \$2 million contribution to expand Sigma Theta Tau International's electronic library. Ms. Lilly's gift, the largest single gift in the 78-year history of Sigma Theta Tau, will help nurses worldwide get the information they need to conduct research, serve patients and control health care costs.

Pssst...Pass it on!

Nurses who missed the opportunity to join as students are able to accept the honor of membership as community leaders. Nominate your nursing colleagues with bachelor's degrees to your local chapter or encourage them to contact headquarters by calling 1.888.634.7575 (U.S. and Canada) or +800.634.7575.1 (International).

The art of nursing

Encouraging prospective students to pursue a nursing career is more important than ever. To promote the opportunities nursing provides, Sigma Theta Tau International offers the "Art of Nursing" brochure. Call 1.888.634.7575 for copies.

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Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing

EXCELLENCE

in Clinical Practice

Fourth Quarter 2000 Volume 1, Number 4

nursingsociety.org

Rehabilitation nursing

Another increasing shortage

By Marlene Ruiz

When analyzing where the nursing shortage is most critical, rehabilitation nursing rises to the top. Kathy Dunn, RN, MS, CRRN-A, a twenty-five-year veteran in this field of practice, explains that like operating room nursing, rehabilitation nursing is an area to which few nursing students are exposed during clinical experience in their educational programs. Without this experience, students and new graduates often have little experience with or serious misconceptions of rehabilitation nursing.

It's true that rehabilitation nursing requires a lot of the individual. It is often physically challenging and demands specialized training. Nurses in the field have special education in patho-physiology, body and behavioral deficits, differentiation of brain and spinal cord injuries, psychosocial aspects, skin care, bowel and bladder training, sexuality, activities of daily living, assistive devices, body mechanics, and



By helping patients set attainable goals, rehabilitation nurses encourage patients' independence.

transfers. Rehabilitation nurses also must have excellent skills assessing their clients, since most patients are not able to verbalize their symptoms.

While rehabilitation nursing is demanding, it is also rewarding. "I learned more about nursing clinically in my first week at Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) than I did in three semesters of clinical through school," said Kate Schreiber, RN, BSN, a new graduate. "The rehab nurses were accustomed to teaching and made me feel an important and integral part of the team."

One of her first clients was a 60-year-old man. While visiting his wife in the intensive care unit, an abdominal aneurysm ruptured. He was rushed to the operating room but lost use below the T8 level. The man was placed next to his wife in the ICU, but she died shortly after his transfer before he had an opportunity to speak with her. When he awoke, he experienced the trauma of having lost both his wife and his legs. Despite the overwhelming loss and persistent depression, he recovered. He now is able to accomplish all his

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Nursing: An international student's perspective

By Wan Hyuck Kim

When I began the six-week internship at Kaiser Permanente Hospital in San Diego, I was excited about the opportunity. I already possessed more than three years of experience in clinical nursing at Seoul National University Hospital, one of only a few tertiary care hospitals in Korea. I looked forward to learning more about nursing in the United States and exploring the difference between American and Korean hospitals.

As a graduate student in Health Service Administration, I discovered many things. First, I found that nursing in this country is often what distinguishes hospitals from one another. The quality and unique characteristics of the hospitals are determined by the quality of nursing and the professionalism of its nurses.

"I found that nursing in this country is often what distinguishes hospitals from one another."

During my internship, I was also able to explore the Dialysis Center and Outpatient Treatment Center. This gave me a great opportunity to compare clinical nursing in the United States and in Korea. The first thing that struck me was the number of patients in the care of each nurse. In Korea, I often cared for 17 to 20 patients, while nurses here cared for far fewer. Taking care of a manageable number of patients means nurses can provide the highest quality care. It makes it possible for nurses to spend their time supplying direct care. I also discovered that patients are not considered a member of a group with the

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Nurses and the 'net

The Internet resource for clinicians

By Cheryl Hall Harris

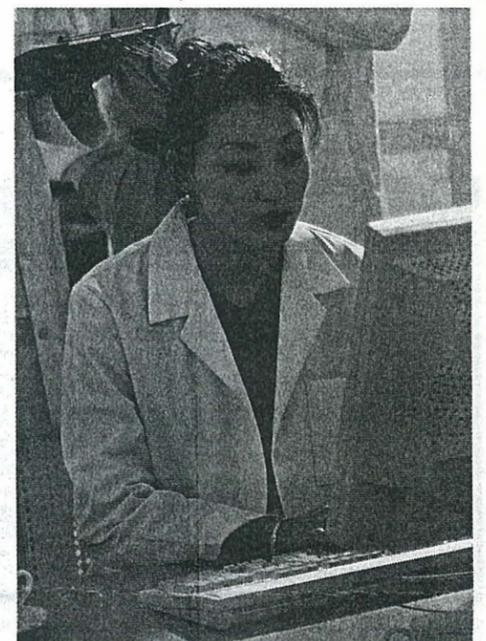
The Internet often brings to mind e-mail, shopping and news. But what about nursing? Placed within the context of your clinical practice, the World Wide Web is a phenomenal resource for nurses.

The Internet provides an almost infinite variety and scope of health data, from simple advice about wellness to the most obscure information about extremely rare diseases. Web sites abound that address mental, spiritual and physical dimensions of health, multicultural aspects of nursing practice and clinical ethics. There are several techniques for finding the specific information you require.

The Power of Search Engines

Because the Internet is vast, making efficient use of your time locating information requires skill and some extremely powerful search tools. If you have spent time "surfing the 'net," you're probably already aware of search engines such as Yahoo!®, ExciteSM and Lycos® for generating Web sites to explore. Since every search engine is configured somewhat differently, each may retrieve distinct Web sites. Although there could be some overlap, using several search engines improves your probability of finding the specific information you seek.

To increase your ability to find relevant sites, enter your search terms on one of the metasearch engine sites such as DogpileSM at www.dogpile.com/. Using as many as 24 single search engines, DogpileSM reports the results of each search engine in a separate list. If you determine one search engine returns the most relevant results, continue reviewing Web sites produced by that engine. IntellisearchTM at www.intellisearch.com/ allows you to narrow your search to a health channel before entering your



"Placed within the context of clinical practice, the World Wide Web is a phenomenal resource for nurses."

search term and then ranks results according to how closely they meet your parameters.

Following Hypertext Links

Another method of finding relevant information is to employ hypertext links using a credible site as a "jumping off place." The Sigma Theta Tau International Web site at www.nursingsociety.org/ provides links to other reliable sites via the "Global Opportunities" button. NursingWorld,

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Sigma Theta Tau International
Honor Society of Nursing

Forensic nurses merge nursing practice and the law

By Rita Colella

Historically, nurses always have had the ability to recognize needs and to take the leadership role in enhancing the quality of life. The specialty of forensic nursing is no exception.

Found in correctional facilities, courts and clinical settings, forensic nurses specialize in nursing practice and the law. Often forensic nurses work with domestic violence and rape victims and testify in court.

A SANE Program for Victims

Although nurses have been working with victims and the law for more than 20 years, the American Nurses Association (ANA) recognized forensic nursing as a specialty only as recently as 1995.

Currently, the largest sub-specialty of forensic nursing is Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs). SANEs are trained in forensic evidence collection techniques, which include the identification of trauma utilizing a

colposcope, alternative light sources, photography and other sophisticated documentation methods. As nurses, SANEs are in a unique position to skillfully perform the forensic examination, as well as provide the victim with the emotional support needed to ease the victim during the healing process. The potential for further trauma is decreased with the SANE's technical skill and ability to interact empathetically with victims. Having a qualified SANE nurse on staff allows evidence to be collected in a sensitive, effective and technologically advanced method.

The goals of SANE intervention are uniform across the country. Key aspects of the forensic examination include:

- assessment of trauma;
- objective documentation of health history, victim's statement and history of the crime;
- assessment of biological, psychological and social risk of medical sequelae;



Specializing in nursing practice and the law, forensic nurses often work with domestic violence and rape victims and testify in court.

rights to dignity and privacy are protected.

Becoming a SANE

To practice as a SANE, one must be a registered nurse with documented continuing education in the forensic nursing evaluation of victims of sexual assault (SANE Standards, 1996). Most states have developed additional requirements specific to their state and counties. For instance, in 1998 the New Jersey attorney general published "The Standards for Providing Services to Survivors of Sexual Assault." These guidelines now provide a framework for SANEs to practice within a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). The team is typically made up of a SANE, a rape crisis counselor and a member of law enforcement.

There are approximately 300 SANE/SART programs in operation across the United States. Since SANEs' education,

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New Harris poll is sobering wake-up call for profession

By Nancy Dickenson-Hazard



A just-released national poll by Harris Interactive presents a sobering wake-up call for nurses everywhere. Despite our profession's far-ranging health care knowledge, the

poll shows that most consumers seldom look to nurses for advice on such important issues as elder care, women's health or childhood diseases. Instead, most of those polled rely on nurses for basic health care advice that's consistent with traditional nursing roles.

The national poll, sponsored by *Nursing Spectrum* and the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, was based on telephone interviews with more than 1,000 adults aged 18 or over.

While the poll results show that nurses have carved out a respectable niche in providing health care advice to the public — principally through the traditional venues of office, school and hospital nursing — we clearly need to do a better job of reaching out to consumers and helping them with a

wider range of health care problems and concerns.

The Traditional Nurse

Out of 30 potential areas of nursing involvement cited in the poll, it is stunning to note that nurses' advice was sought only in the four areas consistent with traditional nursing roles. According to the poll, the public is comfortable asking nurses about over-the-counter health care products, how to take care of themselves or loved ones after surgery, how to take prescription medicines and what types of side effects to expect, and how to interpret information provided by a physician.

For example, more than half (55 percent) of the respondents said they had queried a nurse about post-operative care. Also, more than half (53 percent) of the respondents had asked a nurse for advice about over-the-counter health care products that provide relief for pain, fever or allergies.

Respondents were also questioned about how often a nurse has helped them understand something a medical doctor has told them, including information about treatment options or a diagnosis. The majority (52 percent) responded "very often" and "sometimes."

A similar percentage of respondents said they had asked a nurse about how to take a particular drug (50 percent) and side effects of prescribed drugs (50 percent).

Troublesome Findings

Although nurses are capable of providing a wealth of health care information, most of those surveyed said they did not seek expert nursing advice on care for the elderly, children's health issues, women's health issues, alternative therapies and certain aspects of medications.

The public also does not turn to nurses for advice on other important health-related issues including sexually transmitted diseases, sex education, abortion, and drug and alcohol use. For instance, 59 percent of the women surveyed had not asked a nurse about birth control, 77 percent of women had not sought a nurse's advice about menopause and 81 percent of women had not consulted a nurse about osteoporosis.

Implications

This poll clearly shows that nursing must find a way to make the public aware of the extensive health care knowledge nurses possess.

This is one of the issues being addressed by the Honor Society of Nursing and other professional organizations through aggressive media relations designed to get news and entertainment programs to more accurately portray nurses.

It's also a focus of Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow, a coalition of 19 leading nursing and health care organizations that is launching a national advertising campaign to raise awareness of — and change the image of — the nursing profession in order to recruit and retain more nurses. (For more information on Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow, visit www.nursesource.org.)

These findings should be a major concern for nurses everywhere who've worked hard to expand the role of our profession, increase our versatility and enhance our value in an increasingly complex health care system. It's time for nurses to have our voices heard and be counted among health care advisors consulted by the public.

Nancy Dickenson-Hazard, RN, MSN, FAAN, is the executive officer of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International.

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Mark your calendars!

Leadership Today— Changing Roles, Rules and Responsibilities

Sigma Theta Tau International presents the new 2001 Professional Development Conference and Chapter Leader Academy (formerly known as Regional Conferences)

These two-day seminars offer you five educational tracks from which to choose:

- Surviving and Thriving as a Clinical Practice Leader
- Achieving Your Lifelong Career
- Volunteer Association Leadership: Rewarding Roles in Service to Community
- Becoming a Funded Researcher
- Chapter Leader Academy (2-day track)

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Orlando, FL
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Philadelphia, PA
Chicago, IL

Dates:

January 26-27
February 23-24
March 23-24
April 27-28

Keynote Speaker:

Patricia E. Thompson, RN, EdD, Sigma Theta Tau International President



visit our Web site: www.nursingsociety.org

For more information send an e-mail message to: education@stti.iupui.edu

How are we doing?

Excellence was launched in January of this year providing members with an opportunity to choose the nursing information they receive — education, clinical practice or administration. We would love to know what you think about *Excellence*. So that we may continue to provide you with news and information important to you, we are always looking for authors and good story ideas. Please e-mail your thoughts to amy@stti.iupui.edu.

Career profiles in clinical practice

Name: Teresa Nimmer Vogel, RN, BSN

Title: Staff RN

Employer: Elmbrook Memorial Hospital,
Covenant Healthcare Systems

Years in Nursing: 19



Teresa Nimmer Vogel

Three favorite aspects of job:

- Direct patient contact
- Positively influencing patients' health outcomes
- Educating patients and their families

Three challenging aspects of job:

- Having enough energy and time
- Securing adequate resources
- Keeping current with research and technology via conferences and seminars

Job description:

Medical telemetry, cardiopulmonary, oncology and general medical-surgical responsibilities.

Education:

- Nursing Diploma, 1981, Columbia College of Nursing
- BSN, 1991, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis.

Sigma Theta Tau Chapter:

- Delta Gamma Chapter

Best advice:

"Become vital and active members of your nursing organizations at the hospital, clinic and community at local, state or national levels. Make a difference for nursing."

How Sigma Theta Tau has shaped her career:

"Sigma Theta Tau International has been influential in shaping my leadership abilities. It has given me the knowledge, skills and confidence to chair performance improvement and quality assurance activities at a major teaching center; to become a mentor/preceptor to nursing students and new employees; and to participate as a board member in the local chapter. Through Sigma Theta Tau conferences, I have gained the knowledge and skills to actively pursue a career change within nursing. Sigma Theta Tau has also provided great exposure to other nurses from across the United States and around the world."

Teresa Nimmer Vogel is one member whose career is profiled on our Web site, Career Profiles in Nursing, at www.nursingsociety.org/career. Visit the site today to ask these nurses questions through e-mail and explore the world of nursing. If you are interested in being featured on this site, please visit www.nursingsociety.org for an application. Submission deadline is October 30.

NURSES AND THE 'NET

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maintained by the American Nurses Association at www.ana.org/, offers hypertext links to a variety of nursing publications.

There are other functional sites that provide direction. The University of Iowa site HardinMetaDictionary (HardinMD) at [NK http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/hardin/md/index.html](http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/hardin/md/index.html) serves as an excellent springboard for information on a huge array of health topics. Their "Clean Bill of Health" feature sorts through some of the credibility issues.

Explore Other Sources

Print articles such as this one provide another means of finding valuable Web sites. There are some Web sites that cover specialized topics such as rare diseases, spirituality in health care or bioethics.

For example, if you need relatively obscure and difficult-to-find information about a complex and unusual syndrome, try the National Organization for Rare Diseases (NORD) Web site at www.rarediseases.org/. This database contains hundreds of entries to help you understand the patient with the unpronounceable disease who was just admitted to your care. Conversely, if you want information about simple conditions that may be outside your scope of practice (and you want a place to send patients for easy-to-understand information) consider the New York Online Access to Health (NOAH) at www.noah.cuny.edu/. This valuable resource page is produced by a consortium of organizations including the New York Public Library, the New York University Medical Center and the March of Dimes.

For multicultural health care issues, try the University of Indiana's

Transcultural and Multicultural Health Links Web page at www.lib.iun.indiana.edu/trannurs.htm. This Web site provides dozens of resources that can help you provide sensitive care to a patient from an exotic foreign culture or a religious background with which you are not familiar.

And speaking of respect for human dignity, how about bioethics sites? One of the most comprehensive approaches is provided by The University of Pennsylvania's Bioethics.net site at www.med.upenn.edu/~bioethic/. It includes a basic introduction to bioethics and items about bioethics in the news. One of the features reviews the bioethics issues in the television program E.R. The Nursing Ethics Network at www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/son/ethics/nen.html offers reports of nursing ethics research projects.

Finally, if you have had a bad day and are in need of a giggle, try looking at the jokes at www.allnurses.com/

www.allnurses.com/

Nursing_Humor/Nursing/. The Internet is an extraordinary resource for nurses in all practice settings. Building your comfort level in maneuvering through the vastness of cyberspace will benefit you, your patients and every aspect of your clinical practice.

As you view the online version of this article at www.nursingsociety.org, click on the links listed throughout the article to access the sites directly.

Cheryl Hall Harris, RN, BSN, experience includes twenty years in newborn intensive care, five years providing ethics education primarily to nurses and more than thirty years writing for publication. She currently works full time as a freelance writer.

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critical daily living tasks independently and remains an inspiration to Kate.

"I like rehab nursing because it allows me to visualize the tremendous strength and tenacity of the patients. Dealing with and surviving something as daunting as a spinal cord injury and the overwhelming life changes it brings is a truly miraculous test of human will. It restores my faith in human beings. When I first started working at SCI, I thought that it would be depressing and sad. I was happy to discover it is usually exactly opposite," stated Kate.

Rehab nursing is practiced in a variety of settings. The most common are acute and subacute units. Other areas that allow a lot of autonomy are case management, insurance company management of catastrophic injury clients, workman compensation companies, legal nurse consulting, Paralyzed Veterans Association and the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation.

Once nurses have at least two years of rehab practitioner experience, two levels of national certification are available. "Our challenge is to get them interested in this area of practice," says Kathy. "If they stay a few years, they will stay forever."

For more information about rehabilitation nursing, please e-mail marlene.s.ruiz@kp.org,



Rehabilitation nurses often instruct patients on how to care for themselves after an illness or disability.

kathleen.dunn@med.va.gov, or schreibe@rohan.sdsu.edu.

Marlene Ruiz, RN, BSN, MA, is director of education and consulting services at Kaiser Permanente, San Diego, Calif.

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For more information log on to: www.nursingsociety.org



Online courses are funded by the Joan K. Stout, RN, Continuing Education Series on Nursing Practice and the Eli Lilly and Company Foundation for Women's Health.

Sigma Theta Tau International is an accredited provider of CE for nurses by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.



Wan Hyuck Kim with a fellow graduate student

same diagnosis; they are viewed as unique, individualized and diversified human beings. Certainly, this can most effectively

be accomplished when nurses care for a smaller number of patients.

I also was impressed by the well-organized hospital and its support of effective nursing care. For example, nurses in the United States may check vital signs with an automatic machine every 15 to 30 minutes. In Korea, that equipment is only available in the special care unit, making it impossible to check vital signs so frequently. Even small medical devices such as syringes and IV cannula are designed to support nursing

care of the patient. Without that equipment, even simple procedures become involved and time consuming. I even discovered that patients may choose their own menus and desserts; nurses then fax it to dietary!

On the other hand, I see dramatic differences in the cost of health care. Despite the advanced nursing care in the United States, I was really surprised at the cost of health care here compared with Korea. Based on my experience, I believe that health care cost must be affordable for anyone—even under capitalism—because health is a human right. I believe that the health care system, social welfare, insurance and governmental efforts should make affordability and quality care of critical importance.

Witnessing these differences in health care costs, equipment availability and nurse to patient ratios during the six-week internship, I gained unique insight into nurses from two cultures—Korean and American.

Wan Hyuck Kim is an MPH student at the SDSU Graduate School of Public Health.

Recognizing the best: Regional awards to be presented

Creative and scholarly contributions to nursing benefit nurses and the patients they serve worldwide. To recognize outstanding accomplishments, the society presents the biennial regional awards. The following awards will be presented to recipients from seven geographical regions.

- Media Awards (print, electronic, photography and art)
- Technology Awards (information technology and education technology)
- Research Dissertation Award
- Research Utilization Award
- Research Dissemination Award
- Chapter Research Advancement Award
- Chapter Heritage Award
- Innovative Chapter Award
- Mentor Award

Recipients will be recognized during the 2001 Professional Development Conference and Chapter Leader Academy. Award winners may accept their awards at any one of these Professional Development Conference and Chapter Leader Academy sites: Orlando on January 26-27; San Francisco on February 23-24; Philadelphia on March 23-24; or Chicago on April 27-28.

To be considered for a 2000-2001 award, submissions must be received by October 15, 2000. For information about eligibility, specific criteria and submission requirements, visit www.nursingsociety.org or call Frank Maez at 1.888.634.7575.

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clinical experience, life experience and local protocols differ, each program has its idiosyncrasies. SANEs also practice in varied clinical settings. Programs are conducted in conjunction with local hospitals, women's health centers, freestanding centers, Planned Parenthood and prosecutors' offices. Nevertheless, the premise that SANEs adhere to the Standards of Clinical Nursing Practice established by the American Nurses Association is imperative for purposes of prosecution. Each forensic examination must meet the standards of assessment, diagnosis, outcome, identification, planning and implementation.

Rita Colella, RN, BSN, is the coordinator for the Union County, New Jersey, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner.

Nursing coalition expands membership



Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow
www.nursesource.org

Promoting public understanding of nursing's contributions to meeting the critical human need for quality health care.

Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow (NHT), a coalition of leading nursing and health care organizations including the Honor Society of Nursing, has added its nineteenth member – the National Association of School Nurses (NASN). With more than 10,000 members, the NASN will help strengthen the coalition's commitment to attract people to nursing, as well as promote public understanding of nursing's contributions.

"School nurses can have a significant impact on recruitment to the profession," said Judith Robinson, RN, PhD, executive director of NASN. "We look forward to helping NHT distribute information to middle and high school students and encourage students to consider nursing."

NHT has also received a donation of \$250,000 in research and creative services from JWT Specialized Communications and a \$100,000 grant,

plus an additional \$100,000 contingent pledge for 2001, from the Helene Fuld Health Trust. These contributions will help create and place a national advertising campaign designed to recruit new nurses and convince existing ones to remain in the profession.

With Luci Baines Johnson and Elizabeth Dole serving as honorary chairs, NHT was formed in response to the shortage of nurses in the United States. Rather than wait until the problem is severe and patients are at risk, NHT is working now to increase awareness about the shortage and the excellent opportunities for those who seek a nursing career.

More information about NHT and a list of members can be found at <http://www.nursesource.org>.

Excellence available online

Excellence articles are available at nursingsociety.org/publications/excellence.html. Don't miss these articles:

Excellence in Nursing Administration:

- Achieving positive results during change
- Delivering culturally competent care
- Managed care: How it's affecting health care
- Forensic nursing

Excellence in Clinical Practice:

- Rehabilitation nursing: Another increasing shortage
- Nurses and the 'net: The Internet resource for clinicians
- Nursing: An international student's perspective
- Forensic nursing
- Nursing coalition expands membership

Excellence in Nursing Education:

- On the rise: Are grades where they should be?
- Tapping into technology: The future of electronic theses and dissertations
- Nursing research congress to be held in Denmark
- Nursing coalition expands membership

If you did not select one of these three versions, you automatically received *Excellence in Clinical Practice*. You may still select a customized version of the January issue by calling our Member Service Center at 1.888.634.7575 or e-mailing: marketing@stti.iupui.edu. Select only one version to receive in the mail and please include your member number in your response.



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