Honor Society of Nursing Sigma Theta Tau International

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Evidence-based practice improves clinical outcomes

Health care professionals are on a continuous quest to improve patient outcomes, which often requires staff and other resources to be committed to exploring new methods of treatment and care.

One way to improve treatment outcomes is by using theory-derived, research-based information and applying it to decision-making about care delivery.

With the constraints faced by today's health care system, nursing needs to be accountable for certain outcomes in patient care, according to Jan Bingle, RN, MS, chief nursing officer at Community Health Network in Indianapolis, Ind. Those outcomes include patient satisfaction, prevention of adverse effects, good pain management and good nutrition.

Bingle was a member of one of the first federally funded projects that looked at the utilization of research in practice. The Conduct and Utilization of Research in Nursing (CURN) grant was funded in 1973 by the Division of Nursing of the federal Health Resources Administration Bureau of Health Professions.

"The experience changed the way I looked at practice as the need for practice to be evidence-based," said Bingle, who represents the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists on the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International's evidence-based task force.

"We want to make sure to nurses what evidence-based practice is, and get out in front of our constituents to explain the need for evidence-based practice in our work," Bingle said.

The University of Rochester Medical Center in Rochester, N.Y., is an example of evidence-based practice in action. The medical center has several studies in varying stages of progress that are designed to improve patient outcomes.

A current study at the medical center is an evidence-based practice project that seeks to improve patient outcomes. The project is being led by Kathleen Sanford, RN, DBA, FACHE, chief nursing officer at Community Health Network in Indianapolis, Ind.

"With the constraints faced by today's health care system, nursing needs to be accountable for certain outcomes in patient care," Sanford said.

Mentoring inspires next generation of leaders

Robin had Batman. Watson had Holmes. But who can the next generation of nurses look to? For most nurses, the answer is right in front of their eyes: their managers, co-workers and friends.

"Whether it occurs formally in a classroom or seminar or informally over a cup of coffee, mentoring enriches both the senior staff and the junior health care novice. Mentoring builds bridges, improves communication, unleashes creativity, reduces frustration, and enhances patient care and caregiver career opportunities."

"There are enough role models out there, but I don't think people see how important it is," said Cindy Balkstra, RN, C, a pulmonary clinical nurse specialist at St. Joseph's/Candler Health System in Savannah, Ga. Balkstra believes nurses need to rely on each other for their personal and professional development.

To expand her professional and leadership skills, Balkstra participated in the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International's mentorship program, the Chiron Mentor-Fellow Forum, in 2001. (See sidebar story.) Working with her mentor, Dr. Marianne Matzo, Balkstra developed end-of-life directives for pulmonary patients.

Mentoring is something that should happen every day, not just inside formal mentorship programs such as Chiron, Balkstra said.

"Nurses need to realize, once you get to a certain point in your career, it's part of your role to look back and see who else you can grow," she said.

Balkstra has several mentors, both in and outside of nursing. "They help me be more specific, and they help me when my creativity is a little low," she said.

Mentoring is about giving, as well as taking. "You should look behind to see who needs help to grow, as well as look ahead to see what opportunities are there for you," Balkstra said.

Kathleen Sanford, RN, DBA, FACHE, agrees that mentoring is something every nurse does. As vice president of nursing services at Harrison Hospital in Bremerton, Wash., and administrator at Harrison Silverdale Hospital in Silverdale, Wash., Sanford sees her job as being a leader, as well as a manager. A leader, she says, "is someone who inspires people to be the best they can be."

"I think mentorship is something that, if you have a management job, you owe it to..."
Johnson & Johnson launches campaign to reduce nursing shortage

Johnson & Johnson has launched a $20 million multi-year campaign to attract more people to nursing in hospitals and nurse-related care fields. The campaign was developed with the input of national nursing organizations in collaboration with the Honor Society of Nursing, and complements the existing Nurses for a Healthier Tomorrow campaign, in which the society also is involved.

"Throughout Johnson & Johnson's history as a health care products and services to hospitals, we have always had a special affinity for the nursing profession," said James T. Leshan, vice chairman of Johnson & Johnson's board of directors, who kicked off the Campaign for Nursing's Future. "Now, we are determined to help stimulate a new generation of nurses." The man also is involved. "

Johnson & Johnson hosted a press conference in New York City on Friday, February 6, 2001, to announce the campaign. Wykle was a featured speaker at the press conference. Immediately following the press conference, Wykle and Dickinson-Hazard participated in a satellite media tour to promote "The Campaign for Nursing's Future." They were interviewed by television stations across the country.

"This is something that many of us care a lot about, and it was great to be chosen as one of the people to share the launch with the media," Dickinson-Hazard said. "As nurses, we all have a responsibility to take an active part in ensuring there are enough of us to provide quality care for patients nationwide.

Johnson & Johnson, with approximately 160,000 employees, is the world's most comprehensive and broadly based manufacturer of health care products and provides a broad range of related services to the consumers, pharmaceutical and professional markets. Johnson & Johnson has more than 190 around the world, selling products in more than 175 countries.

Americans are intensely aware of the national nursing shortage and believe it is a serious problem, according to a national poll released by the Vanderbilt University Medical School's School of Nursing and Center for Health Services Research in Nashville, Tenn. The poll confirms that a vast majority of Americans are concerned about the impact the nursing shortage may have on their national health and quality of patient care in the United States. It also confirms that Americans overwhelmingly trust, respect and admire nurses and would encourage relatives and friends to consider a career in nursing. However, a general lack of knowledge of the nursing profession and the opportunities it offers remains a significant barrier to nursing recruitment efforts.

We found three in four Americans believe the nursing shortage is a serious health care problem, and people believe it will negatively impact the quality of care they get in the country's hospitals," said Dr. Peter Buerhaus, associate dean of nursing at Vanderbilt, Honor Society of Nursing board member and a leading researcher on the nursing shortage.

The study shows that:

- 81 percent of Americans recognize that there is a nursing shortage and 63 percent believe the shortage is either a major problem or a crisis.
- 93 percent agree (80 percent strongly agree) that the nursing shortage jeopardizes the quality of health care in the United States.
- Seniors, aged 55 and older, are particularly sensitive to the shortage's impact on the quality of the health care system.
- 53 percent are concerned that the nursing shortage could impact their individual health care, and 65 percent of younger Americans (aged 18 to 34) experience anxiety over the shortage.

Other key findings of the survey include:

- 95 percent of Americans find nurses' opinions on health matters to be credible and overwhelmingly trust, respect and admire nurses.
- 97 percent view nurses and the nursing profession favorably (76 percent very favorably), and 91 percent say nurses play a critical role in the health care system.
- Although 83 percent of Americans, including 78 percent of men, would encourage a loved one to enter the nursing profession, only 21 percent would consider nursing as a career for themselves.

The care that nurses offer, patients is the main reason Americans have considered a career in nursing. Thirty four percent of those who have considered nursing as a career say the primary reason is because nurses care about people and want to help others. Most Americans are unaware that nursing offers career opportunities outside patient care—such as research or hospital management. Many Americans have only a cursory knowledge of the differences among types of nursing professionals, such as licensed practical nurses, registered nurses and nurse practitioners. In addition, Americans are more interested in become a nurse and there is little recognition that nursing salaries are competitive with those of other professions. According to the researchers, interest in nursing is likely to increase significantly once the American public is made aware of the opportunities the profession offers. Already 21 percent say that they have at least once considered a career in nursing.

The biggest problem is that people are unaware of the array of opportunities and rewards in nursing today," Buerhaus said. "They are unaware that nursing salaries are very competitive with other professions or that nursing offers career opportunities in health research, hospital management, and family and community health care, in addition to traditional patient care. We need to get these messages out to parents in nursing class and, above all, students at all levels.

Commissioned by Johnson & Johnson, the nationwide poll was conducted by telephone interviews with 1,005 Americans aged 21 and older. Pene, Schoen & Berland Associates, Inc. of Washington, D.C., conducted the poll.

Nurses help America recover

Time has passed since the terrorist attacks, but the hurt is still very real. As a nursing professional, you are on the front lines helping people deal with the loss of a loved one, job or sense of security. America in Grief is a Web site designed to help busy nurses provide exceptional support and information to the public. Visit www.nursingsociety.org/grief.html for a hub of essential online resources about grief, mental health and children's needs.

National poll shows most Americans are worried about nursing shortage

Vanderbilt University study provides key insights on perceptions and fears

The study at Vanderbilt University also confirms that Americans have little or no idea about how much money nurses earn, and there is little recognition that nursing salaries are competitive with those of other professions. According to the researchers, interest in nursing is likely to increase significantly once the American public is made aware of the opportunities the profession offers. Already 21 percent say that they have at least once considered a career in nursing. The biggest problem is that people are unaware of the array of opportunities and rewards in nursing today," Buerhaus said. "They are unaware that nursing salaries are very competitive with other professions or that nursing offers career opportunities in health research, hospital management, and family and community health care, in addition to traditional patient care. We need to get these messages out to parents in nursing class and, above all, students at all levels.

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New survey provides insight into nursing

Nurse leaders and hospitals are developing recruitment and retention strategies to address nursing vacancy rates and turnover impacting hospitals across the country, according to a January survey by the American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE).

While the nurse workforce shortage has received increasing attention, this research was designed to establish a baseline for future analysis. The results indicate that solutions and policy formation will be based on reliable information. One key finding was that national RN vacancy rates for specific departments/functions ranged from 19.1 percent for critical care to 6.5 percent for nurse managers. The results found that hospitals are developing a variety of solutions to stem this growing nurse workforce shortage trend. For example, 74 percent of all respondent facilities have agreements with schools of nursing to provide clinical training to more than 23 basic RN nursing students per year. Eighty-one percent of respondent facilities hired at least one newly graduated RN in 2000. Nurse executives stated that the most effective recruitment and retention methods included increasing and competitive salaries, providing educational opportunities, improvements in staff satisfaction and input, bonuses, and flex scheduling per year.

The study was conducted for the organization by HSM Group, Ltd., a Scottsdale, Ariz., health care market research and consulting firm. Nurse executives were presented with six different scenarios. The hospital completed the survey based on 2000 data. These findings were presented at the Acute Care Hospital Survey of RN Vacancy and Turnover Rates in 2000. For more information, visit www.aone.org.

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE. From page 1 involves testing whether purple grape juice can reduce nausea and vomiting in cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy. The study came about after a patient told oncology nurses that she had been drinking grape juice and thought it helped lessen treatment side effects. The oncology nurses donated purple grape juice to patients suffering from nausea and vomiting. All but one or two patients reported good results, which prompted the medical center to look at the study more closely.

As director of clinical nursing research and professor of nursing at the University of Rochester Medical Center, Gall Ingersoll, RN, EdD, FAAN, ENAP, became involved to see what might be the basis for the results. A literature review revealed that flavonoids have positive effects on the body, and purple grapes have a high concentration of flavonoids.

Flavonoids also have anti-inflammatory effects, relax smooth muscles and have the potential to reduce tumor growth. Ingersoll and her team concluded the purple grape juice helps reduce the inflammation of the stomach wall and upper intestine, leading to less irritation and potential for impasses that produce nausea and vomiting. The team also believes that the possible relevant potential of the flavonoids may help reduce the hyper-excitability of the stomach.

Ingersoll undertook a complete study on the effects of purple grape juice on chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting. The University of Rochester Medical Center secured Welch Foods will provide the Welch’s Grape Juice, to partially fund the study.

Welch Foods will provide the entire supply of the 6 percent grape juice and a 10 percent grape juice placebo that looks and tastes like the active product.

“We will be able to do a true randomized, controlled clinical trial to compare the effects of purple grape juice on the effects of nausea and vomiting from chemotherapy,” Ingersoll said.

Ingersoll anticipates that it will take two years to complete a randomized, controlled clinical trial involving a full sample of 97 subjects from the medical center’s oncology unit.

When doing such clinical research, involving an interdisciplinary team is important. Ingersoll recommends thinking broadly in terms of disciplines, including social work and physicians. An interdisciplinary team helps increase the likelihood that practice changes will occur based on your findings, she said. “You also need administrative support to get the resources and help in getting the research project underway.”

Ingersoll believes it helps to have advanced practice nurses involved in the research because they’ve been exposed to other research processes. “Advanced practice nurses are excellent for reviewing literature, identifying clinical questions and identifying how to use the research that’s available,” Ingersoll said.

She also recommends having a doctorally prepared research nurse on site, or having a close association with a school of nursing that has a doctoral-prepared faculty with expertise in research design and methodology.

It’s important to note that research before it’s ready to be utilized, Bingle stressed. “Be sure you are evaluating the outcomes. You need to have a report card as you make decisions about nursing care to measure patient outcomes,” she said.

The greatest challenge is putting evidence-based practice into practice. Nurses at larger medical centers with access to a lot of academic resources have a greater chance to enlist evidence-based practice, Bingle said. Community Health Network is so evidence-based because of its strong affinity for the clinical nurse specialist role in being responsible for research utilization.

As nurses continue to look for ways to improve patient treatment, Bingle said. Community Health Network is exploring the outcomes of community service to measure patient outcomes. “We’d all be more comfortable if there was a non-health-care-related community service project that would provide us with an opportunity to strengthen relationships with their colleagues in a different environment. Dust off your pocket pin and wear it proudly or write a personal note to a nurse who has had a significant impact in your career.”

Whatever you decide, use Nurses Week as a platform for reflection and growth. Make Nurses Week meaningful and memorable, and above all take the opportunity to seek in the richness of this noble profession and in the diversity and reach out to the diverse perspectives it shares.

Mary L. Wykle, RN, PhD, FAAN, is president of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International and dean and Florence CEO of the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.

Celebrate diversity

A call to action for Nurses Week

Nurses Week culminates each year on May 6, registered nurse’s birthday. What a fitting reminder to us of her contributions. As registered nurses we have as nurses to do everything we can to advance our profession and continue to be the best choice for those in our care. We strive to find ways to employ our uniqueness in support of this common goal. We embrace diversity and reach out to our colleagues in other health care organizations and to those with differing backgrounds and perceptions. Doing this will enrich the experience for all and will ultimately give cause for continued celebration.

So celebrate nursing’s diversity—activities during Nurses Week that foster collaboration and instill pride. At the Honor Society of Nursing, we will pay tribute to the sacrifices nurses and other health care professionals made on and after the September 11 attacks by dedicating a special garden and park bench on our head-quarters property in Indianapolis. This garden will flourish as a reminder of how the health care community can make a difference and overcome a common cause, tragic or otherwise, to serve the greater good.

In conclusion there are many other ways to celebrate Nurses Week. For example, coordinate a non-health-care-related community service project that would provide nurses with an opportunity to strengthen relationships with their colleagues in a different environment. Dust off your pocket pin and wear it proudly or write a personal note to a nurse who had a significant impact in your career.

Whatever you decide, use Nurses Week as a platform for reflection and growth. Make Nurses Week meaningful and memorable, and above all take the opportunity to seek in the richness of this noble profession and in the diversity and reach out to the diverse perspectives it shares.

May L. Wykle, RN, PhD, FAAN, is president of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International and dean and Florence CEO of the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing, Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.
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Chiron Program—From Page 1

Mu Chi Chapter, Riklikiene’s mentor, is Angela Barron McBride, RN, PhD, FAAN, distinguished professor and dean, Indiana University School of Nursing, and member of Alpha Chapter. Future fellows and mentors are encouraged to identify potential partners and apply as a pair to the 2003 Chiron Mentor-Fellow Forum before the August 30, 2002 deadline. For more information, visit the society’s Web site at www.nursingsociety.org or contact Carol Paddock at 888.634.7575 or carol2@stti.iupui.edu.

Olga Riklikiene, RN, BSN, head nurse, Kaunas Medical University Hospital, Lithuania, is a member of Mu Chi Chapter. Riklikiene’s fellowship will focus on implementing quality control into her hospital’s orthopaedic medicine care. Riklikiene’s mentor is Mereline Maas, RN, PhD, FAAN, Sally Mathis Hartwig Professor of Gerontology Nursing Research and chair of adult and gerontologic nursing at the University of Iowa College of Nursing and member of Gamma Chapter.

Sara Campbell, RN, DNS, CNAA, BC, associate professor and associate dean, Mennonite College of Nursing at Illinois State University, would like to build partnerships between the college of nursing and its community to meet identified needs. Her mentor is Angela Barron McBride, RN, PhD, FAAN, distinguished professor and dean, Indiana University School of Nursing, and member of Alpha Chapter.

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Stories of Family Caregiving: Reconsiderations of Theory, Literature, and Life

This book is an interdisciplinary exploration of the experiences of women and men who provide long-term, life-sustaining care to family members. It takes a narrative approach to the subject through stories from fiction, autobiography and interviews with the family caregivers. The stories explore their experiences in all their contradictions, hopes and dreams. Authored by Suzanne Parier, PhD, and Lioness Ayres, PhD. Now available.

“Through autobiographies, this book offers an exploration of the practical implications of caregiving that can be applied across professional boundaries for groups such as nurses, social workers or gerontologists. I highly recommend this book to all involved in family caregiving.”

Roberta R. Gerans, MSW, PhD
Indiana University School of Social Work
Author of Social Work with the Aged and Their Families and Human Behavior. A Diversity Framework.

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