

South Africa is a multicultural and multilingual country with eleven official languages and many more dialects. Persons from each cultural group adhere to unique values, attitudes and beliefs influencing their health. Nurses come from all cultural groups. Rendering culture sensitive and culture congruent care in such diverse health care settings, poses unique ethical problems, which can only be addressed if the health care workers possess the required knowledge and skills.

Managers should use motivation and reward strategies (acknowledging job performances, rewarding outstanding services and providing constructive feedback) for empowering health care workers. Workload, staff shortages and communication problems impact negatively on maintaining a motivational work setting and on providing learning opportunities for students in health care services. Nurse managers and nurse educators could enhance the theory-practice correlation of student nurses in clinical situations by improving the management-education co-operation and by enabling students' development of their critical thinking skills. This objective can also be attained through distance learning - enabling many students to continue living and working in their communities throughout Africa while pursuing distance education courses.

Diseases affect the psycho-social-spiritual-biological dimensions of life, especially in the cases of psychosomatic diseases, including Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). Persons suffering from this disease benefited from holistic short term group interventions, although their symptoms did not improve. Parents whose children are born with birth defects, face psychosocial challenges. If such a defect is diagnosed during pregnancy, the parents have the added responsibility of deciding whether or not to terminate such a pregnancy. Research attempting to provide a more effective and sensitive service to mothers whose infants were diagnosed prenatally with cleft lips and/or palates, indicate that these mothers need support, information and interaction with mothers who have faced these challenges. Similarly, the parents of children with hearing loss, requiring cochlear implants, need support, guidance and education from multidisciplinary team members. Hearing loss imposes challenges on living, irrespective of age. Thus noise induced hearing loss among miners must be addressed. In this issue ultrasonography as method to visualise and compare sucking patterns in breastfeeding and bottle-feeding infants is also discussed.

The importance of the bio-psychosocial dimensions of illness is emphasised by all articles in this edition, including patients traumatised by cancer diagnosis and treatment. The themes underlying all articles in this issue could be summarised in the words of Kahlil Gibran:  
*"Life, and all that lives, is conceived in the mist and not in the crystal  
And who knows but a crystal is mist in decay?"*

Suid-Afrika is een multikulturele en veertalige land met elf amptelike tale, en baie meer dialektes. Persone van elke kultuurgroep handhaaf unieke waardes, houdings en gelowe wat hulle gesondheid beïnvloed. Verpleegkundiges kom van alle kultuurgroepe. Die verskaffing van kultuursensitiewe en kultuurkongruente gesondheidsorg in so 'n uiteenlopende gesondheidsorgsituasie bied unieke etiese probleme wat vereis dat die gesondheidsorgwerkers oor die nodige kennis en vaardighede moet beskik.

Bestuurders behoort motiverings- en beloningstrategieë (erkennings van werkverrigting, beloning van uitstaande dienste, en konstruktiewe terugvoer) aan te wend om gesondheidsorgwerkers te bemagtig. Die werkslading, personeeltekorte en kommunikasieprobleme het negatiewe uitwerkings op die handhawing van motiverende werksituasies, en op die verskaffing van leergeleenthede aan studente in gesondheidsorgdienste. Verpleegbestuurders en verpleegopvoedkundiges kan die teorie-praktijk korrelasie verbeter vir student-verpleegkundiges in kliniese situasies deur die bestuur-opvoedkundige samewerking te verbeter en deur studente te help om hulle kritiese denkvaardighede te verbeter. Laasgenoemde doelwit kan ook deur afstandsleer bereik word. Afstandsleer stel baie studente in Afrika in staat om in hulle gemeenskappe te leef en te werk terwyl hulle afstandsonderrigkursusse volg.

Siekte tas die psigo-sosiale-geestelike-biologiese dimensies van lewe aan, veral in die geval van psigosomatische siektes, wat Irriterende Dikdersmsindroom ("Irritable Bowel Syndrome") insluit. Persone wat aan die siekte lei, het baat gevind by holistiese korttermyn groepintervensies, alhoewel die simptome nie verbeter het nie. Owers wie se kinders met aangebore afwykings gebore word, moet psigo-sosiale uitdagings hanteer. Indien sodanige afwyking tydens swangerskap gediagnoseer word, moet die ouers ook besluit of hulle die swangerskap gaan beëindig of laat voortduur. Navorsing wat poog om meer doeltreffende en sensitiewe dienste te verskaf aan moeders wie se kinders met gesplete lip en/of verhemelte gediagnoseer word tydens swangerskap, dui aan dat die moeders ondersteuning benodig asook inligting en interaksie met ander moeders wat soortgelyke uitdagings in die gesig staar. Owers wie se kinders gehoorverlies ervaar en kogleêre inplantings moes kry, benodig eweneens ondersteuning, leiding en opleiding van multidissiplinêre spanlede. Gehoorverlies bied lewensuitdagings, ongeag ouderdom. Derhalwe moet gehoorverlies, as gevolg van geraas onder myners, aangespreek word. In hierdie uitgawe word die visualisering, deur ultraklank, van die suigpatrone van babas wat borsvoeding en babas wat bottelvoeding ontvang, ook bespreek.

Die belangrikheid van die bio-psigo-sosiale dimensies van siekte word in alle artikels in die uitgawe beklemtoon, insluitende pasiënte wat deur kankerdiagnose en -behandeling getraumatiseer is. Die temas wat alle artikels onderlê, kan in die woorde van Kahlil Gibran saamgevat word:

*"Life, and all that lives, is conceived in the mist and not in the crystal  
And who knows but a crystal is mist in decay?"*