

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NURSING AND MIDWIFERY RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT: BANGKOK, 9 OCTOBER 2000 AND CONCURRENT SESSIONS ON NURSING AND MIDWIFERY HELD DURING THE COHRED CONFERENCE, BANGKOK, 10-13 OCTOBER 2000



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The key challenges identified by the International Meeting on Nursing and Midwifery Research, organised by the International Council of Nurses (ICN), the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and STTI, included:

- That a research framework should be developed which would address:
 - capacity development for conducting nursing and midwifery research;
 - knowledge production;
 - knowledge dissemination; and
 - ethics.
- The importance that nurses and midwives should participate in decisions concerning health research.

The keynote address on Meeting the Challenge in the 21st Century was delivered by Professor Mo-Im Kim from Korea who emphasised that nurses need to:

- change their roles and render more services in communities than in hospitals;
- become valuable resource persons for the communities they serve;
- participate in project planning and evaluation;
- become leaders of primary health care teams;
- need to change nursing education programmes to incorporate the basic needs of local communities;
- evaluate the outcomes of their nursing interventions.

Although the developed world has a large capacity

for undertaking health research, in many parts of the developing world, the critical mass required to undertake research might not be available.

Dr Naeema Al-Gasseer, the Chief Nurse Scientist at the WHO, indicated that a new paradigm to guide the conduct of health research for development was urgently required. A major problem revolved around the lack of a unifying philosophy to guide investments in health research and development. Such a philosophy should include values and principles for an effective health research system that reduces health inequities and which is driven by country needs and priorities, including:

- equity
- ethics
- ownership
- self-determination
- solidarity
- development and empowerment
- health research and investment
- intersectorality
- partnerships
- accountability

Nursing and midwifery research should establish systems that collect hard data to monitor progress on health research for development, should find ways of accessing research funding, and should contribute to the development of an effective and responsive health research system.

Dr Patricia Grady, Director of the National Institute of Nursing Research National Institutes of

Health, Bethesda, USA, presented a paper on the accomplishments and directions of international nursing research. This institute investigates nursing issues throughout the USA and in some other countries, focusing on:

- preventing and managing infection (Web site: www.nih.gov/ninr/workshop699.htm)
- self management of chronic illness
- achieving quality of life at life's end
- reducing health disparities
- implementing new technologies.

The major focus remains on areas where nurses and nursing care can and do make a difference to the quality of health care and to the quality of people's lives.

Dr Tesfamicael Ghebrehiwet, Consultant, Nursing and Health Policy, International Council of Nurses (ICN), addressed the importance of setting priorities for nursing and midwifery research for the next decade. He maintained that nurses and midwives should be in the forefront of knowledge production as well as continual validation and application of knowledge in the service of humanity. Nurses and midwives should find new and better ways of promoting health, better ways of preventing disease, and better and cost-effective ways of care, cure and rehabilitation. Large masses of nursing and midwifery knowledge remain unused because the research results are not applied in the health care situations. The ICN's Research Network provides mechanisms and linkages with national nurses' associations and between nurse clinicians, researchers, educators, policy makers and managers. During 1997 the ICN called an Expert Group, comprising renowned nurse researchers from all ICN areas, the WHO and institutions conducting nursing research. This group identified the following nursing and midwifery research priorities:

- HIV/AIDS and STDs/STIs
- chronic illness
- infection control
- women's health

- mental health/mental illness
- aging
- health behaviours/health promotion
- special populations
- implications of genetics
- environmental safety
- quality and cost-effectiveness of care
- community based care
- nursing work force
- health care reform

Professor Comchit Hanucharurnkul from the Mahidol University's School of Nursing, and Dr Tassana Boontong, the President of the Thailand Nursing Council, discussed the development of nursing research in Thailand, which commenced in 1967 at the Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. The challenges faced by nurse researchers in Thailand include that:

- there are inadequate numbers of nurse researchers in Thailand;
- nursing research encounters problems in being accepted as inter- and multidisciplinary professional research;
- the outcomes of nursing research often appear to researchers from other fields to be intangible and lacking accurate measurement;
- qualitative research results are not accepted by researchers from most other fields;
- nurse researchers need to focus on areas where nursing can make a (measurable) difference;
- nurse researchers encounter problems in getting their research proposals funded;
- nurse researchers should participate in policy formulation and in policy implementation strategies.

A concurrent session during the International Conference on Health Research for Development, on 10 October concluded that a health research system should be established that generates evidence to guide nursing and midwifery practice. Recommendations included that:

- Capacities should be developed for multidis-

ciplinary health systems research, including nursing and midwifery, to contribute to equitable development.

- A study group should be established to identify nursing and midwifery priorities and strategies.
- Multi-disciplinary partnerships should identify major priorities and gaps, and advocate for increased resources for research.

During a concurrent session Dr Christine Aolufunke Adebajo, from Nigeria, indicated that midwifery and safe motherhood research at national and international levels should address:

- inadequate research training and skills
- unwanted pregnancies
- unsafe abortions
- early childbearing
- STDs/HIV/AIDS
- genital mutilation
- malaria during pregnancies
- maternal and infant mortalities
- harmful traditional practices
- nutritional diseases
- problems during the puerperium.

Nurses and midwives should access nursing and midwifery research results. The WHO should support its collaborating centers throughout the world financially to produce meaningful nursing and midwifery evidence based research results.