

## Sigma's 29th International Nursing Research Congress

### Turning Millennials Into Geriatric Nurses

**Aleatha Rossler, MS, CGRN**

*undergraduate nursing, Texas Woman's University, dallas, TX, USA*

**Purpose:** There is a growing population of geriatric clients in the health care setting, while interest in the specialty is minimal with only 1% of Registered Nurses being certified in geriatrics. There is a need to increase knowledge and interest in geriatric nursing to the new graduate population of nurses entering the profession. Curriculum change and positive geriatric clinical experiences would improve the perspective of geriatric care to new graduate nurses.

**Methods:** Survey students regarding their perceptions of geriatric healthcare at the start of nursing and upon graduation and look for change in this perception by graduation. This change can be made by educating students throughout the curriculum about the geriatric population. While it is important to have a course tailored to this specific topic, it is also important to have this added to each course throughout a program. When discussing a certain disease process, discuss how it differs in a geriatric client or how treatment options may vary. Currently the aging population is taught in an online course at many schools. Even though we are making great innovations in online teaching, this type of course does not typically allow for as involved conversations and may leave the student to doing the bare minimal to get by with the needed grade. Having the care of elderly incorporated across the curriculum will allow for more exposure to the topic and keep the conversation going.

Students need to have interactions with the geriatric population outside of the classroom. Finding clinical opportunities for students to work with geriatric patients both in an acute care setting as well as home or long term setting can open the student's eyes to the possibilities that go along with geriatric nursing. For example, a student that presents as a good leader and is looking for autonomy in their profession may benefit from being introduced to a long term care facility or assisted living environment since the RN is in a leadership role in these areas. Students would also benefit from seeing patients in the home environment or community setting. Being able to see that the geriatric population is still a functional group in society and have a lot to offer rather than the perception that all geriatric patients are confused and incontinent. There is also a need to make students more comfortable with the concept of death as that is another barrier to this specialty. Nurses are built to fix the patient's problems, but should be taught that it is okay to let a person go.

**Results:** This is new research to promote a curriculum change with more of a positive geriatric focus. My hope is to change the interest in geriatric nursing by introducing it sooner to nursing students as a specialty and allowing for positive clinical experiences to enhance the desire to go into geriatrics upon graduation.

**Conclusion:** As a nurse who started out with the desire to do pediatrics, I am now specialized in geriatrics. On the first day of each semester I ask the new nursing students to raise their hand if they want to do pediatrics, labor and delivery, and critical care. There might be five students that don't raise their hands to those three specialties and even then, no one is interested in med/surg or geriatrics. The perception of the geriatric population must be improved as this age group is rapidly growing in numbers. It can be a rewarding career choice for any nurse and by encouraging more new graduates to move into this specialty, they can make a big impact on the quality of care the baby boomer generation receives.

---

**Title:**

## Turning Millennials Into Geriatric Nurses

### **Keywords:**

geriatric nursing, new graduates and nursing specialties

### **References:**

- Beavers, H. (2017). Officially an RN...Now What? *Tennessee Nurse*, 80(2), 13.
- Bishop, P., & Wackier, T. (2017). Education Strategies for Generation Y. *Journal Of Continuing Education In Nursing*, 48(6), 248-250. doi:10.3928/00220124-20170317-02
- Cordeau, K. (2013). GERIATRICS... WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT?. *Gerinotes*, 20(5), 17-18.
- Heise, B. A., Johnsen, V., Himes, D., & Wing, D. (2012). DEVELOPING POSITIVE ATTITUDES Toward Geriatric Nursing Among Millennials and Generation Xers. *Nursing Education Perspectives (National League For Nursing)*, 33(3), 156-161. doi:10.5480/1536-5026-33.3.156
- Ironside, P., Tagliareni, M., McLaughlin, B., King, E., & Mengel, A. (2010). Fostering geriatrics in associate degree nursing education: an assessment of current curricula and clinical experiences. *Journal Of Nursing Education*, 49(5), 246-252. doi:10.3928/01484834-20100217-01
- Kolthoff, K. L., & Hickman, S. E. (2017). Compassion fatigue among nurses working with older adults. *Geriatric Nursing*, 38(2), 106-109. doi:10.1016/j.gerinurse.2016.08.003
- Loader, J. (2016). Loving the new normal. *Kai Tiaki Nursing New Zealand*, 22(11), 25.
- Postma, S., & Flikkema, M. (2010). The next generation of geriatric nurse specialists. *Journal Of Gerontological Nursing*, 36(1), 49-52. doi:10.3928/00989134-20091207-98
- Salmond, S. W., Cadmus, E., Black, K. K., Bohnarczyk, N., & Hassler, L. (2017). Long-Term Care Nurse Residency Program: Evaluation of New Nurse Experiences and Lessons Learned. *Journal Of Continuing Education In Nursing*, 48(10), 474-484. doi:10.3928/00220124-20170918-09
- Wait, D. (2016). Boosting the appeal of aged care. *Kai Tiaki Nursing New Zealand*, 22(9), 41-51.

### **Abstract Summary:**

On the first day of nursing school, I ask the students who wants to be in pediatrics, labor and delivery, and ICU. No one raises their hand for geriatrics. With the growing number of baby boomers reaching retirement age, the geriatric care population is significantly lacking in knowledgeable care givers.

### **Content Outline:**

#### Introduction

- a. Nursing advertises to youth an exciting and fast paced environment to work in. The majority of

graduates are interested in Pediatrics, Critical Care, and Emergency medicine.

b. Less than 1% of nurses hold a geriatric specialization, with 10,000 people turning 65 everyday, there is no way to properly care for this growing population.

#### Body

a. How do you create a more positive perspective of caring for the elderly client with the current generation of students?

- a. Agism
- b. All geriatric patients are not confused or incontinent
- c. Grandparents often care for young grandchildren and therefore nurses will interact with them even in a pediatric environment

b. Geriatrics is not just about taking care of a dying patient.

- a. Improvements in healthcare have allowed patients to live longer and healthier.
- b. Nurses will come across this population within all settings of healthcare and will need appropriate knowledge to provide safe care

c. Curriculum changes to promote a well rounded geriatric experience during school.

- a. Provide a clinical experiences specific to geriatrics
  - i. Inpatient and home dwelling patients
  - ii. Healthy and acute environments
- b. Incorporate simulation of geriatrics with multiple co morbidities
- c. Include family/caregiver roles and early end of life planning

#### Conclusion

a. There is a need to change the way our students perceive care of the elderly population and create a positive experience for them in this environment.

b. The baby boomer generation is aging and will require quality care from our new nurses in order to continue living longer and healthier lives.

First Primary Presenting Author

#### ***Primary Presenting Author***

Aleatha Rossler, MS, CGRN  
Texas Woman's University  
undergraduate nursing  
Assistant Clinical Professor  
Dallas TX  
USA

**Professional Experience:** in the nursing profession for 14 years, 6 as an LVN and 8 as an RN. Have a master's degree in nursing education and have been teaching undergraduate nursing for the last 3 years at TWU. Obtained geriatric certification in November 2017.

**Author Summary:** I have been in the nursing profession for 14 years, 6 as LVN and 8 as RN. I received my master's degree in nursing education from Texas Woman's University and have been teaching undergraduate nursing there for the last 3 years. I became involved in the NICHE program through the hospital I work at and became an advocate for geriatric care about 5 years ago. In November of 2017, I obtained my geriatric certification.