Honor Society of Nursing Sigma Theta Tau International

EXCELLENCE in Clinical Practice

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Alzheimer’s research provides guidance, hope to caregivers

Synthesis of 300 studies to be presented in online journal

By Fay L. Bower, Cynthia S. McCullough and Barbara Pile

The numbers can be staggering. More than 18 million people worldwide currently are affixed with Alzheimer’s disease (AD) (Bosanquet, 2001). Age-specific incidence rates derived from five major epidemiological studies estimated the prevalence of AD in the United States to be 2.32 million as of 1997 (Moore, Zhu & Clipp, 2001). By the year 2040, epidemiologists project that number will escalate to 14 million (Small et al, 1997). Partly in response to the growing prevalence of the disease, research efforts are intensifying.

How do we know when to manage some symptoms of AD and assist problems caregivers face, there is a continuous need to learn more about making a definitive diagnosis and when to intervene to decrease the rate of functional decline.

To make research findings and their implications more available to caregivers, including nurses and as the number of people affected by Alzheimer’s disease escalates, health care providers seek research-based care for patients and their families.

Nurses lead evidence-based practice initiatives

By Suzanne Prevost

The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, in conjunction with Nursing Spectrum, is pleased to announce winners of the inaugural Innovations in Clinical Excellence contest, a program designed to recognize exemplars that champion the value and importance of evidence-based practice in nursing.

“Sigma Theta Tau International is proud to recognize excellence in achievements in evidence-based practice,” says Patricia E. Thompson, RN, EdD, president of Sigma Theta Tau International. “The society has always held a strong commitment to advancing and promoting nursing research and disseminating research findings, particularly those that are readily integrated into practice. A program such as Innovations in Clinical Excellence affords nurse clinicians, educators and administrators an additional method of communicating the impact of nursing research to the profession, to other disciplines and to the public, which ultimately advances recognition of the science of nursing.”

Nurse clinicians from around the globe are working to validate the impact of their efforts by presenting an innovation in clinical excellence that has the potential to improve care and is the first step towards institutionalizing practice change. The following are the winners of the 300 selected studies that were compiled and synthesized into a single online document.

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The ultimate nursing adventure

Student discovers a passion for transcultural nursing

By Andrea Pishkoff

Would you go? Of course! People always say take a risk ... do something exciting ... live a little! Get out of school? Where do I sign? The role of a typical nursing student in today’s college setting is of an individual immersed in books filled with unrelenting information about everything from the common cold to Epidermal-
ALZHEIMER’S RESEARCH FROM PAGE 1
1999, Max, Wehbe, & Fox, 1995, Moore et al. (2001) estimates the total cost of caregiving time to range from $45 per week to $270 per week. The emotional, physical and financial stresses associated with caregiving for AD can lead to caregiver burnout (Dijkstra, Sipma, & Dassen, 1999).
Recognize that there are a variety of ways to help AD caregivers. For instance, caregivers who work in awareness training and problem solving programs cope better with the AD patient’s behavior, such as wandering and inapproriate sexual aggression (Nadler-Moore & Wilson, 1997). More importantly, they are better able to take care of their own physical and emotional needs (Moen & Cripp, 1997). Also, when caregivers attend support groups and receive counseling, they may transition into a rewarding and active role.

Recognizing that nurses were not included on the advisory boards of some well-known magazines, Sigma Theta Tau member and past president Vernice Ferguson, RN, FRCN, FAAN, wrote compelling letters to the editors-in-chief of Woman’s Day and Family Circle. Soon after, Woman’s Day report that they were interested, in fact, to add a nurse to their health advisory board.

Nurse joins Woman’s Day magazine health advisory board

Margaret McLean Heitkemper, RN, PhD, FAAN

‘We are very pleased to have a nurse and Sigma Theta Tau member on the Woman’s Day advisory board,’ says Chief Nursing Officer Nancy Dickenson-Hazard, RN, MWCCME & PhD. ‘It will provide readers with cutting-edge health information and inspire the nursing perspective and afford readers with cutting-edge health information and inspire the nursing perspective. ’

PRACTICE INITIATIVES FROM PAGE 1
Ensuring continued competence in practice means rating only one’s performance against statements such as ‘I review research literature and assess what it means for my practice and work setting’ and ‘I base my final decisions on current accepted research and standards of practice.’ These experiences of reflecting and questioning will help nurses to become more discriminating about the information and resources they access. Reflective practice is part of evidence-based nursing and is one way to continually improve practice.

“We are delighted to serve as co-sponsors of the evidence-based practice contest with Sigma Theta Tau,” says Pati Rager, RN, MSN, MBA, president and publisher of Nursing Spectrum. “Our mission to support and recognize registered nurses who put their outstanding research into everyday practice is our true pleasure and honor. These nurses are shining examples of professionals who bring research to life to patients and the health care colleagues who care for them.”

Winners of Innovations in Clinical Excellence are:

MARY KAY BADER, RN, MSN, CCRN, CAPN, Mission Regional Medical Center; Mission Viejo, Calif., “Using a FOCUS-PDCA Quality Improvement Model for Applying the Severe Traumatic Brain Injury Guidelines to Practice: Process and Outcomes”
MARIANNE CROWTHER, RN, APNC, Mercy Shore Medical Center, Ocean, N.J., “Evidence-Based Development of a Heart Failure Center”
DIANE HALEEN, RN, MN, Harvard University Health Care, Cambridge, Mass., “Developing an Organized System of Care for College Students who abused Alcohol and Alcohol Dependence”
S. JILL LEY, RN, MS, CCRN, CNS, California Pacific Medical Center; San Francisco, Calif., “Nurses in an Era of Antipsychotic Therapies: Generating New Evidence”
MICHIE WAGNER, RN, APN, DS, Nursing, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics; Iowa City, Iowa, “Using Existing Evidence-based Care Pathway: Silver-Treated Catheter Trial”

Innovations in Clinical Excellence winners will be formally recognized during the “Welcome Circle of Friends” reception on Saturday, November 10, 2001, at Sigma Theta Tau International’s 36th Biennial Convention in Indianapolis, Ind. Contest winners have also been invited to present their submissions as poster presentations during Clinical Days Session, Sunday, November 11, 2001.

Suzanne Prewos, RN, PhD, is a professor in Nursing at the University of Washington in nursing at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tenn. She is chair of the Evidence-Based Practice Workgroup.


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Nurse joins Woman’s Day magazine health advisory board

Margaret McLean Heitkemper, RN, PhD, FAAN

Center for Women’s Health Research at the University of Washington.
‘Woman’s Day is committed to providing its 20 million readers with health information that is accurate, valuable and possibly even lifesaving,’ says Madonna B. Behen, the Health Director at Woman’s Day. ‘To fulfill this dual goal, we rely on the best deal on the market of experts in women’s health, such as Margaret McLean Heitkemper, a distinguished panel of experts in various fields of health and medicine. We’ve chosen to include a nurse on our board because of the significant impact that nurses are making on the quality of health care in this country. Dr. Heitkemper has clearly distinguished herself as a leader in the existing databases for Patient Evaluation and we’re honored that she has agreed to become a member of our advisory board.'
How are you dealing with “information overload”?

By Anne Hennessy
Keeping abreast of the enormous amount of health care information is a daunting task. Have you ever wished you could find an easy, time-saving way to keep up with new developments in your professional areas of interest? A new online service called “My Info Search” may be the answer.

Imagine having a trusted expert send you weekly developments in your area of interest; it would be an Internet-based service available at Sigma Theta Tau's home page, www.nursingsociety.org, and enter your personal profile.

At the bulletin, you can link right to your personalized Web page to review complete abstracts of the articles and gain access to the full text, if available.

Online Literature Review offers other features including a core journal section that allows searching across a smaller list of key journals selected by Sigma Theta Tau.

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Nursing education at your desktop
If you are too busy to attend a conference or need to renew your license or certification, turn to Sigma Theta Tau International’s Online Case Studies for Nursing. Learners are led through clinical decision-making steps and have an opportunity to contact the author and participate in online forums. Links to abstracts, full text articles and research are included. Plus, an option to complete the case study for continuing education (CE) credit is available.

New! These case studies will be available soon.
- Hypoglycemia and Failure to Thrive Syndrome
- Toddler with Alteration in Respiratory Function

Looking for some stress relief?

Q Why does there seem to be more stress now than ever before?
We are all living increasingly fast-paced and complex lives. Culture and society are changing much faster than our bodies are able to adapt and evolve. Therefore, new methods of coping with stress are not effective when managing new challenges. As a consequence, we are seeing a dramatic increase in diseases related to stress.

Q Is stress due to an increasingly complex society, how can an individual do anything about it?
Stress is a perceptual event—not an external one. Each of us perceives events differently, places and relationships in different ways, sometimes as stressful and sometimes not. The good news is that we have control over our own perceptions.

Q Is there anything that can be done to protect against stress?
There are a number of stress inoculation behaviors that you can adopt. Fasting a healthy diet, doing aerobic physical activity on a regular basis, getting adequate sleep and limiting caffeine intake will all help you be stress-resistant. Obviously, all these things done together are more powerful than any one alone.

Q Are there any different ways to cope with stress today?
The ways to manage stress are probably familiar to most people. The difference is that we need to use the techniques in a deliberate and systematic way rather than allowing them to happen randomly.

Q How can you control stress?
There are a lot of strategies you can use. I divide them into four categories: avoidance, perception change, lifestyle modification and relaxation techniques.

Q But how can you avoid stress?
The most effective way to handle stress is to avoid it. Most of us can find at least one stressor that they can eliminate from their lives. This requires reflecting on your daily activities and interactions to determine which ones could be eliminated. Another way to avoid stress is to manage your worrying. I call this having a well-controlled "worry list." You can have as many things as you want on your worry list, but only worry about a few of them at a time. Isn't it true that most of the things you worry about never come true?

Q How can you use perceptions to manage stress?
Since stress is a perceptual event, it is possible to change perceptions and eliminate the stress. This strategy is especially helpful when dealing with things you cannot control. Changing perceptions may be as much as learning any new skill. It takes practice. You identify the stressor and perceptions that have about it. Then, write a new healthier perception. Every time the event happens, practice saying the new perception. Over time, the new perception will replace the old.
NURSING ADVENTURE FROM PAGE 1

University in Dayton, Ohio, I have always had a love and curiosity for strange places and new experiences. Born to parents with the same desires, I have been afforded numerous opportunities to travel abroad within the last ten years and share in the cultural diversity and beauty of the globe. Right before winter quarter started, amidst the papers, final exams and group projects, I came home and listened to the messages on my machine just like any other day. Nestled amongst the messages to return calls were words from my sister that changed my life, “Hey, Andy. Do you want to go to Cambodia? Call me.” Not five minutes later I was planning an attack strategy to convince my professors for the impeding quarter that this opportunity was a must. My fingers couldn’t type fast enough to send e-mails to the assistant dean and upcoming graduation day. All attempts proved successful.

However, in order to make any trip as rewarding and thorough as possible, one must get information and facts about the destination before leaving. After continued research and information from my course coordinator, I learned of the real history behind Cambodia and the sadness that the empire had incurred in only the last 25 years and the devastating state that the country’s health care system was now in. Once a prosperous and beautifully sculpted harvesting society, Cambodia is now barely able to survive after the fall of the empire to the Khmer Rouge in 1975. Cambodia as a whole has had to strive against impossible odds. Currently the life expectancy is only 53 years and the infant mortality rate sits at an astonishing 103 per 1,000 live births. Only 64 percent of the population has access to safe water and there is only one doctor per 9,523 people (Ministry of Health, 1998). These facts only made the drive for cultural immersion from your front step to the culturally diverse streets of the very cities that we live in. Cultural immersion from your front step to the farthest and most mysterious places can do nothing less than create awareness of the diversity within each culture and light a flame of curiosity to help someone in need. A plane ticket is not needed—just a willing hand, an open heart and a passion for making a difference.

Andrea Pohlbotte is a student at Wright State University and will graduate in December 2002.

Special thanks go to Elizabeth Sorenson, RN, MS, CNOR, clinical instructor at Wright State University, who worked closely with Ms. Pohlbotte on her article.