News Briefs

Flexibility keeps nurses
A study shows diversified, personalized recruitment and retention helps hospitals combat the nursing shortage. The American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE) surveyed 58 U.S. hospital nursing and human resource administrators. The group cited flexibility as vital in meeting career and personal needs of hospital nurses. For more information, visit the AONE Web site at aha.org or call 800.AHA.2626.

Promote breast cancer awareness
Help fight breast cancer by purchasing "Fund the Cure" stamps. When you buy the stamp for 40 cents, the extra 7 cents goes toward breast cancer research. If all stamps are sold, $16,000,000 will be raised for research.

STTI wins award
Sigma Theta Tau won the Award of Excellence in the 2000 Associations Advance America (AAA) Awards program, a national competition sponsored by the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), Washington, D.C. The award is for the society's partnership with the American Cancer Society's Triple Touch Program. This program is now under consideration for a Summit Award, the highest level of recognition, at ASAE's 80th annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., August 12-15.

Nursing shortage is our charge
By Marlene Ruiz
California or any state's statistics about the current nursing shortage are just the tip of the iceberg. A recent literature search pulled up articles from 1999 and 2000 detailing the effects of nursing shortages in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Pakistan, South Africa, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom, revealing the depth and impact of the shortage on international health care.

Most of the articles addressed the shortage in acute critical care, but all fields of practice are affected when there is a shortage of nurses. The shortage is the result of many factors, including declining birth rates; a wider span of career opportunities for women; negative media coverage of nursing; cultural objections to nursing as a profession; and, avoidance within the ranks of nurses mentoring their future replacements.

There are serious concerns about the U.S.'s ability to alleviate the current shortage quickly. A number of qualified faculty are retiring, both in the academic and clinical settings. This limits the number of students who may be enrolled in nursing programs. Hospitals are reducing the inpatient space, limiting the clinical experiences available for new nurses. Senior staff is retiring, decreasing the qualified preceptors/mentors available for assisting the next generation of nurses.

Marilyn Moats Kennedy, founder and managing partner of Career Strategies, Inc., and published

Nurses help Ukrainian children with heart disease

Leaving their jobs in hospitals and medical centers in Mississippi, Tennessee, South Carolina and Minnesota, volunteers used their vacation time to contribute to international health care.

A medical team from the U.S. and Israel worked with the staff of the Lviv Cardiovascular Surgery Center in Lviv, Ukraine, this spring. During the eight-day trip, health professionals shared knowledge and resources with their global colleagues. Through their joint efforts with the Lviv physicians and nurses, 10 corrective heart operations and eight cardiac catheterizations were performed. In addition, dozens of children with heart disease were evaluated with diagnostic equipment and treatment courses were recommended.

With a staff of just four nurses, including Kimberly Stepp, RN, BSN, 24-hour-a-days were staffed to assist with the diagnosis, treatment and post-operative care of the Ukrainian children. Stepp is a pediatric flight and pediatric intensive care nurse at LeBonheur Children's Medical Center in Memphis, Tenn. The volunteer nurses worked side by side with Ukraine nurses during each procedure to provide education and training. The medical mission was part of the Society's Triple Touch Program.

Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing
In reading through each chapter, you come to the realization that what at first glance appears to be a collection of simple tasks such as sitting with an elderly woman, caring for a young man who has just been in a motorcycle accident, or talking with the family of a child who has leukemia requires knowledge and the ability to care. Unfortunately, nurses have not been good at conveying to the public the intricacy and importance of what they do. Fortunately, Hudacek has captured the importance of nurse work by having nurses share their experiences.

Hudacek presents information in a sensitive and responsive manner. This book is extremely easy to read and a must for all nurses. Whether you are a nurse clinician, researcher, or administrator, Hudacek's Making a Difference: Stories from the Point of Care illuminates the fundamental meaning and purpose of nursing. What makes this book unique and recommended are the stories or memories of each nurse that are indicative of how nurses are forever affected and changed as a result of their relationships with patients and families. To order your copy of Making a Difference, contact Sigma Theta Tau International toll free at 888.634.7575, e-mail at: members@stti.iupui.edu or order online at nursingsociety.org/catalog.

Music shown to decrease infant pain

A soothing lullaby doesn't just help a baby go to sleep, it also helps relieve its pain.

Nurse researchers at Indiana University School of Nursing have completed a pilot study revealing the value of a music intervention. The book captures the essence of nursing by describing the work of nurses and the actions they take as they give of themselves. By utilizing story telling, Hudacek gets at the heart of human experiences.

Throughout the book, readers are beckoned to reflect on the knowledge and work of nurses that continue to be under-valued and under-acknowledged. In reading through each chapter, you come to the realization that what at first glance appears to be a collection of simple tasks such as sitting with an elderly woman, caring for a young man who has just been in a motorcycle accident, or talking with the family of a child who has leukemia requires knowledge and the ability to care. Unfortunately, nurses have not been good at conveying to the public the intricacy and importance of what they do. Fortunately, Hudacek has captured the importance of nurse work by having nurses share their experiences.

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of Children's HeartLink's international work to help children with heart disease and assist growing cardiac programs around the world. Stepp was invited to participate by the trip's leader, Don Watson, MD, pediatric cardiac surgeon at University of Tennessee-Memphis.

"I was interested in going because I love to teach and I saw this as a good opportunity to share nursing knowledge with another culture," Stepp says. "The kids would come out of post-op and we would take care of them and try to teach the nurses some of the ways we provide care in the U.S. There was a big gap in the nursing skills with some procedures."

The volunteer team worked in conditions that differed greatly from those to which they were accustomed, overcoming obstacles such as scarce medical supplies, equipment and sterile instruments. Cultural differences also were evident in the job responsibilities of nurses. What nurses are empowered to do in the U.S. was often done by a physician or medical specialist in Ukraine.

While the trip included many successful procedures, Stepp considers her involvement in an operation for a baby to be her most significant contribution. Without the operation, the baby would have died. The survival rate for the procedure was slim.

"The fact the baby made it through with our surgical procedure and she will be well is a real change from moment to moment and how the health care team at the hospital and the community can rise together to meet the challenge," says Stepp. "Each day presented a different challenge. It was fascinating to see all the agencies pull together to address problems and find solutions."

Jeanne Yount, PMCH director of care management, coordinated the transportation center during the aftermath of the storm.

"What struck me most was how nurses stepped up to the plate — to assist in any way they could during the disaster," says Yount. "From being out in the shelters, to giving tetanus shots, to functioning as nursing investigators, to running a transportation center. Nurses gave 100 percent to ensure that patients, staff and the community had what they needed during this trying time."

Nurses other than those practicing in hospitals responded to the call. Nurse educators from East Carolina University (ECU) and the Nash Edgecombe Wilson and Halifax Nursing Consortium, a two-year associate degree program, also were active in recovery endeavors.

Lori Kwisnek, RN, BS, BSN, MSN, CCHP

Title: Correctional Facility Nurse

Employer: State Correctional Institute, Greensburg, Pa.

Years in Nursing: 25

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Chemotherapy may cause bone loss in women.

Women who survive breast cancer face emotional, physical and mental traumas. An often unknown side effect is an increased risk for developing osteoporosis, a condition that depletes bone mass and strength. While osteoporosis is generally associated with menopause, breast cancer survivors can develop symptoms much earlier in life. It is estimated that one out of every eight women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime, with 183,000 new cases projected for this year.

A team of nurse researchers at the University of Nebraska Medical Center is examining prevention and treatment of osteoporosis for breast cancer survivors. This study is being funded by the Rosemary Berkel Crisp Nursing Research Award, one of Sigma Theta Tau International's Small Grants.

Women who survive breast cancer have another concern—they may be at a greater risk for osteoporosis, and its onset may occur earlier in life. These women are at a double risk: they experience menopause early as a result of their cancer treatment (especially chemotherapy) which leads to increased bone loss. Post-menopausal women with a history of breast cancer generally are not prescribed hormone replacement therapy (HRT), which prevents osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a risk factor for women who survive any cancer that prevents them from taking estrogen or that causes early menopause. Estrogen protects against bone loss.

**Nursing shortage**

> CONTINUES FROM PAGE 1

expert on generational differences, advises that the Baby Boomers are currently the largest segment of the population and the group now facing imminent retirement. The Boomers will be dependent on the much smaller Baby Buster and Nester cohorts for health care. She says that while some traditional work values will be the same with Busters and Nesters, there will be sharp differences in their perception of the roles of managers, employees, employee loyalty, telecommuting, technical competence and what constitutes a day's work.

With this generational shift looming, it is time to seriously look at nursing and the scope of the profession. Ron Norby, RN, director of the Veterans Affairs Desert Pacific Healthcare Network, suggested in a recent keynote address that nurses look at who is the best person to do the job. For example, he suggests that nurses can work with the patients and family members to help them learn how to administer complicated IV therapy and depending on them to do it. If lay people are capable of this sophisticated responsibility in the home, does the RN need to do IVs in the health care setting? Could IV therapy be done by a non-RN? He even suggests promoting nurse practitioners as cost-effective alternatives to physician providers.

As nurses expand their capabilities and determine the future direction of the profession, are they moving up and holding back at the same time? As the profession evolves within the health care arena, where are its boundaries? Are they constant or are they subject to change?

Nursing roles may be leaders, mentors and patient advocates. All nurses are challenged to begin thinking about where the profession needs to go and how to compensate for limited staffing to provide the highest quality patient care in the future.

It is critical for nurses to maximize outcomes and not lose sight of health care's big picture while surviving the shifts caused by change.

Your thoughts are welcomed for inclusion in Letters to the Editor in the October issue of Excellence in Clinical Practice. Please e-mail your ideas to Marlene Ruiz at: marlene.e.ruiz@kp.org.

Marlene Ruiz, RN, BSN, MA, is director of education and consulting services at Kaiser Permanente, San Diego, Calif.

For more information or for those residing in Nebraska to volunteer for the study, please contact Dr. Ott at 308.865.8147 or corr@unmc.edu.