Welcome from the Director

Valuing the contribution of older nurses

Nurses from 120 countries gathered in Melbourne for the International Council of Nurses’ 25th Quadrennial Congress, sharing a rich diversity of experience and knowledge in support of the continued development of a strong, dynamic and collegiate world-wide nursing profession.

The importance of nursing’s rich history and the contributions of past nursing leaders was a recurring theme throughout the week. The debt that we owe to those nurses that came before has never been more apparent.

Valuing and benefitting from experience and diversity is a lesson that is often lost in the workplace. As discussed in the ICHRN monograph *Managing the Mutigenerational Workforce: Managerial and Policy Implications*, age diversity in the workplace brings a tremendous challenge for the nurse manager and can often lead to increased friction and conflict in the workplace.

Additionally, each generation has a distinct set of characteristics, values, beliefs and preferences which need to be considered in effectively managing the workforce, and in making the best use of the skills and talents that each member of the nursing team has to offer.

Demographic changes, as well as recruitment freezes and reductions in the numbers of funded nurse training places means that the nursing workforce is ageing in many countries. As noted later in this newsletter, this phenomenon is not exclusive to the developed world. Countries such as New Guinea are also seeing older nurses play a critical role in maintaining and delivering much needed health services.

Although public sector cutbacks in many countries have affected the availability of nursing positions, worldwide shortages of nurses persist, and retention of older, more experienced nurses will continue to be an important strategy for many countries across the globe.
Proactively correcting misperceptions about the older worker, creating a positive work environment for nurses of all ages, making changes in the physical environment, altering the work, restructuring compensation and benefit packages, and offering flexible work schedules are all important strategies in ensuring that the skills and experiences of older workers are retained.

Lesley Bell,
Director, ICHRN

What’s new at the ICHRN

New Resources and Publications

The ICHRN continues to provide a range of free research documents and guidelines aiming to support and strengthen sound and sustainable approaches to nursing human resources worldwide.

The latest addition to our list of publications is a brief overview on Nursing in Costa Rica, provided as part of our Fact Sheet series.

As with all the monographs, fact sheets and country case studies produced by ICHRN, this paper is freely available for download at www.ichrn.org.

ICHRN’s Knowledge Library

The ICHRN Knowledge Library now has links to over 1,300 scholarly articles and reports on various aspects of nursing human resources, ranging from occupational health and safety to workforce planning.

The database can be searched by author, category or key term. Web links are provided to take users straight to the paper’s source.

If you would like to suggest for inclusion reference materials and documents that you have found useful, please contact the ICHRN Secretariat (ichrn.secretariat@icn.ch).

Featured News

Almost 4000 delegates attend ICN Congress 2013

Close to four thousand nurses from 120 countries gathered at the 25th ICN Quadrennial Congress in Melbourne, Australia to share knowledge and discuss global health care priorities.

Bringing together evidence, experience and innovations and highlighting the critical importance of equity and access to health care for communities and individuals, the Congress demonstrated how nurses are key to ensuring equal access and quality of health care for all.

The theme of the 2013 Congress was Equity and Access to Healthcare. It provided a global platform for the dissemination of nursing knowledge and leadership across specialities, cultures and countries via the ICN.

The main objectives of the Congress were:

1. To advance and improve equity and access to health care.

2. To demonstrate the nursing contribution to the health of individuals, families and communities.

3. To provide opportunities for an in-depth exchange of experience and expertise within and beyond the international nursing community.

The scientific programme featured invited speakers as well as a wide range of concurrent sessions. The Congress ran from 18-23 May, and included four plenary sessions, 19 main sessions, 11 network meetings and five workshops. The scientific programme boasted more than 550 abstract presentations and 590 posters.

Judith Shamian announced as new ICN President

Judith Shamian, outstanding nursing leader in Canada and internationally, has been elected as the 27th President of the International Council of Nurses (ICN). The election took place in the context of ICN’s governing body meeting, the Council of National Representatives (CNR), at the Melbourne Congress.

In her inaugural speech at the ICN Congress in Melbourne, Judith Shamian announced that her watchword would be “Impact”. This includes ICN’s impact on the quality of nursing care and patient safety; on global health through our
presence at global decision-making tables; on the social determinants of health; and on the knowledge and skills of nurses.

Judith Shamian's nursing achievements span all domains of nursing practice: academia, administration, policy and clinical settings. She is recognised as an outspoken advocate on health and nursing issues both in Canada and internationally.

“ICN is the umbrella under which we gather – as professionals, unions and regulatory bodies,” said Dr Shamian. “If we harness our power – if we work together, we will transform this world’s health systems and have a truly profound impact on the health of our people.”

ICN Announces Focus on Nursing Human Resources for 2014

Nursing human resources will be a major focus of ICN activity in 2014, according to Chief Executive, David Benton.

Speaking at the ICN Quadrennial Conference, Mr Benton said that the ICN would continue to play a lead role in supporting nurses’ development throughout the world, building on its track record in developing resources such as ICHRN’s Flexible Work Practices monograph.

Full details of Mr Benton’s presentation on ICN’s future directions, along with other conference presentations, are available at the ICN website.

Mauritius Nurses Association awarded for outstanding achievement

The Mauritius Nurses Association (MNA) has been awarded the ICN’s NNA Innovation Award.

Accepting the Award at the Congress, the President of the MNA, Mr Kallooa Bagooaduth outlined a range of strategies implemented to improve wages, working conditions and the status of nurses in Mauritius, as well as develop a sound financial and governance structure for the MNA.

Runners up for the award included the Organización Colegial de Enfermería of Spain, recognised for the development of its digital multiplatform and promotion, and the Canadian Nurses Association.

Japanese Nurses Association launches shiftwork guidelines

In March 2013 the Japanese Nurses Association officially launched its “Guidelines on Night Shift and Shift Work for Nurses”.

The Guidelines have been created as a tool to reduce the burden of night shift and shift work, and are one of a range of JNA activities aimed at improving the working conditions of nurses.

As well, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has placed a limit on the number of overtime hours that may be worked over and above the standard working hours of 40 hours per week. Additional limits apply for those who are raising children or providing nursing care for other family members.

Ageing, attrition contributes to ‘drastic’ health worker shortages in Papua New Guinea

The ageing health workforce has been identified as one of the key challenges for Papua New Guinea’s (PNG) health system. The former Health Minister warned parliament in 2012 that “if we do not do anything about our ageing workforce quickly, the health system may collapse.”

The health workforce in PNG mainly comprises nurses and midwives, and retirement and attrition means their numbers are dwindling. Government figures indicate that 20 per cent of the country’s health workers are over the legal age of retirement (55) and a further 40 per cent are between 45 and 55 years old.

Poor working conditions, including lack of remuneration and incentives, ineffective supervision and support, logistical challenges and insufficient training and resources contribute to high attrition of health workers.

As the World Bank noted in their 2011 report, falling supply means that these workers have not been replaced. Training capacity has weakened considerably, with reduced government support forcing the closure of all but three of the eight public nursing schools since 1999.

PNG is unlikely to meet its MDG targets, and maternal mortality remains very high, though estimates vary.
A new workforce plan has been approved by the government in 2013, and a spokesperson for the government has said that a “training plan is now in place.”

Sources:
IRIN “PNG grapples with ageing health workforce” IRIN humanitarian news and analysis, 14 March 2013

The World Bank PNG Health Workforce Crisis: A Call to Action The World Bank. 2011

Dawson, A et al Human resources for Health in maternal, neonatal and reproductive health at community level: A profile of Papua new Guinea Human resources for Health Knowledge Hub and Burney Institute, 2011

Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation slams ‘cheap labour’ proposal

In January 2013 the Irish HSE launched a new employment programme, which will see graduates receiving 80% of the agreed graduate salary rate.

The Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO) has said that there are no new positions, and that 1000 experienced nurses will be let go to make room for the new graduates, and has called on graduates to boycott the scheme.

The initiative is the latest in a series of cost saving measures, introduced in recent years in response to economic pressures.

The INMO unanimously passed an emergency motion at its May 2013 annual meeting on Public Service pay, opposing cuts in pay or reductions in other terms and conditions. The motion mandates the organisation to ballot for industrial action ‘up to and including the withdrawal of labour’ and actively participate in other forms of protest as part of public sector wide action.

Sources:

INMO “HSE’s False Start’ to Graduate Nursing Careers prepares to launch” 10.01.13 Press release January 10., 2013

England’s ‘Safe Staffing’ Campaign wins support

In England, organisations including the Florence Nightingale Foundation, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and Unison as well as other nurse leaders have joined forces to form the Safe Staffing Alliance which is calling for minimum nurse numbers on wards.

The Safe Staffing Alliance responds to growing fears among the country’s nursing profession that the loss of nursing positions is compromising patient safety.

The country’s main opposition party, the Labour party, also recently announced it would back the campaign.

The announcement follows the release of a Care Quality Commission (CQC) report that named 26 National Health Service (NHS) hospitals and providers where checks revealed inadequate staffing. In 2012 the CQC found that 16 per cent of inspected hospitals in England did not have adequate staffing.

The RCN says that the NHS workforce has fallen by almost 21,000 since the Coalition Government came to power, including a loss of more than 6,000 nursing posts.

Sources:
Nursing Standard “A nursing alliance with a firm and simple message: Numbers matter”

Labour Party “Labour backs new hospital safe staffing campaign as safety fears grow” Press release January 2013

Lakhani, N “Fears for patient safety as 60,000 NHS jobs face the axe” The Independent Tuesday 13 November 3012

Danish nurse wins 2013 Christiane Reimann Prize

Kirsten Stallknecht, former President of the International Council of Nurses has been awarded the 2013 Christiane Reimann Prize, nursing’s most prestigious international award.

Stallknecht has long been known as a formidable force in nursing and public life, not only in her native Denmark but throughout Europe and internationally, dedicating more than 50 years to improving working conditions for nurses, particularly those affected by war, financial difficulties and catastrophes, and those working in low-income countries.

Former President of the International Council of Nurses (1997-2001), the Danish Nurses Organisation (1968-1996) and the Nordic Nurses Federation (1989-1995), Stallknecht believes passionately that nurses have to “fight for their right to salaries comparable with those of other professions with the same responsibilities…and to fight for the right to pension schemes, payment for inconvenient hours and most of all to create a
career structure that enables nurses to continue in their profession when they have chosen a family life.” Her belief is that only with satisfactory work conditions can nurses deliver quality nursing care.

**Nursing News in Brief**

**Hospitals targeted in Syria conflict**

Both sides in the Syrian conflict have deliberately targeted medical facilities, causing the health system to collapse, according to aid agency Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF).

In a report published in the United Kingdom’s *The Independent*, the MSF report says that most health professionals have fled as a result. Young people are being sent to work as ‘nurses’ in response to the crisis, and pharmacists and dentists are treating patients.

Syrian government figures quoted in the report are that 57 per cent of the country’s hospitals have been damaged and 36 per cent are unable to function. The UN estimates that more than 70,000 Syrians, mostly civilians, have been killed in the past two years.

**Source:**
Hall. R “Both sides have intentionally targeted hospitals over two years of Syrian civil war, claims aid agency” *The Independent* Thursday 7 March 2013.

**Nurse files discrimination lawsuit after parent requests “no black nurses”**

An American nurse has filed a lawsuit against Hurley Medical Centre after it met a parent’s request that “no black nurses” were to look after his infant.

The note was later included in the baby’s medical chart, until later removed following objections by the hospital’s lawyer.

Responding to the case, the National Black Nurses Association has released a statement affirming the staff members right to a non-discriminatory workplace, and noting that a patient’s right to choose cannot be exercised on the basis of race and ethnicity.

“The employers may need to expand their cultural competency training to include patients,” the statement says. “Working with patient to reform behaviours that create a hostile working environment is one way towards reformatting a patient’s behaviour.”

**Sources:**
Advance for nurses “NBNA Weight in on Discrimination Lawsuit over ‘No Black Nurses’ Request” Advance for nurses February 25 2013

Brumfield B “Lawsuit: Race-based request sidelined Michigan nurse” CNN 17 February 2013

**Iceland pay deal targets gender gap**

A new contract struck between Landspitali National University and Iceland’s nurses union includes salary increases of between 5 and 9.6 per cent, depending on education and work experience, according to reports in *Iceland Review Online*.

A special workload payment, retroactive for two months, is also included in the deal.

Almost 300 nurses had resigned in the lead up to the agreement, with resignations to take effect March 2013. Those nurses had until midnight on the day after the deal was struck to withdraw their resignations, in order to qualify for the workload payment.

Chair of the Nurses Union and ICN Board member, Elsa B. Friðfinnsdóttir, also noted in an interview that the deal includes a provision on further steps towards equal rights to salaries and better wages for nurses. The Minister of Welfare has also stated that the contract is the first step towards addressing gender-based pay gaps.

“The unexplained gender-based wage gap is a disgrace,” he said on radio. “It has been decided to correct the difference in wages … of which healthcare workers are among those most affected.”

**Sources:**
Iceland review online “Iceland Hospital’s New Contract with Nurses presented” Iceland review online 14 February 2013

Iceland review online “Nurses reject Iceland Hospital Pay raise Offer” Iceland review online 5 February 2013.

**UK temporarily suspends overseas registration**

The UK’s Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), imposed a freeze on new overseas applications for registration during February and March 2013.

The ban on new applications remained in place while the agency reviewed its overseas registration and policy procedures to ensure that
policies were being applied “firmly, fairly, legally and consistently”. The freeze was implemented after concerns were raised by the Professional Standards Authority.

According to the Nursing Times, almost 1,000 overseas nurses had their applications put on hold while the review was carried out. The agency has warned that new applicants may experience delays in having their applications processed.

A review of the policy itself is now underway, and will consider proposals such as requiring applicants to attend in person with their identity documents, and the administration of written, oral or practical tests for some or all applicants. The NMC aims to complete the review and implement its findings by April 2014.

Sources:
NMC "NMC resumes overseas registration": NMC website, 2 April 2013
Calkin, S "NMC ends freeze on overseas nursing applications" Nursing Times 9 April 2013

Rwanda plans to train more nurses

Rwanda’s Ministry of Education is planning to increase the number of nurse and midwives graduating from nursing schools, according to Minister of Education Mr Vincent Biruta. However, Mr Biruta said the increase in the number of graduates would require the schools to make provision for self-sponsoring students to enrol.

The announcement follows a shakeup which sees responsibility for nursing schools moved from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Education.

Source:
Ubomenyi "Number of graduating nurses and midwives to increase" Ubomenyi 21 April 2013

Industrial Court ruling brings an end to Kenya’s nurses dispute

In Kenya, a nurses’ strike that lasted for more than two months ended in February 2013 following an arbitrated ruling by the Industrial Court.

The strike began on 3 December 2012, in support of registration of the Kenya National Union of Nurses (KNUN) and payment of monthly allowances. The conflict escalated later that month when the government had declared the strike illegal and introduced disciplinary measures including withholding salaries and random transfers.

Under the new agreement, government is required to release the nurses’ December and January salaries and reabsorb those dismissed for absconding duty during the strike.

The KNUN has not been registered, with the National Labour Board claiming that nurses are adequately represented by the Union of Kenya Civil Servants.

Source:
Kiriba H “Kenya: Nurses Call Off Strike After Deal” The Star 11 February 2013, reproduced on allAfrica.com

Israel’s nurse win pay rise

Israel’s treasury and the Nursing Union agreed on a 14 per cent wage rise over 4.5 years in December 2012, according to a report in Israel News.

The agreement followed a strike by Israel’s nurses that lasted 17 days. After a lengthy overnight hearing in the Labour Court, a deal was struck which would see across the board wage increases, as well as new funds for “professional solutions” to issues raised during negotiations.

Source:
Dvir, N "Nurses strike ends with ‘historic’ deal” Israel News, 20 December 2013, reproduced on ynetnew.com

Human resources for health continues to be a high priority in Africa

The steering committee of the Network of African Parliamentary Committees (NEAPACOH) has decided that human resources for health will be one of its main areas of focus for the next two years.

The decision was taken in April 2013 at a meeting hosted by Partners in Population and Development (PPD) including parliamentarians from across Africa.

The next meeting of the NEAPACOH is scheduled for September 2013.

Source:
Research briefs and publications
Recent research briefs and publications relevant to nursing human resources include:

**Nurse Workforce Policy and the Economic Crisis: A Global Overview** (2013) *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*

**The global nursing faculty shortage: Status and solutions for change** (2013) *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*


**Health workforce remuneration: comparing wage levels, ranging, and dispersion of 16 occupational groups in 20 countries** (2013) *Human Resources for Health*

**Creating an enabling environment for human resources for health program implementation in three African countries** (2013) USAID/CapacityPlus


For a more comprehensive list of the latest in nursing human resources research, visit the ICHRN Knowledge Library.

Events & Announcements

5-8 September, 2013
**8th International Neonatal Nursing Conference 2013**
Belfast, Ireland

10-13 November, 2013
**Third Global Forum on Human Resources for Health**
Recife, Brazil

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The International Centre for Human Resources in Nursing was established in 2006 by the International Council of Nurses (ICN) and its premier foundation the Florence Nightingale International Foundation (FNIF). The Centre is dedicated to strengthening the nursing workforce globally through the development, ongoing monitoring and dissemination of comprehensive information and tools on nursing human resources policy, management, research and practice.