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The key question that will dominate the 21st Century will be, "What do nurses know and how do they use that knowledge to benefit people?"

(Adapted from) Dr. Hildegard Peplau, International Congress of Nurses, 1997



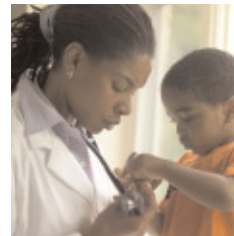
NURSING RESEARCH

A Key to the Nation's Health



Nursing research supports helping people cope effectively by making the best decisions about their healthcare needs or illnesses. It's about searching for effective approaches to achieving and sustaining good health, preventing or delaying the onset of disease or disability, understanding and easing the symptoms of acute and chronic illnesses, and making a difference in how care is provided. Nursing research saves lives.

Nurses make a difference by helping individuals and communities to change health behaviors and practices. Nurses, sensitive to the complexities and high cost of health care, use their knowledge to save time, money and most importantly, lives.



THE IMPORTANCE OF NURSING RESEARCH

Nursing cannot make a difference without research. Nursing research is critical to establishing a scientific basis for the care of people at all stages of life: from promoting healthy lifestyles to managing patients during illness and recovery to caring for those at the end of life. Nurse scientists look at care from the perspective of patients, families and communities; at diverse settings such as the home, the trauma center and hospice. Their research results are translated into effective actions that benefit patients, their families, health care professionals, and the public.

LEADING-EDGE NURSING RESEARCH UNDER WAY

Nurse researchers supported by NINR are currently providing scientific leadership in five select areas:

- **CHANGING LIFESTYLE BEHAVIORS FOR BETTER HEALTH**—a recent Department of Health and Human Services report found that 40 percent of premature deaths can be attributed to individual unhealthy behaviors.
- **MANAGING THE EFFECTS OF CHRONIC ILLNESS TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE**—Chronic disease conditions are the leading cause of illness, disability and death, and affect at least 100 million people in the United States.
- **IDENTIFYING EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO REDUCE HEALTH DISPARITIES**—National health surveys identify substantial disparities among different segments of the population, including certain members of ethnic groups, in access to health care, incidence of disease, length of life and mortality rates.

- **HARNESSING ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES TO SERVE HUMAN NEEDS**—Rapidly evolving technologies offer opportunities and challenges to nurse researchers. Investigating, advancing, and using these technologies is critical in providing appropriate and humane health care.
- **ENHANCING THE END OF LIFE EXPERIENCE FOR PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES**—Understanding end-of-life and the job of caring for seriously ill and dying patients is a primary role in nursing research and care.

NURSING RESEARCH MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN OUR LIVES

Nursing today is recognized as an indispensable link between clinical research and front-line patient care.

Here are just a few examples of NINR-supported research:

- Some organ transplant patients are now taught to perform self-assessments and report the results, improving communication with care providers and identifying early signs of infection and rejection more quickly. Treating infections before they became a major problem helped reduce hospitalizations for infection by 50 percent.
- Intervention aimed at elementary school children can help reduce their cholesterol and body fat levels and increase their fitness, activity and understanding of cardiovascular disease risk factors. This is important work toward developing healthy lifestyle habits during childhood and adolescence and reducing risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

- Low-income mothers who receive home visits by nurses have significantly lower pregnancy-induced high blood pressure and better timing of subsequent pregnancies. Childhood injuries were also substantially reduced. These important interventions were key to improving the quality of life for these families.

LEADING-EDGE AREAS OF INTEREST

Within the five select areas, NINR researchers are undertaking critical research designed to enhance and save lives.

- **CHANGING LIFESTYLE BEHAVIORS FOR BETTER HEALTH**
 - A focus on major health problems that are prevalent across populations (obesity, insufficient physical activity, management of chronic illnesses, substance abuse, etc.)
 - Health promotion focused on the healthy, as well as those at risk for disease or who are already ill
 - Interventions to enhance health choice decision making, such as whether to take estrogen, undergo genetic screening, or select a certain diet.
- **MANAGING CHRONIC ILLNESS**
 - Maintaining optimal daily life activities for patients living with chronic illness
 - Development and testing of interventions to stem chronic decline and dysfunction
 - Interventions that address the special needs of caregivers who are part of vulnerable populations, including elderly and rural caregivers

■ REDUCING HEALTH DISPARITIES

- Culturally sensitive interventions to modify health disparities
- A focus on disparities related to infants, children, the elderly, immigrants, inner city and rural populations
- Evaluation of cost-effectiveness of interventions, such as home visits by nurses versus visits in the clinic

■ HARNESSING ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

- Exploring both basic science interventions and clinical applications of genetics within the context of nursing science
- Assessing ways genetic risks can be minimized, including the role of lifestyle changes and environmental factors, to delay or avoid genetic expression of disease

■ END-OF-LIFE CARE

- Studies of the end of life that encompass the spectrum of care settings, including hospital, home and hospice for all demographic groups
- Development and testing of models for palliative care that clarifies when it should begin and how it should be structured.
- Investigation of family support and bereavement issues

ONE OF THE AIMS OF NURSING RESEARCH IS TO ENSURE THAT KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HEALTH-ENHANCING AND LIFE-SAVING THERAPIES IS TRANSLATED INTO HEALTH CARE SERVICES. AND THIS WORK IS MAKING AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE.

Nursing research focuses on quality of life across the lifespan.

Nurses are part of your family and your community ... when you need them most.

