



NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 2

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

It has been a busy period since I reported to you in our last *Newsletter* in March. There are a number of developments I would like to apprise you of.

2005 INDEN Meeting

We are pleased that we were finally able to obtain sufficient information about ICN activities for the INDEN Board of Directors [BD] to be able to make a decision. The INDEN meeting will be held May 20-21, 2005, in Taipei, Taiwan. The BD will meet on May 22nd. Please place these dates on your calendars. Based on comments made to us by members, we will be putting

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out a call for members to submit abstracts for posters to display during the meeting. This will enable people to request funding from their settings. Please begin thinking about this, and alert your colleagues and students as well.

The doctoral programs in Taiwan will collectively host a reception for us. We are most grateful for this hospitality. Once the exact day/time have been established, we will inform you.

Task Forces

Several task forces were formed, with INDEN members volunteering to serve. These were based on strategic planning discussions at the Toronto meeting. They are as follows:

1. Mentorship: Val Ehlers and Callista Roy, Co-chairs
2. Identifying global research priorities, John Daly, Chair
3. Facilitating international research collaboration, Richard Redman, Chair
4. Developing data bases for INDEN, John Cutcliffe, Chair
5. Planning for doctoral student and postdoctoral fellow workshops, Hugh McKenna, Chair
6. *Newsletter* and publications, Morag Gray, Chair
7. Commission for a doctoral program collaborative, Mary Courtney and Kate Galvin, Co-chairs.

It is anticipated that in the near future they will be submitting their reports.

Posting of papers from the Toronto conference

Seven of our speakers submitted papers following our 2003 conference. They were edited, and have been posted on our website [<http://www.umich.edu/~inden/>]. As others send us their papers we will add them to our site.

Listing of INDEN

INDEN is listed in the "Yearbook of International Organizations." We update this information each year; this year, we were asked to include our logo as well. This service is free, and provides us with great visibility worldwide.

Sessions on INDEN at Regional/International conferences

A suggestion was made in Toronto that we organize sessions on INDEN at various international or regional meetings. This process has begun. As of this writing, three such sessions were held, with INDEN Board members presenting information on INDEN, and distributing brochures.

- a) Johannesburg, South Africa: during the International Multidisciplinary Health Care Conference, Hosted by the University of South Africa, March, 2004. V. Ehlers, S. Ketefian, M.J. Kim.
- b) Sydney, Australia: during the Leadership and Mentoring in Nursing conference, hosted by the University of Western Sydney, July 2004. J. Daly, S. Ketefian, M.J. Kim.
- c) Dublin, Ireland: during the 15th International Nursing Research Congress, organized by the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, July 2004. H. McKenna, C. Roy.

We are grateful to the organizers of these conferences for enabling us to bring the message of INDEN to conference delegates.

It had also been suggested that we might organize scientific sessions during various conferences. It is not clear how this could be done without cutting into the main host conference, which we would not want to do. In addition, we do not have staff to manage this type of additional activity. If a

group of members wishes to present a proposal to the BD, we will be pleased to entertain them.

INDEN Elections

Our elections are now in progress. The committee is implementing the by-law changes members voted on [gradually increase student board membership on the board to 3, and elect an officer-elect 1-year prior to the ending of an officer's term]. I hope all members will actively support the work of the Election Committee, provide requested information in a timely manner and vote when the ballot comes out.

Publication of book

By way of an update, the work on our book titled *Doctoral Education in Nursing: International Perspectives*, is progressing apace at the publishers. Editors and authors have proofread, and submitted the final corrections on the manuscript. A cover design is now under preparation. The book has 30 authors from 9 countries. All chapters are co-authored to assure that multiple country perspectives are represented in the chapters. We will inform you as soon as we have a publication date, and how you may purchase your copy.

Workshop attendance

We were able to send two student members of INDEN to the "Four Country Project" Annual workshop, held in June 2004 in Toronto. Hala Darwich and Lourdes Marie Tejero were selected. They have sent reflections on their experiences, which appears in this issue.

At the postdoctoral level, Dr. Debra Anderson was selected to attend a 2-week workshop for postdoctoral fellows offered by the University of Pennsylvania, and she too has submitted her own reflections, included in this issue.

As can be seen, these are wonderful opportunities for our members, who find these workshops intellectually stimulating and enriching in multiple ways. We are grateful to our colleagues and institutions in the 4-country project, and the University of Pennsylvania, for inviting us to send some of our members to their workshops.

Shaké Ketefian, President

NEW POST FOR INDEN TREASURER

Dr. Hugh McKenna, one of the INDEN co-founders and Treasurer, has been promoted from Head of the School of Nursing to Dean of the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences at the University of Ulster. He took up this new position on the 1st July 2004.

With 28,000 students, the University of Ulster is the largest university of the island of Ireland. A quarter of the University's business is in the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences. His Faculty incorporates the Schools of Nursing, Health Sciences (all AHPs, sports studies), Environmental Science (coastal studies, geography), Biomedical Science, Psychology, the Research Graduate School, and the Institute for Medicine and Primary Care.

Hugh is one of a very small number of nurses in the UK university system who holds such a Deanship.

Congratulations, Hugh. Your international colleagues are proud of you!

CONFERENCE NEWS

INDEN Board Members Hold Special Session at STTI Conference in Dublin

At the Sigma Theta Tau International Research Conference in Dublin, Ireland on Saturday, July 24, 2004 two INDEN board members, Drs. Hugh McKenna and Callista Roy presented a special session on the organization and work of INDEN. In a room set up for 50 persons, more than 60 participants crowded in to listen to the presentations and to engage in lively discussion on doctoral education during the one and a half hour session. Participants included those from the US, as well as those from European and Asian countries.

Dr. McKenna outlined the growth of doctoral education around the world and discussed the founding and current work of INDEN. Dr. Roy addressed one specific project on Mentoring. She noted that this work addresses three of the goals of INDEN: to 1) Create a common vision for the future of doctoral education; 2) Develop guidelines relevant to different countries; and 3) Devise approaches for influencing policies relevant to doctoral

education. The specific goals of the project were noted as: 1) To define and describe the complex process of mentoring in doctoral education and 2) To develop a Position Paper on Mentoring in doctoral education. Conference participants were asked to contribute to the project by filling out Opinionaires on mentoring.

Issues raised by the group included ways to collaborate internationally, the strain of faculty with both teaching and research responsibilities, and faculty shortages in some countries. A great deal of enthusiasm was generated for communicating on common interests related to doctoral education and the key question was how to join INDEN. We can hope that participants of the STTI special session will become active members.

Submitted by: Sr. Callista Roy, PhD, RN, Professor and Nurse Theorist, William F. Connell School of Nursing, Boston College

REPORT OF FELLOW FOLLOWING ATTENDANCE AT POSTDOCTORAL WORKSHOP

I would like to thank INDEN for sponsoring me to undertake the *Postdoctoral Summer Nursing Research Institute (SNRI)* conducted through a 2 week residential school in May at the University of Pennsylvania over a two year period. The two years of the SNRI focuses on writing for publication skills and "grantsmanship." The focus for this year was on writing research grants. The course was quite intensive with comprehensive sessions conducted in both the mornings and the afternoons. Areas covered throughout the course included the following aspects of writing research grants: specific aims, preliminary findings, background and significance, budget development for longitudinal studies, time lines, funding sources and review process, what to do when a pink sheet comes back, human subject review, and ethics, grant team building and implementation and what to include in data analysis. These sessions were complemented with time allocated for independent study to write up or revise individual grants supported by password access to computers and library cards for use over the duration of the 2 year course. This greatly assisted the SNRI fellows to use the time productively with the building accessible to the fellows in the evenings

and on the weekend. By the end of the course many budding research grant proposals were developed, along with an increase in self-confidence and awareness in how and where to put the grants in for funding. To complete the two weeks SNRI fellows presented their research proposal to the group which was a great time to receive helpful critique and suggestions for the developed proposals.

The comradeship from the other SNRI fellows and the Directors of the Institute was great with lots of healthy discussion occurring. The faculty were very honest and frank about their experiences with not only their successes but also their unsuccessful grants as well, and it was great to hear their reflections on their grant writing careers. As the only Australian fellow on the course, it was great to exchange research ideas and knowledge and enjoy the company of the other fellows. I thank the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing for organizing and offering this wonderful workshop.

Debra Anderson, PhD, RN
Queensland University of Technology
School of Nursing
Australia

REPORT OF PARTICIPATION IN DOCTORAL WORKSHOP UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

This workshop, held at the University of Toronto in June, 2004, was part of the "Four Country Project" Annual faculty/student workshops [see *INDEN Newsletter* of March 2004]. The four institutions are Lund University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Toronto, and Ulster University. INDEN was invited to send two students this year. We were very fortunate to have been selected to represent INDEN at this intellectually rich workshop.

Each of the four schools had sent several faculty and students. The research of all participants related in some important way to the overall workshop theme, which was nursing administration and management. An important area of learning for all participants was to hear presentations from each school about how doctoral education was conducted in their own

countries, and enabled us to identify similarities and differences.

Faculty from each of the four schools presented their research programs, and discussed their current research. The topics were wide-ranging, and it was highly instructive for students to hear of the work of the faculty. The areas of research discussed included human resource planning, patient safety issues, risk assessment, outcomes, management, health policy, and quality measurement.

Time was allocated for students to present their research as well, although in most cases these were at the beginning stages of conceptualization. Given the formative phase of their work, the input provided by the faculty was extremely helpful in shaping the students' thinking and research plans. Feedback was also given by peers to the students' presentations. Comments included guidance in conceptualization of the research, as well as potential direction regarding methodological strategies and approaches appropriate to the specific research question.

The workshop gave us an opportunity to meet many faculty and students from different backgrounds and perspectives. It was a chance to get away from the daily press of work and hear about other perspectives on research methods and design.

The intellectual experience and interpersonal dimension that this workshop provided soon became more communal given the fact that both faculty and students shared the same residence hall provided by the University of Toronto. In addition, a mid-week trip to Niagara Falls and a nearby winery helped create valuable bonds, and the group became a true blend of cultures.

Remarkably, despite the fact that the participants came from various countries, backgrounds and cultures, the nursing experiences were all comparable, the professional issues were similar and the clinical experiences were alike. Most importantly, the eagerness to move the nursing profession and nursing science forward was noticeable among all participants. Furthermore, the eagerness to analyze nursing problems, to expose

them and study them scientifically in order to come up with interventions and changes was evident even if the approaches and methods were different.

As students, this experience enabled us to present our work outside the accustomed group of students and faculty in our own settings. At first, it was a bit intimidating, given the diversity of the group and expertise of the faculty attending the workshop. But soon, the friendliness and supportive spirit made the discomfort vanish and the experience became a productive one. It allowed us to assess our work and their relevance to the other participants, and permitted us to learn how to frame our presentations, and to think about more effective ways to convey and share nursing knowledge and expertise with others from dissimilar specialties. The questions that were raised after each presentation were all geared to strengthen the nursing research and improve outcomes for patients.

At the end of the workshop an email list was created to keep the communication among all participants open to allow for future collaboration when possible. As students, we came to know where in the world we could locate researchers with similar expertise as our own. Although immediate collaboration did not take place, if not for this workshop, we would not have known about these nursing programs and the work of their faculties. The differences among the nursing programs in terms of philosophies and approaches would have still been a mystery. This workshop opened our eyes to the fact that various research methods and approaches are possible. It emphasized the importance of thinking differently when appropriate; within a diverse group such as this, thinking differently and in a fresh way about one's research problem became easier. Overall, this was an experience of great value, and had an immeasurable impact on us, both for its scientific value, as well as for the horizons it opened for us. We thank the Four Country Project institutions, the University of Pennsylvania, and INDEN for making it possible for us to attend.

Hala Darwich, Doctoral Student, University of Michigan, USA
Lourdes Tejero, Doctoral Student, University of the Philippines

THE EUROPEAN DOCTORAL CONFERENCE IN NURSING SCIENCE – A SUCCESSFUL IDEA CONTINUES

The European Doctoral Conference in Nursing Science is organised by PhD-students for PhD-students in order to give them an opportunity to come into contact with and to learn from each other directly. Although nursing science has made great advances in Europe for the last decade, in some countries it is not well-established and different PhD-regulations exist. Moreover, it is a known fact that to attain a PhD-degree is a lonely and hard road for every student. For this reason, getting help and guidance, not only from supervisors, but from peers as well, is essential for PhD-students.

EDCNS is part of a collaboration of the Departments of Nursing Science of the Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany, and of the University of Maastricht. Therefore the conference place alternates yearly between both universities.

In October 2003, more than 70 PhD-students from about ten countries throughout Europe and other parts of the world attended the 4th European Doctoral Conference in Nursing Science (EDCNS) held at the University of Maastricht, the Netherlands. During the two days of the conference PhD students presented their research projects and exchanged experiences with each other. Presentations covered a broad spectrum of different research projects, qualitative as well as quantitative. Topics focused on various aspects of nursing, such as health care needs of elderly, health problems like pressure ulcer, incontinence and falls, or ethical attitudes of nurses.¹ Each presentation lasted about 40 minutes including a 20-minute discussion. After their presentations, the PhD-students received an evaluation form with feedbacks, filled in by the audience anonymously. The sessions were chaired by qualified nursing scientists from different countries.

In several workshops the participants had the opportunity to enhance their knowledge with regard to research

¹ An overview of the abstracts of all presentations can be found on the website: www.zw.unimaas.nl/edcns2003.

methodology or to their presentation skills. Furthermore, a demonstration of a virtual PhD-defence, went on in the traditional University Hall of Maastricht, which gave them both authentic and humorous insights into the delight and burden of the last step of the way to the doctoral degree.

The next EDCNS will be taking place at Humboldt University of Berlin from 1st to 2nd October 2004. Again its objectives are to provide European doctoral students in nursing science the opportunity

- to meet and establish contacts with colleagues from different countries
- to present a research project as a part of one's PhD-research project, and
- to share knowledge and information in the area of nursing research around the world.

The organising committee would welcome abstracts for oral or poster presentation. For further information with regard to call for abstract or to conference registration, please contact e-mail: elke.mertens@charite.de or antje.tannen@charite.de or visit the website <http://www.charite.de/ch/pflege>

THE SHORT STUDENTSHIP SCHEME (Shared Opportunities for Research Training) University of Glamorgan School of Care Sciences

The UK shares with many other countries the need to increase nursing research capacity. One of the difficulties faced is the dearth of funding opportunities for research training.

On qualifying, most nurses wish to gain some clinical experience. For those who subsequently wish to train as researchers, it is very difficult to switch from a staff nurses salary to a research bursary. There are a few research student schemes which fund the nurse's salary but these are difficult to obtain and are so few that they can not easily make a substantial difference to research capacity. More commonly funding for research training comes in the form of a stipend which is usually around £9000 per annum (many offer less). It is simply not possible for many UK nurses to take up such a stipend because of financial commitments,

The scheme

The School of Care Sciences, University of Glamorgan, has funding for approximately two PhD bursaries each year. The NHS in Wales has a large nursing vacancy factor and difficulty in recruitment. In partnership with 4 local Trusts the School of Care Sciences offers the opportunity for newly qualified nurses to apply for a post as part time staff nurse and part time PhD student. The studentships are advertised nationally alongside existing Trust vacancies and as such aid in recruitment.

The School of Care Sciences at the University of Glamorgan has as part of its research strategy, the desire to 'support a research capability that contributes to the overall improvement in the quality of life in Wales'. An important aspect of this is to increase the research capability of nurses through working collaboratively with our local NHS Trusts.

These studentships provide an important step in helping us to reach these goals, at the same time helping in the recruitment and retention of nurses to the Trusts, and increasing the research capacity within the clinical areas. The scheme also facilitates the development of joint nursing research programmes between the Trusts and SoCS.

The studentships

Four studentships are offered each year. There are a number of degrees which provide research training in the UK, e.g. MPhil, PhD and MSc Research. The applicant can opt for any one of these. One studentship is allocated to each Trust each year. PhD students will undertake a programme of studies over four years, whilst the nurses simultaneously work in a clinical area. MPhil/MSc Research studentships will run for two years.

Students are employed by the Trust (at 0.5wte), and will receive a pro-rata studentship, funded by SoCS. The bursary is exempt from income tax.

The students

Students will be qualified nurses or allied health professionals who have recently qualified. They need to possess a first or upper second class Honours degree.

The programme of study

The School of Care Sciences has an overarching research theme of:

Regenerating health and social well-being in those groups that are especially vulnerable, through research that focuses on empowerment, education, effectiveness and efficiency.

Students entering the studentship scheme join one of four Research Groups (each lead by a Professor) according to the focus of the research. All students undertake formal research training as part of their programme of study. This includes training in research methodologies and academic writing. All students are supervised by a supervision team, drawn up in partnership with the employing Trust, and in accordance with university regulations.

Individual projects are identified through collaboration between SoCS and the local Trusts. These reflect research questions identified by clinical staff and/or SoCS staff.

One of the most remarkable features of the scheme is the way in which the Human Resource departments in each of the 4 trusts facilitated the process of appointment. One advertisement was placed on behalf of the four trusts and one appointments panel met. It comprised of staff from the four trust and the head of research at SoCS. Although applicants applied to one trust the process enable us to match students to projects in a way which enabled an individual who had applied to one trust to be appointed to another if this enabled the best solution for the Trust, student and school. This enabled flexibility in choice of projects. The cooperation of the HR departments was crucial to this process.

We have yet to evaluate the scheme. The following advantages are apparent from the outset.

1. It has enabled the School to double the number of research students who can take advantage of its bursaries. (NB. It will take the student a year longer to graduate).
2. Nurses who might have held a desire to train in research but could not because of financial difficulties can have an opportunity to do so.

3. The NHS Trusts become more attractive as employers because of the scheme
4. The NHS Trusts are able to have clinical questions answered.
5. Nurses are able to gain the necessary clinical experience whilst simultaneously studying for a research degree.

Further details can be obtained from Prof Donna Mead or Dr. Maggie Kirk. School of Care Sciences, University of Glamorgan. Pontypridd. CF37 1DL
dmead@glam.ac.uk

HOW TO SURVIVE A PART-TIME PH.D IN NURSING

Introduction

More and more nurses are studying at post-graduate level. A sizeable number of these pursue their studies to Ph.D level. In this paper I wish to give a personal perspective on what it is like to study for a Ph.D part-time. The title of my Doctoral thesis was 'The Selection and Evaluation of a Nursing Model for Long-Stay Psychiatric Patients'. It took me five years to complete¹.

Motivation for undertaking a Ph.D

While a clinical nurse manager I became involved in discussions concerning the implementation of a nursing theory in a psychiatric unit. I soon became aware of two important questions facing nurses: how do you select a nursing theory which will be appropriate for a particular group of patients?; will this theory have any effect on the quality of care received by those patients? An initial trawl of the literature did not provide answers to these questions and colleagues encouraged me to register for a PhD. This led to a two stage study: the first stage involved asking ward managers to select an appropriate nursing theory for practice, the second involved facilitating the use of this theory in a clinical setting and noting the effects it had on specific quality of care indicators.

With my family I weighed the advantages and disadvantages of undertaking a PhD part-time. Perhaps the main advantage was that I could retain my job and therefore my career would not be put at risk by taking three years off work to do full time research. This also meant that I could earn a full salary.

Furthermore, if the project was related to my work I would have the added advantages of bringing some excitement and innovation into the job and perhaps try and bridge the infamous theory-practice gap.

However, we did realise that by doing a Ph.D part-time I would be taking on a task that many full-time students find extremely difficult. To me I was entering unknown territory as far as my abilities were concerned. This was not helped by the apparent uncertainty in the academic community as to what constitutes a doctorate and what are the differences between a PhD and a Master of Philosophy!

Doing a Ph.D: the process²

Expansion

After registration I was allocated a supervisor and under his guidance I became immersed in the literature. Any article or book that mentioned models, theories, quality or long-stay psychiatric patients was sought, read and catalogued. At this stage I was not very focused but I did experience intellectual expansion. As a result of the reading I had undertaken my original ideas on how to approach the study changed. This is probably the most demanding time for the supervisor-student relationship. In my case I was telephoning my supervisor once every week and seeing him once a month. With hindsight, I was obviously looking for reassurance and wanting to share newly acquired knowledge with him.

During this early stage I was filled with unbounded enthusiasm and joviality. The search of the extant literature was like a detective trail – one article or book leading on to another. If curious family and colleagues showed an interest they were bombarded with details of the proposed study to such an extent that they were often reluctant to ask about it again! It can indeed be very boring to have to listen to repeated accounts of other peoples' research projects. Einstein wrote: *"If A = success, then the formula is A=X+Y+Z, with X being work, Y being play, and Z keeping your mouth shut"*³

Accompanying the feeling of enthusiasm was a feeling of uncertainty. These are strange emotional bedfellows. Naively, I believed that the research methods course

I had undertaken at undergraduate level would see me through the Ph.D I soon realised that this was not the case and I joined night classes on a Master's research course to prepare me better for the methodological rigour required at post-graduate level. This decision was vital to my 'coming of age' as a research student.

'Coming of Age'

Without doubt the most enjoyable part of the study for me was the data collecting procedure. The academic process of putting into action a research design that had been developed from the research literature was stimulating. The personal experience of visiting wards and collecting data directly from patients and nurses was particularly uplifting.

I found potential respondents very open and welcoming and I often left a clinical area with a wealth of unsolicited information. Furthermore, their hospitality was such that I was offered copious cups of tea and coffee. As a result of their friendliness and their desire to share their problems with me, I was seldom able to adhere to my data collecting timetable.

During this phase yet another valuable lesson was learned. A research design may look perfect on paper and the data collecting method may appear straightforward. However, on entering the 'real world' of the patient and the practising nurse, events occurred that made adaptation essential. Nurses do take sick leave and holidays, porters go on strike and post is not collected, patients can decide not to co-operate, wards are closed, Christmas is not a good time to collect data, and ethical committees often only may meet twice per year.

Graft

The writing up phase of the thesis was undoubtedly the most difficult part of the process for me. Experts agree that doing a Ph.D is a lonely existence^{4,5}. Full-time students normally have the congenial company of others who are also doing research. In contrast, as a part-timer I did not have this supportive milieu. I worked at writing up my research in relative solitude.

As I collected more and more material it felt like I was living with a monster that was getting bigger and bigger, and as the time passed the content got so specialised that nobody apart from myself really knew anything about it!

While 'writing up' I tended to work in the evening time and during weekends. Phillips and Pugh maintain that this is a common occurrence with part-time students⁴. One major problem I experienced was having to switch repeatedly from everyday nursing work to research work. The psychological adaptation involved in having to do this was not a pleasant experience. Part of the problem was having to force myself to get back to where I left off or having to force myself to stop writing up and return to clinical work when I was in a particularly productive train of thought.

On occasions I left my research work aside for days on end and seldom thought about it or looked at it. Then an enormous surge of guilt occurred and I worked continually and productively at it for weeks.

I also noticed an interesting phenomenon which has been validated recently by other part-time Ph.D colleagues. When I should have been spending more time on my research I found a compulsion to do domestic tasks that I would otherwise find unappealing. Painting, cutting the grass, scouring household drains and car maintenance became attractive alternatives to getting back to my unfinished thesis. Procrastinating became an art form.

Weekend research work was a particular problem because of an inner resentment of having to give up this supposed leisure time. Similarly, family relationships can get strained. I am conspicuous by my absence from contemporary photographs of family outings. The guilt involved in spending research time away from my family was palpable.

Being the parent of small children does not make this easier. When I was writing up at home they invariably found their way to where I hid myself or my paperwork. This inevitably led to me ignoring them or getting irritated. Then I felt guilty for behaving that way and left the research

aside to give time to our children. Periodically my wife had the unenviable task of keeping the children away from me when I was 'studying'. Ph.D graduation scrolls should be torn in two and partners should get a half.

As a part-time student there were several time-related issues that I felt would disadvantage me. Since it was going to take me at least five years to complete the Ph.D, invariably more books and papers were going to be published by other authors/researchers on my research topic. Therefore the literature was growing. I was also aware that in the interim someone else could publish a similar study and steal my "academic thunder". Furthermore, since there is normally a one year waiting time for publication in academic journals it was going to take over six years before my study was eventually published. By that time the whole area could become outmoded.

At certain times of the academic year I had great difficulty gaining frequent access to library, photocopying, computing and printing facilities. Living off campus, as most part-timers do, I found these constraints particularly frustrating.

I had a great deal of support from my hospital manager for my research. However, I was aware that this could lead to problems. It was possible that work colleagues could have resented me being given what they perceived as an easy passage by management concerning workload distribution. This can lead to interpersonal problems. I could also envisage that if two people in the same work place were undertaking a part-time study they may be inclined to watch the other carefully to see if their ordinary workload remains comparable.

As a part-time researcher I had to learn to say 'NO!' to extra duties that could impinge upon my research time. New and junior members of staff may have a problem doing this. Saying no sometimes led to more of the guilt referred to above, especially if my colleagues got the extra work that was meant for me. This could have had further implications for my relationships with them.

Saying no can also backfire, as not being involved in new initiatives I was occasionally isolated from stimulating innovations and as a result future career doors could be closed to me.

On several occasions I wondered if I should be doing research at all, or when or if I would finish writing up the thesis. In essence, this 'graft' part of the research was a survival test with an opponent that I had to succeed in overpowering. At the start of the research I often lay awake at night thinking enthusiastically about the study topic, now near the end I dreamed of finishing and getting away from it.

*"Writing...is an adventure; to begin with it is a toy and an amusement, then it becomes a master, and then it becomes a tyrant; and the last phase is just as you were about to be reconciled to your servitude – you kill the monster and fling it – to the public."*³ Winston Churchill

Survival pointers when writing up the Ph.D thesis:

Five years is a long time to spend with a single research topic but it is not unusual for some students to still be doing a Ph.D over nine years part-time! Therefore, a potential Ph.D student must select an area that not only interests them but intrigues them to such an extent that they will not get too bored with it at the 'graft' phase.

Students should arrange their time so that they have set days or hours for writing and adhere rigidly to these. They also should have set time for leisure, family and friends. All the significant people in their life should be made aware of these arrangements^{4,5}.

Regular contact should be kept with other research students, peers and supervisors. These contacts should be seen as a positive motivating force.

During this research process students may become bewitched by side issues. There should be a way of identifying too many different tangential themes and intriguing avenues of investigation. They should stick to the objectives of the study – they do not have the time to do otherwise.

Outcome and evaluation

When I eventually finished writing up and I submitted the thesis to the examination

office at the university I felt tremendous relief. Now I could concern myself with renewing old acquaintances, taking a holiday and pursuing other areas of leisure. However, I suffered what may best be described as withdrawal effects; it was difficult to get the thesis work ethic out of my system. Even if watching a film on television I had the nagging thought that I should be upstairs working.

Notwithstanding the difficulties experienced as a part-time student it was one of the most stimulating periods of my life. The process took me through the entire spectrum of emotions. To me one of the greatest personal benefits of completing a Ph.D part-time is the tremendous psychological boost of achieving the highest academic award under extremely trying circumstances.

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Written by Professor Hugh McKenna

ONLINE JOURNAL OF ISSUES IN NURSING

The May 31, 2004 *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing* topic, *The Endangered Health System: A Progress Report on Workforce and Work Environment Issues* examines recent strategic planning efforts to resolve workforce issues such as nurse supply and demand. Four featured articles summarize three national reports and review the nursing profession's response to several workforce and work environment issues. Peggy Hewlett and Michael Bleich provide the topic overview.

In the first article, Bobbi Kimball describes the 2002 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation report *Health Care's Human Crisis: The American Nursing Shortage*.

The second article, by Patricia Reid Ponte, summarizes key elements of the American Organization of Nurse Executives monograph, *Perspectives on the Nursing Shortage: A Blueprint for Action*, noting contributing factors to the nursing shortage, recommendations for resolution, and actions that nurses can take to help ensure a robust workforce for the future.

In the third article, Katherine Kany summarizes *Nursing's Agenda for the Future*, and describes the process for identification of the script and priorities for dramatic changes in health care policy and delivery in the next decade.

The fourth article, also by Bleich and Hewlett, notes the nursing profession's response to the workforce issues cited in these and other national reports on the nursing shortage and calls for a tiered, comprehensive approach to increase supply, respond to current demand, and enhance the working environment to benefit recruitment and retention.

Deadline for submission of items for the next newsletter is 31st October 2004

Please send items to m.gray@napier.ac.uk

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