

Research and HIV Nursing

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Welcome to this edition of *HIV Nursing*, which for once is focused on you rather than your patients or clients. The theme in this edition is research: how to do it and how to disseminate it. It always strikes me at conferences how much good research is being done by those working in the HIV field yet how little we get to hear about it. Are we suffering from the shrinking violet syndrome or just too busy to put pen to paper? Whichever, NHIVNA has always held as its basic tenets, education, support and research and this edition attempts to address all three.

On 1st May 2008, the new Nursing and Midwifery Council's Code of Conduct [1] becomes operational and I draw your attention to two aspects:

- You must deliver care based on the best available evidence or best practice.
- You must take part in appropriate learning and practice activities that maintain and develop your competence and performance

Evidence-based practice and the need to maintain competence means that continuing education is now integral to our continuing practice. As nurses increasingly register as graduates, demands for higher education grow. At one time holding a Master's qualification was rare, now it is fairly commonplace and people are looking at studying at doctoral level. Although doctoral work is often associated with the phrase 'many are called but few are chosen,' this is perhaps more accurately linked with people choosing the wrong research subject or doctoral pathway. To address this, Mark Hayter discusses the advantages and disadvantages of doctoral study through either a traditional PhD or a professional doctorate. He provides some helpful issues to consider before embarking, perhaps the most important of which is to choose something you are interested in.

To follow this we have two examples of research in progress. Rui Baptista-Gonçalves shares his experience of some of the practical issues facing a PhD student in getting started and choosing a suitable methodology. Simon Jones discusses the advantages of making research part of your

working life and describes the challenges of undertaking evaluation research with voluntary organisations at home and overseas.

Regardless of whether you may wish to pursue further studies the opportunities to undertake research are many and in this field there are many funding opportunities, not least of which is the Boehringer Ingelheim research grant available to NHIVNA members. Having been a member of a selection panel I am all too aware how frequently applications fail to address the key requirements of a research call. Anyone considering submitting a proposal is well advised to read Peter Harper's five rules on writing a proposal and using them as a check list during their preparation.

Many on a Master's course undertake a project for their dissertation. Although there is a temptation to see the award as the only goal, it is worth sharing what you did with others. With the NHIVNA conference not far way and the International AIDS conference next year, it is time to start thinking about submitting an abstract. Abstract writing, like proposal writing, is not difficult if you follow some simple rules and they are included in this edition. There are huge advantages in presenting at NHIVNA's national conference. First is its nursing focus, unlike other HIV conferences and second, the opportunity to win one for the many awards for best practice, innovation or research. What have you to lose? So get your thinking caps on and start writing and while you are at it, how about an article for *HIV Nursing*?

References

1. Nursing Midwifery Council. The Code Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives. London: NMC Available at: <http://www.nmc-uk.org/Article.aspx?ArticleID=3056> (accessed 17 April)

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