

College of Nurses Symposium

Nursing and the Health of Older People: Practice, Policy and Partnership

16th and 17th October 2009, Wellington

The Wellington Regional Group of the College of Nurses are to be congratulated for providing a stimulating two day programme with informative speakers from a wide variety of areas concerned with services for older people. The 140 delegates in attendance enjoyed the inspiring presentations, informative sponsors, lively debate and professional networking opportunities at this Symposium.

The symposium format allowed delegates to hear all sessions and to engage fully with presenters on a wide range of topics; here we include just a small selection of papers and topics presented.



Rae Lamb presented “The View from the HDC on Aged Care Nursing.”

Keynote Speaker

**Professor Marilyn Waring
(College Patron)**

Gender, social justice and poverty: what a nation looks like when the Executive bans these words.

Marilyn provided an excellent and challenging opening paper in which she noted the key connections between economic recession, poverty and the suffering of vulnerable members of society. She went on to say that at community/local levels income loss will be concentrated in already vulnerable groups compounding their social and economic disparities.

She noted that in any financial crisis women prop up the family in a balance of paid (mainly part time) and unpaid work. Often this work includes the care of older people. Globally for women the recession intensifies their hardship as they work in vulnerable employment also overseas unemployment means some additional family members may return home and increase demands on housing and income. Societies with greater inequalities are far more prone to poor health, increased crime, xenophobia, poor housing, the list goes on and the recession magnifies these.

She also drew delegate’s attention to the close connection between the investment in



Sam Jackson (left), College Board and Wellington Committee members participate in the opening of the Symposium.

the health and welfare of vulnerable people and the ultimate health and well being of a nation. Withdrawing welfare support and preventative care in tough economic times is a certain recipe for increased suffering and longer term problems.

**Key note speaker – Rae Lamb (Deputy Health and Disability Commissioner)
Aged Care Nursing- The view from the Health and Disability Commission**

Rae discussed several case studies of complaints to the Health and Disability Commissioner related to residential care settings. She suggested that in these settings communication and relationships were extremely important. It was valuable for symposium delegates to have the opportunity to reflect on the complaints process and the learning and growth, which occur when complaints are well handled and findings are implemented. Rae noted the importance of responding promptly and proactively to concerns and the need to really listen when faced with a complaint.

Nurse Practitioners: A key role in providing high quality care to older people across primary, secondary and tertiary settings. Presenters: Mary Daly (NP, OPRS, HVD-HB), Liz Langer (NP, Psychogeriatric, ODHB), Helen Bowen (Gerontology NP Intern, WDHB), Janet Parker (Gerontology Nurse Consultant, WDHB).

Here nurse practitioners or nurse practitioners interns shared evidence of their roles in providing services to older people in a range of settings. In particular Helen Bowen and Janet Parker shared exciting evidence of the development of NP services across the continuum of care at Waitemata DHB. They already have excellent evidence of improved patient outcomes, and reduction in admissions. They offered a developing model of care of interest and relevance to all District health Board areas

Research and Innovation: Foundations for Practice

Presenters: Dr Michal Boyd (NP), Mary Jane Gilmer (NP, AUT University), Dr Stephen Neville (Massey University)

Dr Stephen Neville reported on his research that analysed social isolation and loneliness in 700 adults aged 65 years and older. He concluded that specific predictors of loneliness included economic living standards and age; emotional loneliness; poor self rated health and depression. Mary Jane Gilmer spoke of her work providing primary health care services to homeless people in association with the Auckland University of Technology and Dr Michal Boyd spoke of her practice as an NP and research she has led investigating the changing patterns of need in residential care settings.



Left: Professor Marilyn Waring delivers her keynote address Right: Community Perspectives in Nursing Panel.

Ethics: Care of Older People and Ethical Decision Making

Presenters: Amanda Lees (Lecturer National Centre of Health, Law and Ethics, AUT), Dr Rosemary Godbold (Senior Lecturer in Health Care Ethics at the National Centre for Health, Law and Ethics).

Dr Rosemary Godbold spoke about the ethical issues in elder care; the role of values in ethical care and the link between ethics and nurses current / future practice.

Amanda discussed the concept of dignity. She also spoke about ethics and New Zealand specific values which included the challenge where several different value systems compete. She suggested that ethics helps to provide a common starting point for moving forward in thinking about delivering optimally ethical care for older people. They both discussed

the concept of the Values Exchange www.nurse.values-exchange.org.nz as a tool for open exchange of differing values and ethical standpoints and how this can be used to open up transparent discussion.

Power point presentations from many of the Speakers sessions are available via the link on the College website www.nurse.org.nz

This was, as it set out to be, a stimulating, challenging and enjoyable event, we would like to thank all the speakers for giving of their time to present at this Symposium. We would like to thank our major sponsors Massey University and Moving on Training (Australia) for their valuable support as well as our other sponsors who all helped make this a very worthwhile event.



Left: Dr Annette Huntington -Welcome Address Right: Delegates participating in open discussions with the panel.