Nurse Practitioners as Primary Care Providers

The influx of newly-insured Americans seeking health-care services due to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has focused the national spotlight on the shortage of primary care providers, making the role of the nurse practitioner more important than ever. See this recent article in the Arizona Daily Star.

Through our Doctor of Nursing Practice program, we prepare advanced practice nurses in four nurse practitioner specialties: family, adult-gerontological acute care, pediatric and psychiatric mental health. In particular, ACA will provide one of the largest expansions of mental health and substance use disorder coverage in a generation, benefiting 62 million Americans. Psychiatric mental health is one of the many areas where advanced practice nurses can help bridge the gap between the increasing patient population and the supply of providers.

As of Jan. 1, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported 3,900 Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) in the United States. According to the Jonas Center of Nursing Excellence, in 2013, these HPSAs represented 90 million Americans.

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, we are featuring several Wildcat Nurses whose research or clinical practice is focused on this underserved area of health. Please don't hesitate to contact me with comments, questions or suggestions!

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Diagnosing Delirium

On any given day, Dr. Sue Rose, a board-certified gerontological clinical nurse specialist and psychiatric nurse practitioner, has no idea what to expect, and she loves it.

“When the cheese slides off the cracker, it’s my job to get it back on,” says Dr. Rose, who received her Master of Science in Nursing from the College of Nursing in 1995, as well as her Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing in 2003.

Based in Portland, Dr. Rose works for a hospital system doing inpatient consultations, as well as an outpatient clinic and a private practice. She conducts cognitive testing in older adults who have memory problems, such as Alzheimer’s or dementia, and/or behavioral problems. Her main focus is diagnosing and treating delirium.

“Delirium is an acute brain disorder with a very high mortality rate that can range up to 76 percent,” says Dr. Rose. “People often don’t recognize it, and attribute delirium-related symptoms to old age. Delirium is potentially reversible if treated, but we have to be detectives to determine the cause. It might be a urinary tract infection, pneumonia, a new medicine, sleep deprivation, or a combination. We fix one thing at a time until the patient improves, but the clock is ticking. The longer the delirium persists, the worse the outcomes.”

Dr. Rose says she was drawn to psychiatric nursing on the urging of Professor and Division Director Terry Badger. Dr. Rose also credits Professor Pamela Reed and former professor Linda Phillips for inspiring her career path, saying they "both really have a heart for geriatric nursing.”

Dr. Rose recently published a book chapter on delirium for an undergraduate nursing textbook and is working on a “Delirium Trail Guide” iPhone app. She can be reached at Susan.rose@geroconsult.com.
Cognitively-Based Compassion Training to Combat Stress

According to “the negative attribution error,” a key concept from psychology, we often jump to negative and irrational conclusions about other people’s behavior. Misjudging or overreacting in social situations, such as when a driver cuts us off on the freeway, can trigger a stress response in the body that negatively impacts our health. The inflammatory response, a part of our body’s response to stress, can put us at greater risk for chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and major depression.

Assistant Professor Tad Pace, a biological psychologist with a background in neuroscience, joined the College of Nursing last fall. An expert in how stress interfaces with health, wellness and illness risk, his research is focused on how Cognitively-Based Compassion Training (CBCT) can help people have a healthier or more optimal stress response.

“CBCT encourages people to pause and reflect for a moment about what’s really going on, and then if they choose, have a stress response,” says Dr. Pace. “But in many cases, that sort of response is not necessary. You can potentially avoid cranking up the stress hormones in your body and the subsequent short-term and long-term negative consequences to your health.”

Dr. Pace is conducting several studies looking at whether CBCT can have a positive impact on the body’s response to stress, including in healthy adults and in foster children. To learn more, contact Dr. Pace at twwpace@email.arizona.edu.

Teaching Mindful Eating to Obese Adolescents

We eat for many reasons, but most have nothing to do with the physical sensation of feeling hungry. Mindful eating fosters self-understanding of what drives you to eat and helps you to identify the types of hunger that influence your eating behavior. There is eye-hunger, when seeing a dessert tray compels you to want to eat; nose-hunger, when the scent of food entices you; mental hunger, when you realize you missed lunch and must be hungry; and heart-hunger, when your emotions drive you to reach for a snack.

Clinical Assistant Professor Patricia Daly, a PhD alumna, is certified by UCLA to teach mindful eating. “With our background in nutrition and holistic world view, nurses are uniquely qualified to teach mindful eating,” she says.

In Dr. Daly’s research program, she tested a mindful eating intervention with high school girls weighing over 200 pounds. Over six weeks, she taught mindful-eating to one group, and provided traditional nutrition and exercise information to a comparison group.

“A month later, my intervention group was still losing weight,” says Dr. Daly. “Through mindful eating, they attained a behavioral skill they could apply at will.”

Dr. Daly brought food to the high school every week to practice eating with the girls. She used tools such as chopsticks and blindfolds to change the cadence of how they usually ate. At the end of the study, compared to girls in the other group, those who learned mindful eating had reduced their weight significantly. Contact Dr. Daly at pdaly@email.arizona.edu.

Blessings and Tragedy Inspired Graduate to Become Neuroscience Nurse

This month, Dr. Tiffany Hoke, one of the first in her family to attend college and the first to earn a graduate degree, graduated with her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree.

Dr. Hoke grew up in a small Arkansas town of a little over 3,000 people and was raised predominately by her mother, a surgical technologist and the most inspirational person in her life. Dr. Hoke fondly remembers knowing that her mother was doing something amazing, helping save people’s lives.

Unfortunately, her mother suffered from progressive neurological and neuropsychological illnesses. As her illnesses advanced, it was not uncommon for Dr. Hoke to receive periodic phone calls notifying her that her mother had been hospitalized or had made attempts to harm herself. On June 1, 2010, Dr. Hoke received the tragic call informing her that her mother had taken her own life.

“Through my tragedies, I have experienced the blessings of purpose, passion, love and hope,” says Dr. Hoke. “All that I have endured and overcome has cultivated within me resilience and ability to see a future of inevitable success, because I truly believe that when you believe in something, a cause, and you fully commit yourself to it, the universe conspires to make it so.”

A self-described “neuro-nerd,” Dr. Hoke is a certified neuroscience and stroke certified registered nurse, and now an adult-gerontology acute care nurse practitioner. She has accepted a position with Carondelet Health Network’s St. Joseph Hospital as its first nurse practitioner with a DNP degree. Dr. Hoke can be reached at Nursehoke@email.arizona.edu. Watch video of her story at http://bit.ly/tiffany_hoke.
28 Nurse Scholars Present at WIN Research Conference

The 2014 Western Institute of Nursing (WIN) Annual Communicating Nursing Research Conference held April 9-12 in Seattle featured presentations and posters by 28 Wildcat Nurses, including students and faculty.

Session presenters included Professor and Division Director Terry Badger, (Reasons Latinas with Cancer Select Supportive Others for Interventions); Clinical Associate Professor Kate Sheppard (Compassion Fatigue among Registered Nurses: In Their Own Words); and Assistant Professor Sheila Gephart (A Participatory Approach to Gain Entry to a Health System for Neonatal Research). In addition, Wildcat Nurses presented 18 posters, including four Bachelor of Science in Nursing honors students.

Anna M. Shannon Mentorship Award

During WIN, Professor and Division Director Terry Badger was honored with the Anna M. Shannon Mentorship Award. She is the first faculty member from the College of Nursing to receive this honor. The annual award recognizes an outstanding mentor who demonstrates unselfish efforts to support and promote the professional growth of other nurses in the West. Dr. Badger has served as a mentor or co-sponsor for numerous undergraduate Honors student and master’s student theses, PhD dissertations, and DNP practice inquiry studies. In research, she has coached many from the initial conceptualization of a study through the dissemination of their findings, having published with many of her prior students. As Division Director and Professor, she provides insightful and constructive input to colleagues writing grant proposals and manuscripts.

Evidence of her commitment to the mentorship of others, Dr. Badger has been recognized and honored by nursing students and colleagues with the Graduate Faculty Mentoring Award, Outstanding Honors Faculty Award, College of Nursing Excellence in Teaching Award and the Extraordinary Faculty Award.

With a background in psychiatric mental health advanced practice nursing, Dr. Badger’s research is focused on psychosocial oncology with cancer survivors and their family members. Congratulate Dr. Badger at tbadger@email.arizona.edu.

Fellows Inducted into the Western Academy of Nursing

At WIN, Associate Professor Marylyn McEwen and Clinical Associate Professor Kate Sheppard were inducted as Fellows into the Western Academy of Nurses, which recognizes and honors nurses who have achieved superior accomplishments in the realm of direct care nursing practice, education or research.

For more than 20 years, Dr. McEwen has promoted health in Mexican-Americans who reside in the U.S.-Mexico border region through community-based interventions and participatory research, among other activities. Dr. McEwen uniquely contributes to the body of knowledge about the context in which type 2 diabetes is managed by persons of Mexican origin along the border. She has an exceptional record of mentoring nursing and other health professions students to provide culturally relevant interventions in the border region. Contact Dr. McEwen at marylynm@email.arizona.edu.

Dr. Sheppard is the sole provider in clinical practice in rural northeastern California and received the 2012 Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award. Dr. Sheppard focuses her research on compassion fatigue among nurses, which according to available literature, affects 30 to 90 percent of nurses, depending on the specialty in which they practice. She is also the psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner specialty coordinator for the College of Nursing. Contact Dr. Sheppard at kbs1@email.arizona.edu.
NEWS YOU CAN USE

Alumni Delegation to Vietnam

SAVE THE DATE! People to People Citizen Ambassador Programs is working with Dean Joan Shaver to plan a nursing program to Vietnam, slated for Nov. 14-23, 2014.

More details, including the preliminary itinerary, will be available in the coming weeks.

Call 877.787.2000 or email citizens@peopletopeople.com to confirm your interest or for more information.

We hope you can join us in Vietnam!

New on Social Media: RN to MSN Program

Check out our online RN to MSN program for working registered nurses on social media!

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