



Update on the Study of European Nurses in Diabetes (SEND)

The Federation of European Nurses in Diabetes (FEND) and the Maastricht University Medical Centre signed contracts for performing a Study of European Nurses in Diabetes (SEND) in 2006. Marianne Cassel-Lundberg, a member of the study group, presented the current status of SEND for the first time at FEND 2008.

The current situation among diabetes specialist nurses in Europe can be described as lacking both clarity and control in relation to nursing roles and titles. Consequently, stakeholders are unable (or unwilling) to define standards of nursing practice and determine the most appropriate and cost-effective ways of delivering patient care. As a result, uncontrolled role developments and a large increase in nursing titles has occurred without systematic review or regulation, so creating confusion both within and outside the nursing profession. Furthermore, the lack of clarity regarding specialist and advanced nursing means that there is no agreement about educational preparation for higher levels of practice.

SEND was designed against this background. The aim of this study is to investigate the nature, volume, work setting, case mix and workload of diabetes nursing care in eight countries in Europe. In doing so, SEND aims to provide scientific knowledge on the quantity and quality of the workforce of diabetes specialist nurses in Europe. To achieve this, the following main research question has been identified: What is the function of diabetes specialist nurses

in Europe from a cross-national perspective? This question will be answered by addressing four questions:

1. Which factors influence the quality of diabetes nursing care in Europe?
2. What do function descriptions of diabetes nurse specialists in Europe look like?
3. What is the nature, volume, work setting and the case mix of diabetes specialist nurses in Europe?
4. What is the workload of diabetes specialist nurses in Europe?

SEND involves three phases. Phase I consisted of a systematic literature review to answer sub-question 1 (manuscript has been submitted for publication). Phase II took place at a 2-day meeting in Amsterdam in 2008. During this meeting, representatives of eight European countries (members of the SEND study group) shared data on the function descriptions of diabetes nurse specialists in Europe with the purpose of clarifying their values on the concept of 'function description' and on the assessment tools to be applied in phase III. Phase III of SEND (which was started in November 2008 and is still ongoing) aims to provide data on the nature, volume, work setting and case mix of diabetes specialist nurses in Europe as well as their experienced workload. These data will be collected by means of a survey to be translated and distributed by participants.

A sample of the diabetes nurses from Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands, Poland, Spain,

Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom will be approached during the next months to participate in SEND.

We plan to present the final results of the study at the FEND 2009 conference in Vienna.

It is expected that the results of SEND will be highly relevant for a wide audience: for example the executive committee of FEND, national associations of diabetes specialist nurses, policy makers at local, national and European level, professors of training programmes for nurses, scientific researchers, and of course diabetes specialist nurses working in Europe.

HJM (Bert) Vrijhoef on behalf of the SEND study group

SEND Group

SEND is financed by FEND and the University Maastricht. The SEND team consists of: Brigitte Ostenbrink and Doris Hemmann (Germany) Rita Forde (Ireland), Bep Bakker (The Netherlands), Malgorzate Gasiorowska (Poland), Maite Valverde (Spain), Marianne Cassel-Lundberg (Sweden), Seyda Ozcan (Turkey), Sofia Llahana and Liz Kamps (United Kingdom), Joyce Janssen (Research Assistant, Maastricht University Medical Centre, The Netherlands) and Bert Vrijhoef (Principal Investigator, Maastricht University Medical Centre, The Netherlands). Study group members collaborate with the national associations of diabetes specialist nurses in their country.

