



Diabetes nursing: supported by research and supporting research



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Diabetes nurses: making themselves heard

Nurses contributions to scientific research are probably the least visible of their many activities. DIAMAP, an initiative from EURADIA, is mapping the diabetes research landscape in Europe, identifying its strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities for future research.¹ Until now, the DIAMAP database (www.diamap.eu) has been populated mainly by medical and basic science colleagues. Nurses and other healthcare professionals, who work in diabetes research and have their own funding, should enter their details to become a part of this larger database and to ensure their field of research is registered. This important strategic plan will be used by the European Commission and other agencies when deliberating on allocation of future funding – nurses should ensure their voices are heard.

As we enter a new era of predictive, pre-emptive, and personalised healthcare, the visibility of the contributions of nurses in research is expected to improve. The shift in emphasis from treatment to prevention and from acute illness to chronic conditions, the increasing reliance on technology in healthcare delivery, and the call to translate successful research into clinical practice are all changes which affect our entire thinking about patient care and, as such, provide many challenges to nursing research.

Research activities

The articles in this issue of *European Diabetes Nursing (EDN)* illustrate how diabetes nurses contribute to research, to further improve diabetes nursing practice. Heinrich *et al* (pages 51–56) describe how a web-based education programme called DIEP was developed to meet current practice requirements and the educational

needs of multiple, specific patient groups. The input of nurses was found to be crucial. DIEP is being tested on its feasibility in daily practice, and we look forward to the results about its actual impact on self-management of people with diabetes. The article by Geerts *et al* (pages 58–64) looks at a cross-sectional survey performed by a nurse-led research team in the care of people with painful diabetic neuropathy (PDNP). Systematic screening of the severity of PDNP and its treatment among patients of a disease management programme clearly shows how nursing care can further improve the quality of diabetes care. The impact on patient outcomes of PDNP management and treatment by a nurse practitioner will be published in due time. Song and Lee (pages 65–68) report the findings of a survey about the relationship between self-care maintenance and perceived health among 1154 people with diabetes in Philadelphia. This study, performed by two nurses, indicates that better perceived health is determined by self-care maintenance behaviour, such as actively managing diet and exercising more frequently, and that self-reported comorbidities are associated with worse perceived health outcomes. As such, these are important results to support nursing practice.

Findings from other diabetes nursing research will be presented at the 14th Annual Conference of FEND.² The conference inspired a diabetes nurse from Austria, Ms Claudia Leippert, to raise awareness for Insulin For Life and to support access to diabetes medication and treatment (page 70). At the conference, the Study of European Nurses in Diabetes (SEND)³ is expected to reveal the actual level of support from diabetes nurses to research activities, and to foster discussion about the need for, and support of, future research in diabetes nursing.

It is not hard to see that, to enable research to support diabetes nursing, the support of diabetes nurses to research is needed. That said, we kindly invite you to submit your research papers for publication in *EDN*!

HJM (Bert) Vrijhoef and Sarah Hills

Co-editors, *EDN*

References

1. www.euradia.org/ [accessed 7 July 2009].
2. www.fend.org/conference/conf.html [accessed 7 July 2009].
3. Vrijhoef HJM. Update on the Study of European Nurses in Diabetes (SEND). *Eur Diabetes Nursing* 2009; **6**: 34.