Happenings

A New Global Resource on the Internet: Canadian-International Nurse Researcher Database (CNRD)

Howard Brunt and Colleen Varcoe

Meeting the Challenge of the Explosion in Nursing Knowledge

A problematic aspect of the knowledge explosion in nursing and the health sciences has been the lack of user-friendly, intuitive, up-to-date databases for researchers, clinicians, policy-makers, and others to link up with experts in both methodologic and substantive areas. Examples of challenging situations include:

- the researcher seeking someone to assist with data analysis
- the editor or grant administrator requiring an expert reviewer
- the health-care provider seeking treatment advice
- the investigator attempting to establish a national or international research network
- the policy-maker having to make evidence-based decisions
- the individual seeking advice and support for optimizing health

The Canadian-International Nurse Researcher Database has been developed to address such challenges as these. Launched in the spring of 1999, the CNRD is rapidly becoming a valuable addition to nurses' research infrastructure.

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Canadian-International Nurse Researcher Database: What Is It?

The CNRD is a *free* service supported through sponsorships from a variety of sources: government agencies, professional associations, consumer groups, non-governmental agencies, academic institutions, the private sector. Its initial development was funded by the Canadian Association for Nursing Research, the University of Victoria School of Nursing, the British Columbia Health Research Foundation, and the Canadian Association of University Schools of Nursing.

The CNRD utilizes a unique array of computing technologies that permit interactive Boolean searching, self-editing of personal data records in a secure web-based environment, instantaneous updating of information with a minimum of administrative upkeep, and generation of evaluative data. The objectives of the CNRD are to:

- promote excellence in nursing practice through research and evaluation
- strengthen links among researchers, practitioners, administrators, educators, and policy-makers for evidence-based health-care delivery
- promote and support research networks
- educate nurses, other health professionals, and the public in nursing research

The CNRD is easily accessed on the worldwide web. An individual seeking expert opinion in either a particular research method (e.g., grounded theory analysis; randomized control design) or a substantive area (e.g., care of the elderly; wound care) can search the database using the appropriate terms. Searches can be conducted by either entering terms freeform or using menu selection. The full index of database terms can be either printed or viewed onscreen. Boolean searching (e.g., phenomenology *and* suffering *and* children) helps users locate individuals who more precisely match their requirements. Upon completion of the search, the user can examine the full profile of the persons found in the database and e-mail them directly from within the CNRD. To protect anonymity, e-mail is forwarded *by the CNRD,* so members' e-mail addresses are not divulged. Once correspondence has been established, the CNRD member can decide whether to respond to an inquiry.

Nurses wishing to enter themselves in the database can do so easily in a password-secure environment designed with a flexible data-input structure. Database members can modify their profile at any time.

Nurses who cannot find a particular term in the database to describe their expertise can easily add a new term, which then instantly updates the database. The administrator regularly reviews new terms for their appropriateness. The structure of the CNRD will be modified over time as usage patterns evolve.

Future Plans for the CNRD

An international advisory committee has been formed to help steer the evaluation and development of the CNRD. Nurses with an interest in research infrastructure development or evaluation design, particularly based on information technology, are encouraged to consider serving on the advisory committee (contact Howard Brunt, below). The intention is to maintain the service through sponsorships and grants from major international nursing organizations; the advisory committee is currently attempting to increase the CNRD's base of support. While the database was originally developed in English, versions in both Spanish and French are envisioned as international support continues to grow.

Ultimately, the key to the CNRD's success is the registration of as many nurse researchers as possible. The capacity of the database is virtually limitless. By entering your expertise, you are indicating your willingness to share your knowledge and experience with others around the world. You are cordially invited to become a member of the CNRD. For more information, contact Howard Brunt, R.N., Ph.D., Office of the Vice President – Research, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC V8W 2Y2. E-mail: hbrunt@hsd.uvic.ca

Visit the Canadian-International Nurse Researcher Database at www.nurseresearcher.com