Research links in Newcastle

This week the RCN Research Society is holding its annual conference, hosted by the University of Newcastle upon Tyne (March 29-31). This short report highlights the projects underway in the main research centres in Newcastle. On page 45, a more detailed explanation is given of how links are being formed between academic departments and practising nurses in Newcastle.

CENTRE FOR HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH

The ethos of the Centre for Health Services Research (CHSR) is collaborative research which includes the disciplines of health services research such as economics, sociology, psychology, anthropology and statistics. Liaison with clinical disciplines including clinical medicine, dentistry and remedial therapies, as well as nursing is a key element.

Recent research has included studies of:
- Patient outcomes in fractured hip and myocardial infarction which are influenced by nurses
- Patient satisfaction associated with different kinds of nursing organisation
- How nursing in acute hospital wards is organised and features associated with organisation
- Specific kinds of nursing developments including nurse practitioners in primary health care
- Providing a pre-admission clinic assessment of older patients who will be having surgery.

Nurses at the CHSR are also involved in topics such as the development of services for managing leg ulcers, the development of care maps in improving the management of inpatient care, and the development of information giving to patients who have had strokes and their carers.

DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE, NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

The primary healthcare department has formed a dynamic and expanding nursing team to address issues central to community nursing practice. Projects currently underway include:
- A joint project between the department and the University of Northumbria to explore factors predicting the sensitive issue of successful discharge of medical patients
- An evaluation of the introduction of a care management scheme devolved into primary care, in which a district nurse takes the role of lead care manager and budget holder. This is being carried out in conjunction with Northumberland social services and local trusts
- An evaluation of the innovative post of nurse practitioner in mental health which is being carried out in Gateshead Healthcare.
- An exploration of ways of promoting evidence-based practice by nurses and GPs with three other sites in the Northern and Yorkshire region
- A study of practice nurse involvement with people with mental health problems
- The management of domestic violence by primary care practitioners.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHUMBRIA

The University of Northumbria has recently merged with Bede, Newcastle and Northumberland College of Health and offers a range of nursing courses including Project 2000, pre- and post-registration nursing degrees, a direct entry pre-registration midwifery degree, and an MSc in health sciences incorporating a primary healthcare role. It also offers ENB post-registration courses including the higher award to PhD level.

Nursing is located in the faculty encompassing physiotherapy, occupational therapy, education and social work. A cross-faculty research strategy is new in place which prioritises multi-disciplinary research projects. A chair in nursing research has been funded by the regional health authority which aims to develop nursing research within this context.

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY AND NEUROSCIENCE, NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

The UK's first professor of psychiatric nursing practice, Phil Barker, is based in the department of psychiatry and neuroscience. Current projects involve leading and promoting research and clinical audit, developing postgraduate opportunities for psychiatric nurses, and working in clinical practice with people who have experience of severe depression and psychotic disorder. Research work currently underway includes:
- A study of the perceptions of patients, carers and members of the healthcare team, of the 'need for nursing' in specific clinical populations
- A study of empowerment in the care of people with enduring mental disorder within the community. This is a joint study between the nursing departments at Newcastle University, Edinburgh University and the University of Ulster.