Older people’s food choice; gains from nicotine patches; catheters in spinal injury

Who benefits from nicotine patches?
Transdermal nicotine is most effective for those with moderate addiction and younger smokers, research suggests.

A randomised, double-blind placebo trial was undertaken in 1,686 people. Nicotine patches were more effective in those with moderate addiction and in those aged 24-49.

Abstinence in the first week was the strongest predictor of sustained cessation and more common in those using nicotine than placebo patches.


Older people want homemade food
Nurses need to be aware of older people’s culture in relation to food and the way they communicate their needs.

Researchers interviewed 42 older people in a long-term care unit. One of the themes to emerge was the need to feel self-sufficient in feeding and manage cutlery normally. The group also expressed feelings of shame when they spilt food onto their clothing. Those who were unimpaired said that they lost their appetite when having to eat with people who spilt food. A desire for food which looked and tasted homemade was also expressed.


Incontinence after spinal injury
Incontinence is a significant complication of intermittent catheterisation in people with spinal injuries. To identify the prevalence and severity, 116 people were interviewed. Of the group, 54 reported no leakage while the remaining 62 had an occasional problem. Minimal or moderate amounts of leakage were reported by 53 per cent and large volumes by 45 per cent. Frequency of leakage was reported as occasional by 53 per cent, once or twice a week by 10 per cent and more than twice a week by 37 per cent.


Joint pay claim
Nurse unions launched a joint pay claim last month for 1996 for a 6.5 per cent pay rise for all staff and a range of improvements in terms and conditions including progress on equal opportunities.

High cost of care
The high cost of litigation if patients at risk of self harm are not sufficiently protected was highlighted this month when a person suffering with paranoid schizophrenia, who was paralysed from the waist down after walking out of hospital and jumping from her bedroom window was awarded nearly £500,000 compensation.

Deterred for up to 72 hours under the Mental Health Act, she insisted on leaving and returning to her flat.

A nurse had tried to persuade her to stay but did not restrain her.

Rewind
A round-up of recent news events

Nurses campaign for a 6.5 per cent pay rise
Centrally driven initiatives to change the National Health Service should be radically reduced for the time being so there can be a period of consolidation and stabilisation, staff can concentrate on patient care and care in the community policy can be stabilised as well, Marco Cereste, who is Chair of the NHS Trust, said last month.

AIDS epidemic
In parts of sub-Saharan Africa, the HIV transmission rate among females of the population is probably 1.2 times higher than the infection rate among males, and most HIV-positive women were infected with the virus by their spouse.

In the West, however, the largest infected groups are intravenous drug users and homosexual men. The result is that men are five to ten times more likely than women to contract HIV.

Meanwhile, John and Pat Caldwell of the Health Transition Centre of the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health at Canberra University, Australia, suggested in the Scientific American last month that there is a connection between the spread of heterosexual AIDS and lack of circumcision.

APRIL 3/VOLUME 10/NUMBER 28/1996 NURSING STANDARcD 29