Nurse’s agony column for teen mag

A NURSE PRACTITIONER who specialises in sexual health has been appointed to write the problem page for a teenagers’ magazine.

Felicity Young, who works at St Mary’s Hospital, Paddington, is answering letters from worried readers of the monthly magazine J-17, formerly weekly Just 17.

Ms Young said her first month as ‘agony big sister’ had brought about 100 letters, many concerned with the consequences of unprotected sex.

For a child to talk to parents about sex, you must acknowledge that they are having it, and that’s not necessarily a very nice thought,’ she said.

‘I will formulate an answer that will meet the needs of the individual, but will also meet the needs of other letter writers, too,’ she said.

J-17 editor Sam Baker said the letters the magazine received on sexual health covered many subjects, including one from a girl who had been raped and others from readers who were afraid of getting pregnant from toilet seats.

Ms Young’s appointment came through her experience of working with teenagers, he said. ‘It was not so much that Felicity was a nurse but that she worked with young people and would not be too formal.’

Charity aims to back stoma care nurses

By Dina Leifer

STOMA CARE nurses have been asked to support a new organisation which aims to offer an alternative to commercial sponsorship.

The non profit-making organisation, British Colostomy Association (BCA) Direct, offers a prescription dispensing service. It was set up thanks to a donation from Convatec, a stoma care firm opposed to sponsorship.

BCA Direct makes its income from fees which the government pays to dispensing appliance contractors. Any profits go to the BCA trust, a charity, and to ostomy associations.

The trust aims to offer financial support to stoma care nurse (SCN) posts, as an alternative to commercial sponsorship deals.

BCA Direct’s founder Ian McCartney explained that about 30 per cent of SCNs in the UK were sponsored. ‘In an ideal world the NHS would pay. The trust is the lesser evil,’ he said.

Convatec had made a donation to the trust equivalent to funding four posts for a year. However, it had no influence over the working of the trust or BCA Direct, he said.

David Swarbrick, Convatec’s vice president, said sponsorship put nurses in a difficult position and Convatec’s financial support. BCA Direct would be compromised by Convatec’s financial support.

BCA Direct has invited the RCN’s SCN forum to meetings to ask for their support. The RCN is awaiting feedback from the forum members.

IN BRIEF

■ Readers of Nursing Standard and our sister journal Paediatric Nursing are being given the chance to attend the Romanian Nurses’ Association’s annual conference in July at substantially reduced rates. The trip will be from July 17-21 and the total cost would be £400-£500. For details contact Alan Glasper on 01703 796807.

■ Any group of nurses planning to raise money for charity by strutting their funky stuff on the catwalk, is invited to contact BBC assistant producer Claire Zolkwer on 0181 225 7669. Ms Zolkwer will enlist the help of a major model to give tips on catwalk modelling for the pilot programme of Reach for the Stars, a new prime-time show.

■ Former nurse Claire Rayner, president of the Patients’ Association, was this week due to launch a campaign to encourage parents to have their children vaccinated to halt the spread of a range of diseases. The Don’t Delay, Immunise Today campaign is being run by the British Medical Association.

■ Dramatic increases in life expectancy and profound changes in lifestyle are leading to global epidemics of cancer and other chronic diseases, says the World Health Organization’s annual report, published this week. Conquering Suffering, Enriching Humanity contains the latest international data, trends and projections on a number of chronic diseases.