If decisions are only decreed valid if the majority of those entitled to participate do so, most local elections would be declared null and void. We can only hope the RCN retains its guts and integrity.

Joyce Robins, co-director, Patient Concern

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES NEED RIGOROUS EVALUATION

There are inherent challenges to conducting complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) research in nursing (features July 20).

A particular therapy may consist of a number of systems that include a wide range of treatments. There are, for example, many studies that address the efficacy of acupuncture needling in chronic illnesses. This is only one element of a range of interventions used by an appropriately trained acupuncturist, including dietary changes, botanical potions, massage and moxibustion therapy.

The recent updated and revised Medical Research Council guidance for design and evaluation of complex interventions provides guidance as to the staged and systematic development of complex interventions and highlights the potential role of quantitative and qualitative methods.

Although explanatory randomised controlled trials are widely accepted as the gold standard in clinical research, they are not always feasible or appropriate. In addition, the use of placebo or sham controlled trial design for CAM intervention may potentially lead to false negative results and a randomised pragmatic design may prove more rigorous and appropriate.

Graeme Smith, Edinburgh

CORRECTION

Mercy Yates, the daughter of Moyra Yates, has pointed out two mistakes in her mother’s obituary notice (June 29). Moyra’s maiden name was Dowling, not Bowling, and she was born in Malta, not India.

A corrected version is available at www.nursing-standard.co.uk. We apologise for the errors.

OBIITUARY

Peggy Grieve
1920-2011
Midwife, tutor and RCM Scottish board chair

A leading light in Scottish midwifery, Margaret ‘Peggy’ Grieve MBE, has died aged 91. Born at Castletown in The Borders, she ignored her father’s warning that as a nurse ‘she would have a lot of cleaning up to do’. She replied that she was used to cleaning up the cowshed and moved to Lochmaben Sanatorium, where she cared for patients with tuberculosis, scarlet fever and diphtheria.

Accepted for general training at Cumberland Infirmary in 1941, Peggy was handed a length of cloth and told to make her uniform made up. She found her vocation at the Royal Maternity Hospital in Rottenrow, Glasgow. She transferred to Cresswell Maternity Hospital in Dumfries and, when the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) opened a branch in Dumfries and Galloway, she became its secretary.

After a midwife teaching diploma course in Edinburgh, Peggy became a midwife tutor. She was awarded the Muirhead Scholarship in 1959 and studied midwifery services in mainland Europe. She attended the International Congress of Midwives in Berlin in 1963 and in Chile in 1968.

In 1971 Peggy was appointed principal nursing officer in midwifery in East Fife. As divisional midwifery officer, she was tasked with amalgamating several maternity units.

Peggy was appointed MBE in 1971. She was elected chair of the RCM’s Scottish board in 1976 and became chair of the executive. When she retired in 1981, the college made her an honorary member.

A diminutive figure, Peggy was not one to fade into the background and was a smiling presence at RCM gatherings and active in the Church of Scotland.

Laurence Dopson is a freelance journalist

NURSING STANDARD