

International Council of Nurses · Conseil international des infirmières · Consejo internacional de enfermeras

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Communications CSG Liaison: Helen Ward Editor: Andrea Renwanz Boyle

# **Greetings from the Chair:**

Warm greetings to you all,

Many of us have not long returned from our Network conference in Helsinki, our most successful conference to date with record attendance of more than 740 delegates with representation from 40 countries. Our program consisted of 4 keynote lecturers, 179 oral presentations, 8 workshops and 292 posters. A successful conference cannot be achieved without all the hard work done by many people. A few people who worked tirelessly before the conference and during the conference and should receive special mention include: Merja Merasto (President of the Finnish Nurses' Association – our host and Chair of the Conference Organising Committee pictured below); Riitta Meretoja (Chair of our Scientific Committee); and Anna Suutarla (Co-chair of the Conference Organising Committee). Also I would like to acknowledge the ICN -INP/APNN core steering group and subgroup chairs and our members for their ongoing support and friendliness at these events. Our next Network conference will be held in Hong Kong in 2016 – keep an eye out on our website for further information.

At our network conferences the 7 subgroups hold meetings and actively recruit for new members. Those of you who were unable to attend but would like to join one of the 7 subgroups, please review the guidelines for membership on our Network website and, if

eligible, contact the chair of the subgroup who will guide you through the requirements. This is a great and fun way to get to know other members from different countries and to actively participate in the Network. Lastly, the core steering group is recruiting new members – further information will be sent to our subgroup chairs.

Don't forget the ICN Conference and Council of National Representatives is being held in Seoul, Republic of Korea in 2015 – 19-23 June. We will be hosting our Network meeting at this conference and hopefully will see many of you in Seoul!



Warm regards

Anna Green, Chair International NP/APN Network International Council of Nurses

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#### **Featured Countries**

#### **Finland**

**Author:** Anna Suutarla, RN, PHN, M.Sc. Finnish Nurses Association

# Reflections on the August, 2014 INPAPNN Conference in Helsinki, Finland

As Anna Green noted in her chair's report, the numbers of Network conference attendees, key note lectures, oral presentations, posters, and workshops provided evidence of a very successful and productive meeting. Of special note were delegates attending from over 40 different countries. The gracious hospitality and the attention to detail provided by Finnish Nurses Association members, conference organizers, hosts at the Helsinki Mayor's reception, and host country participants truly made the conference memorable.



Communication regarding the conference is provided in the links below.

1. Content from the conference program can be accessed at:

http://nurses-fi-

bin.directo.fi/@Bin/00e6da951a9cac33058e88 4a75115ea2/1412328172/application/pdf/1980 71/APNN 2014 program%20%286%29.pdf

2. Content from the conference posters can be accessed at:

http://nurses-fi-

bin.directo.fi/@Bin/09e8011e5047249d448aeb

bfd26b38aa/1412328424/application/pdf/19809 5/APNN\_2014\_program\_posters.pdf

3. Three of the keynote speakers gave permission to provide their presentations. This content can be accessed at: <a href="http://www.nurses.fi/8th-icn-international-nurse-prac/keynote-speakers/">http://www.nurses.fi/8th-icn-international-nurse-prac/keynote-speakers/</a>



### **Tanzania**

Author: Laura Jurasek, NP, MN, Canada

#### **Describing the Beyond Epilepsy Program**

Epilepsy, a condition characterized by repeated episodes of seizures, is plagued by stigma and is a neglected disease throughout the world. There are 50 million people worldwide living with epilepsy, the majority of them in the developing world, especially Africa where there is a greater than 90% treatment gap (WHO, 2012). Being 'epileptic' in Africa can mean you are feared, avoided, thought to be contagious, witched or possessed. People with epilepsy are often excluded from normal aspects of life such as school, employment and marriage; they are seen as a burden to their families and ultimately, because of these beliefs, do not seek healthcare, often turning to traditional

healers. They become a burden to society and suffer immensely in all aspects of their life because of a very treatable condition. Epilepsy is a chronic disorder whose diagnosis can easily be made in primary healthcare settings with clinical knowledge and skills, without diagnostic tests and can be treated successfully with one medication in 60-70 % of cases allowing individuals to lead normal and productive lives. Health education and community acceptance are essential for persons with epilepsy, their families and community. Epilepsy is a personal and social crisis in Africa and has been identified by both the World Health Organization (WHO) and International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) as a priority for intervention and change.

The Beyond Epilepsy Program is an innovative twist on sustainable education and social entrepreneurship in Africa, utilizing the current structure of healthcare and strength of community in rural Tanzania to create epilepsy experts in frontline healthcare providers, the majority being nurses. The Program empowers participants to be the agents of change for epilepsy in their communities through action planning. Grassroots community engagement will increase knowledge and acceptance of people with epilepsy in their communities. The Tanzanian culture remains steeped in tradition and respect within a very oral society. In most areas in Tanzania, especially in rural communities where the majority of people live, there is no access to TV, computers or data enabled cell phones; this limitation makes high tech communication strategies unviable at this time. Information from local community members who are educated and respected is the most valuable communication tool currently available in Africa.

The Beyond Epilepsy Program has been in development for two years following the receipt of a travel grant from the North American Commission of the ILAE for programs to address Epilepsy in the African region. Partnerships were developed with the Ministry of Health and Tanzania National Nurses Association (TANNA) and in June and July of

2012 an assessment was completed in rural Tanzania which highlighted the need for education for frontline healthcare providers, the community and stigma reduction initiatives to improve the lives of those living with epilepsy in Africa. People with epilepsy were seen to be isolated, unemployed and excluded from their communities and from opportunities that would be available to others. Children with epilepsy were hidden in family huts or orphanages away from the judgement of the community, denied family and social interaction and education; children who most likely would outgrow their seizure disorder are left without opportunity for the future and social support to become happy. healthy and productive citizens. The needs assessment reinforced what the WHO and ILAE have prioritized; intervention for epilepsy is essential in Tanzania and throughout the African region. As the project gained momentum, other partners joined the Beyond Epilepsy Program bringing new perspectives to enhance the long term sustainability of the program, including the Edmonton Epilepsy Association (member of the Canadian Epilepsy Alliance) and the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) Africa.

Beyond Epilepsy is an educational, awareness and advocacy program that can be easily implemented throughout Africa creating epilepsy experts at the community level and generating a grassroots movement to educate change. This five day program package is designed to build upon strengths of primary healthcare providers by increasing the knowledge and skills needed to improve care of people with epilepsy, innovative use of epilepsy treatments available frontline, health education, stigma reduction and action planning by participants who will become the agents of change for epilepsy in their communities and healthcare settings.

In January 2014, the Beyond Epilepsy Program did just that when implemented in a rural area of Tanzania with 25 frontline healthcare providers attending the workshop. The course evaluation revealed the participants felt all aspects of the program were extremely beneficial and will change their care and

perceptions, and increase advocacy for epilepsy. Pre and post stigma and knowledge assessments revealed improved knowledge, increased confidence in seizure management and positive changes in beliefs about people with epilepsy in the healthcare providers. Action plans are ongoing and monthly updates will be provided by leaders within the group. Already, two participants have negotiated free radio air time in their community to promote health education, positive messaging about epilepsy and where to access care. They also established an epilepsy group consisting of 13 members representing a variety of people in the community committed to improving the lives of those living with epilepsy. Other participants have provided epilepsy educational sessions at local elementary and secondary schools; education to colleagues and traditional healers in their communities, incorporated into a University Nursing Curriculum; and have initiated other Community Epilepsy Groups. Many participants planned and celebrated Purple Day Activities on March 26th, International Epilepsy Awareness Day which will be the first in Tanzania. In attendance at the program was the Vice President of the IBE Africa region who stated "this is brilliant...the best initiative I've seen...we need this program in every country in Africa!!"

The passion and excitement demonstrated during the program and ongoing efforts by participants confirmed the vision and direction chartered for the course at the outset which was to develop a capacity building program for frontline health care providers and incorporate the program into the nursing curriculum in Tanzania. The overwhelming success of the pilot reinforces the need to implement the program in other regions of Africa. Since the program's inception the growth and support has been tremendous as the unique approach has been recognized. During the 2nd African Epilepsy Congress, the Beyond Epilepsy Program will be highlighted as an innovative educational initiative in Africa. The greatest change in society occurs with engagement and empowerment of the people; Beyond Epilepsy is empowering people to STAND UP FOR

EPILEPSY and be the change they want to see in Africa!



#### Reference

The World Health Organization (2012). Epilepsy Fact Sheet N°999. Available at www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs999/en/

#### **Latin America**

Author: Joyce Pulcini, PhD Dr. Joyce Pulcini reports on a recent editorial written by Silvia Helena de Bortoli Cassiani and Keri Elizabeth Zug entitled "Promoting the Advanced Nursing Practice Role in Latin America". The authors note that the healthcare environment in Latin America is exceedingly complicated with disparities in access to quality health care and disease burden posing challenges for health care delivery and care resource allocations. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) released a Resolution in September 2013: Human Resources for Health: Increasing Access to Qualified Health Workers in Primary Health Care-Based Systems calling for increases in advanced practice nurses to support primary health care delivery in Latin America.

PAHO is currently in the process of establishing a work plan to support additional education and role expansion for advanced practice nurses including the identification of work goals related to the regulation, scope of practice, and educational requirements for these clinicians working in Latin America. Ultimately, these advanced practice clinicians will be able to promote and assist in the implementation of quality primary health care

and universal health care for all citizens within Latin America.

Additional information regarding this important editorial can be obtained by contacting the following authors:

Silvia Helena de Bortoli Cassiani, Regional Advisor on Nursing and Allied Health Personnel, Health Systems and Services World Health Organization / Pan American Health Organization, Washington D.C, USA; and Keri Elizabeth Zug, Health Systems and Services, World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization, Washington D.C, USA.

# **Announcements:**

Would you like to communicate with NPs and APNs from around the world? Why not join the INP/APNN discussion forum, hosted by ICN. It's free, fun and interactive. Go to the following link, register and join a topic that interests you or create a new topic.

www.icn.ch/forum/viewforum.php?f=47&sid=7d 51a21fe5b9ca7220e1b23ff9279e4f

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