



## AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF MENTAL HEALTH NURSES' RESEARCH AWARD 2008

Local academic Professor Terence McCann from Victoria University, is the recipient of this year's Australian College of Mental Health Nurses' Research Award. The award was presented at the annual conference held recently in Melbourne. Professor McCann presented a paper, co-authored with Eileen Clark from La Trobe University and Sai Lu from Victoria University, on antipsychotic medication side-effects and adherence in people with schizophrenia.



Professor Terence McCann

completed a questionnaire on the side effects of antipsychotic medication. Professor McCann and his colleagues found that over half the participants reported that they had experienced over 45% of the side effects in the last month. The most common side effects, experienced by over 60% of participants were "difficulty in remembering things," "difficulty in concentrating," "tiredness," "putting on weight," "sleeping too much," and "restlessness."

Commenting on these findings, Professor McCann said, "Greater attention is needed to monitor side-effects as they were very common in this study."

Cumulative side-effects may have a more adverse effect on well-being or may lead to omission. Professor McCann and his team found that over 40% of participants experienced accumulated side-effects of medium clinical importance, and a small number of participants experienced side-effects of high clinical importance.

"As most consumers experienced clinically important side-effects, consumers, case managers and prescribers may need additional training to be able to recognise side-effects and to take action to prevent or minimise their effects," said Professor McCann.

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In providing a background for this study Professor McCann said, "Many people with schizophrenia are reluctant to take their antipsychotic medications. There is a direct relationship between non-adherence and relapse, but there are conflicting reports about the association between side-effects and non-adherence." In his study, Professor McCann had two main objectives:

- 1 To examine the prevalence of antipsychotic medication side-effects in individuals with schizophrenia,
- 2 To assess if there is any relationship between side-effects and medication taking.

During this study, 81 consumer participants, the majority of whom were prescribed atypical antipsychotics (86.4%),



Damien Khaw

### REFLECTIONS ON MY TIME AS A NURSING RESEARCHER

It feels strange to recall that it was a day almost three years ago that I

was sitting at home with the careers section of The Age newspaper open, surrounded by scraps of paper and cut-out job ads, and wondering if I should apply for the interesting looking research job in psychiatric nursing I had found.

At that time, I had just graduated from a degree in psychology and was in the process of looking for a research job in a mental health field. I knew nothing about nursing at the time, but thought that the job might provide me with a good opportunity to consolidate all those skills I'd spent years at university learning. Cut-

back to the present and I'm definitely glad I made the decision to respond to that ad. My time spent as a research assistant at the Centre for Psychiatric Nursing for the past two and a half years has been a fantastic learning experience. At the start of next year I will be leaving nursing research to find work in another field, but I feel confident that the work I have been involved with here has laid the foundation for my future endeavours.

Despite coming from a non-nursing background, I have, since the very first days at the Centre, always felt like a valued member of the team. This is not to say that there were not challenges during my conversion from psychology to the nursing world. I can't help but to laugh, for instance, when I think back to the first few weeks of the job, back to the time when the Centre was known as the Centre for Psychiatric Nursing Research and Practice (CPNRP). At this time my knowledge of nursing and nursing organizations was quite limited and I recall that those first few meetings were so filled with strange acronyms and nursing jargon that it was almost like my colleagues were speaking in a foreign language. Thanks to the patience and guidance of others, however, it wasn't long before I too could understand and communicate in "Nursing Speak".

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The researchers found that the types of side effects that participants reported were associated with their ages and genders. Older consumers (those 36 years and older) were more likely to report anticholinergic and allergic side-effects than their younger counterparts (those 35 years and younger). Younger women were more likely to experience hormone-related side-effects than older women. There were no differences between the younger and older participants, however, in relation to extrapyramidal, autonomic, psychic, and other, miscellaneous, side-effects.

*"Prescribers, in particular, need to take account of age-related differences in sensitivity to medications, and the susceptibility of younger women to hormone-related side-effects,"* said Professor McCann.

*As most consumers experienced clinically important side-effects, consumers, case managers and prescribers may need additional training to be able to recognise side-effects and to take action to prevent or minimise their effects*

Although one-fifth (19.8%) of participants claimed they had missed taking their medication at least once in the week before data collection, there was no association between the omission of medications and the presence of side effects.

For their assistance with the study, Professor McCann and his colleagues thank the consumer participants for taking part in the study, and Gayelene Boardman (School of Nursing and Midwifery, Victoria University, Melbourne) and Cecil Deans (School of Nursing, University of Ballarat) for their contribution to data collection.

For further information on this study you can contact Professor McCann at:

Victoria University  
School of Midwifery  
St Albans Campus  
PO Box 14428  
Melbourne, Victoria 8001

## 9TH VICTORIAN COLLABORATIVE PSYCHIATRIC NURSING CONFERENCE FEEDBACK

Nina Davine and Christopher Schildt, were among a group of 40 undergraduate nursing students from Victoria University, who attended the 9th Victorian Collaborative Psychiatric Nursing Conference. Here are some of their observations.

For Nina, the presentation on the "Kya weave" program inspired thought and discussion on women centred practices and the lack of options available for women to choose a female only acute inpatient stay. Nina writes, "When discussing this with colleagues, differing opinions were expressed. One thought it would be an amazing, positive experience for women to have a safe space without the distraction of men, another thought that most women would not choose a female only option and another thought it would be very difficult to staff. What was highlighted to me in these discussions was choice; having different options available and encouraging women to make their own, informed decisions."

She adds, "The presentation on the implementation of recovery principles in NWMH was lovely, seeing pictures of the residential environment and hearing accounts from the consumers and carers. The clinicians from this project have focused on the needs, desires and aspirations of consumers as well as minimizing the effects of their illness in a supportive and cohesive environment. In my own nursing practice in the near future, the themes of consumer empowerment and choice are resonating with me from these presentations. Fostering processes for consumer feedback and input are essential for community participation and lead to that community feeling involved and empowered. This relates to all nursing practice and applies in all settings and all nursing fields. The practice of empowering others involves providing information, placing confidence in individuals to make their own decisions and treating all people, whether they are consumers, carers or health professionals, with respect."

For Chris, the Conference not only allowed insight into current trends for practice but also included diversity across Psychiatric Nursing as a whole.



Christopher Schildt and Nina Davine

Exposure to this multi faceted role further heightened his interest in the field. He notes, "Reflective practice is a tool that can be implemented in the everyday clinical setting. The presentation by R. Garlick and J. Lemieux brought to light the need for reflection. During my undergraduate course, reflective practice is a skill that has been taught throughout clinical exposure and theory subjects and this presentation substantiated the reasoning behind it. In my future practice this is a skill I will continue to develop, as I am now more aware of the benefits and the reason for its incorporation within the nursing degree."

With regard to the presentation by E. Muir-Cochrane, Chris writes, "This is extremely important knowledge for the Psychiatric Nurse as it also encourages medical nursing interventions. It establishes that co-morbidity is a common problem that can be both easily recognised and treated or even prevented and that the role of the Psychiatric Nurse should incorporate general health promotion as well as public health skills in everyday practice. This presentation I found most beneficial as it redefined what I considered the role of the Mental Health Nurse and I was able to understand how to incorporate other skills from various subjects within the degree into my Psychiatric Nursing practice. It is important to recognize the amount of co-morbid diseases faced by consumers and how this prevalence is greater than in the general population in order to put into place effective screening measures, preventative programs and education as well as addressing the underlying risk factors. As a student, absorbing this wealth of information was as invaluable as clinical exposure itself."

## DAMIEN KHAW: REFLECTIONS ON HIS TIME AS A NURSING RESEARCHER Continued from page 1

I think the favourite part of my job at the Centre was being given the opportunity to listen to, and learn from, the experiences of nurses and consumers. Perhaps because I came from outside the discipline, these are the experiences that are most memorable to me, and that I feel that I learnt the most from. I have also enjoyed the sheer range of activities that I was involved and included in during the course of my work. In the past two years and a half years I have been involved in everything from assisting with the design of Centre research projects, to grant writing, analysing data and conducting literature reviews.

I was also fortunate to be given the opportunity to

be involved in many activities that were outside the scope of a usual research assistant position. These are the experiences that I am most proud of. Some personal highlights were: co-designing and facilitating workshops to teach nurse educators a range of basic research skills and to clarify evidence-based practice models; designing course content for, and co-facilitating an 8-week research training and mentoring program for our Clinical Research Fellows.

Reflecting over my time as a nursing researcher, it seems clear to me that these opportunities and experiences would not have been provided to me if, after finishing my degree, I had simply sought a

job within psychology. Three years ago I was looking for a job that could provide me with a wide range of experiences and a solid grounding in research and education. I feel that this was achieved at the Centre. For this I thank my colleagues – to all the staff of the Centre, those of you who are still there, and those that I worked with in the past, thank you very much, my time with you was a pleasure.

Damien Khaw  
Research Assistant

## CPN EDUCATION AND TRAINING UPDATE: IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT OF WITHDRAWAL FROM ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS IN PSYCHIATRIC INPATIENT UNITS

This two-day 'Train the Trainer' workshop was a joint enterprise between the Centre for Psychiatric Nursing (CPN) and the Victorian Dual Diagnosis Initiative.

The collaboration was in response to a training need identified by Victorian psychiatric nurses and a Victorian Department of Human Services' recent policy Dual diagnosis: Key directions and priorities for service development that mandates that dual diagnosis is systematically identified and responded to in a timely and evidence based manner and that this is core business for both mental health services and alcohol and drug services. This workshop aimed to develop the capacity of the Victorian psychiatric nursing workforce in the identification and management of acute withdrawal from alcohol and other drugs in psychiatric inpatient facilities.

The workshop was conducted in June as part of the Centre for Psychiatric Nursing's 2008 Education and Training Program. Greg Logan and Mark Powell from the Victorian Dual Diagnosis Initiative and Mal Doreian from Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre developed and facilitated this relevant and engaging two-day workshop. They also produced comprehensive trainer manuals and resources, assisting participants to deliver training sessions in their own practice settings.

Twenty one mental health clinicians from mental health services across Victoria completed the workshop. Workshop participants were mainly

mental health nurses working in clinical, management and education positions in Victorian psychiatric inpatient units in the public sector. One occupational therapist working in an acute psychiatric inpatient unit and two mental health nurses working in the private sector also attended the workshop.

*Importantly, participants felt they would be able to access ongoing support as they progress dual-diagnosis training and practice improvement in their workplaces*

The workshop was evaluated using a standard CPN workshop evaluation instrument. The evaluation found that the workshop participants agreed that the presenters were knowledgeable about the subject and enthusiastic throughout the workshop; the teaching style suited their respective learning styles; the subject was structured logically and that the resources provided were relevant and useful. With regard to workshop outcomes, participants agreed that sessions were relevant to their workplace; they experienced a substantial increase in knowledge and subsequently felt more confident in dealing with issues relevant to identification and management of withdrawal from alcohol and other drugs and that participation in the workshop is likely to alter their practice.

Participants anticipated that the workshop would enhance their practice in a variety of ways. They



Mal Doreian, Greg Logan and Mark Powell

described an increased readiness, interest and resourcefulness to facilitate education sessions relevant to the identification and management of withdrawal in their respective clinical settings. Participants felt the workshop has provided them with important resources within a structured format that they are able to share with colleagues. Importantly, participants felt they would be able to access ongoing support as they progress dual-diagnosis training and practice improvement in their workplaces. Participants stated that the workshop enhanced their knowledge, skills, confidence and enthusiasm in working with people with coexisting mental health and dual diagnosis problems.

The workshop participants identified the expertise and generosity of the trainers, the workshop content, the knowledge and understandings gained and the resources provided as the best aspects of the workshop.

Due to the success of this workshop the CPN is organising to present a similar workshop as part of its 2009 Training Calendar.

## CENTRE FOR PSYCHIATRIC NURSING PRECEPTORSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM:

### BUILDING INDUSTRY CAPACITY

The continuing demand for CPN Preceptorship workshops in 2008 indicates that preceptorship skills are still very much in demand by mental health organisations.

This year the CPN delivered one metropolitan preceptorship workshop and one industry based workshop at Peninsula Health.

The CPN calls for expressions of interest for industry based preceptor workshops each year in early December. The call for expressions of interest is sent to state wide mental health nurse educators via the CPN's Nurse Educator email list.

2008 was also the year for the CPN to implement a Preceptorship Training Program designed to build industry capacity to provide greater access to, and support in, delivering this important workshop to a larger audience.

Building capacity in mental health organisations is critical; the CPN believes that by offering supported training to local educators to teach this workshop, we increase preceptorship skills and knowledge across mental health services. Another very important outcome of this collaboration is the continued development of local educators' knowledge and skills in delivering training and healthy opportunities for organisation and Centre growth.

This activity is one of collaboration and partnership; improving preceptorship does not just include workshops; it includes ongoing critical review of local implementation processes, and a comprehensive evaluation of the benefits and limitations. To ensure success, factors relating to leadership, organisational change, and workforce engagement must also be central to the developing program.

This year the CPN successfully delivered two Building Industry Capacity Preceptorship Training programs, one within a metropolitan mental health service and one within a rural mental health service.

If you or your mental health organisation has an interest in the Industry Building Preceptorship Training Program for 2009, you can contact the CPN at:  
03 8344 9626 or cpn@nursing.unimelb.edu.au



10<sup>th</sup>

# VICTORIAN COLLABORATIVE PSYCHIATRIC NURSING CONFERENCE

## CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Celebrating  
10 Years of  
Clinician Focused  
Conferences

# 13 & 14 August 2009

As joint hosts the **Centre for Psychiatric Nursing, The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (Vic Branch), The Health and Community Services Union** and the **Australian Nursing Federation** invite you to attend this exciting conference.

The aim of this conference is to focus on the practice of psychiatric nursing and how this practice contributes to better health outcomes for the consumers of services.

Abstracts of no more than 200 words are invited for 30 minute paper, poster and 60 or 90 minute workshop presentations that focus on the practice of psychiatric nursing. All posters submitted for the conference will be entered into the Conference Poster Competition with a

\$100 Gift Voucher going to the winning entry. Papers with a focus on recovery from mental health problems are particularly encouraged. Themes below are listed for your consideration but papers need not be restricted to only those shown.

Papers from practicing clinicians and post graduate students undertaking clinical projects are particularly encouraged.

If you are interested in presenting a paper but would like more information, support or guidance please contact:

**Steve Elsom at CPN:**

**T: 8344 9460**

**E: [sjelsom@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:sjelsom@unimelb.edu.au)**

Abstracts can be submitted electronically. The instructions and format for the submission of abstracts are located on the CPN website: **[www.cpn.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.cpn.unimelb.edu.au)**

If you are unable to submit an abstract electronically please contact the CPN:

**T: (03) 8344 9626**

**E: [cpn@nursing.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:cpn@nursing.unimelb.edu.au)**

**F: (03) 9347 4375**

### Themes

- Innovation in practice
- Sustainability of psychiatric nursing
- Consumer perspectives
- Carer perspectives
- Clinically-based research and evaluation
- Psychiatric nursing across the life-span
- Rural issues
- Cultural and indigenous issues
- Dual diagnosis
- Dual disability
- Recovery

DEADLINE FOR  
ABSTRACT SUBMISSION:

Friday  
27 February  
2009



MAILING DETAILS HERE

AUSTRALIA  
PAID  
POSTAGE

If undeliverable return to:  
Centre for Psychiatric Nursing  
School of Nursing and Social Work  
The University of Melbourne  
Level 5 234 Queensberry Street Carlton VIC 3053