

Research Opportunities: An Enhancement Tool for Nursing Students Public Health Nursing and Population-Based Health Initiative

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At a university or college whose purpose is to empower students with knowledge and skills, what is the typical undergraduate nursing student's involvement in research? For a student who desires more than the typical experience, what could it be?

Salisbury University's Undergraduate Nursing Program has implemented core courses that include content on research methods and evidence-based practice. These courses provide students with an understanding of the research process, opportunities to develop critical analysis skills when reading and critiquing research, and opportunities to be involved in clinical research projects that seek to improve community health outcomes. The knowledge and skills gained from these experiences are applied to nursing practice.

As faculty, we recognize diverse activities can facilitate the learning process for all students and enable them to retain information for use in their future careers. Research involvement is one activity that is increasingly important for graduates to bring to their new roles as registered nurses. The experiences provide students with opportunities to expand the variety of situations presented within the complex profession of nursing and the nursing education process that involve critical thinking (Palmer, 2009). By exploring research opportunities and addressing the divergent ways in which nursing students learn, nursing schools can assure students have opportunities to



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succeed in their programs. Research activities are not expensive to implement and can be attractive to nursing students.

In part to expose undergraduate nursing students to clinical nursing research, a small group of faculty from nursing and psychology at Salisbury University initiated a women's health research team. The team's goals are to implement aspects of research within the curricula by focusing on a pressing community health issue: breast cancer screening among Latina migrant farm workers. During the last two migrant seasons, the research team conducted five focus groups on breast health and breast cancer detection to identify barriers to care among this marginalized population.

As nurses, we are expected to provide culturally congruent and competent care to patients. Therefore, as nurse educators, we strive to impart this knowledge and skill to our stu-

dents. Nursing theory courses should supply students with an overview of culture and nursing considerations for various cultures. Affording students the opportunity to participate in research experiences, such as the breast health focus groups, allows students to enhance their knowledge about cultural aspects of nursing care.

From the students' perspective, being involved in this research experience and working with the breast

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Professional growth contributes to the development of nursing education, practice, research, and leadership by preparing nursing students to successfully deal with health issues.

health focus groups gives them more insight into the needs of the Latina culture in surrounding counties. Before the focus groups began, members of the research team attended the Multi-Agency Meeting for the 2010 Migrant Season with various health organizations from local counties. Attendees were able to become familiar with the health issues the Latina community encounters. During the focus groups, Latina women reported they were aware of the health resources available to them, but misconceptions about breast cancer prevented them from utilizing the resources. The information gained from the agency meeting and focus groups was useful during maternity and psychiatric clinical rotations. The students were able to provide culturally congruent patient education, address educational content related to

health care disparities, and provide information on access to affordable women's health services within the community.

The Salisbury University women's health research team has established collaborative relationships that provide student opportunities for personal and professional growth. Professional growth contributes to the development of nursing education, practice, research, and leadership by preparing nursing students to successfully deal with health issues. By participating in the facilitation of focus groups, nursing students are able to critically evaluate and apply the data and/or findings to practice (evidence-based practice). Personal benefits available to nursing students include: learning to present research findings through poster presentations at the annual NSNA Convention

(NSNA, 2011) and other nursing/psychology conferences; learning to read, critique, and write academic articles; and learning to disseminate nursing research and apply it to interdisciplinary practice. Involving undergraduate nursing students in research experiences may also empower them to implement and lead evidence-based practice initiatives as registered nurses and consider career goals as nurse educators and nurse researchers. **DN**

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Healthy People 2020: An Important Benchmark for Future Nurse Leaders

From the Healthy People 2020 Web Site (<http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020>)

Healthy People provides science-based, 10-year national objectives for improving the health of all Americans. For three decades, Healthy People has established benchmarks and monitored progress over time in order to:

- Encourage collaborations across sectors
- Guide individuals toward making informed health decisions
- Measure the impact of prevention activities

Healthy People 2020 continues in this tradition with the launch on December 2, 2010, of its ambitious, yet achievable, 10-year agenda for improving the nation's health. Healthy People 2020 is the result of a multiyear process that reflects input from a diverse group of individuals and organizations.

Healthy People 2020 Vision

A society in which all people live long, healthy lives.

Mission

Healthy People 2020 strives to:

- Identify nationwide health improvement priorities.
- Increase public awareness and understanding of the determinants of health, disease, and disability and the opportunities for progress.
- Provide measurable objectives and goals that are applicable at the national, state, and local levels.
- Engage multiple sectors to take actions to strengthen policies and improve practices that are driven by the best available evidence and knowledge.
- Identify critical research, evaluation, and data collection needs.

Overarching Goals

- Attain high-quality, longer lives free of preventable disease, disability, injury, and premature death.
- Achieve health equity, eliminate disparities, and improve the health of all groups.

- Create social and physical environments that promote good health for all.
- Promote quality of life, healthy development, and healthy behaviors across all life stages.

Four foundation health measures will serve as an indicator of progress toward achieving these goals:

- General Health Status
- Health-Related Quality of Life and Well-Being
- Determinants of Health
- Disparities

For information on implementing Healthy People 2020 and *MAP-IT: A Guide to Using Healthy People 2020 in Your Community*, go to <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/implementing/default.aspx>. Download the *Healthy People 2020 Framework* at <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/Consortium/HP2020Framework.pdf>. **DN**

In Support of Promotion and Awareness of the Effects Of Human-Animal Interaction on Chronic Disease

Submitted by University of Missouri, Sinclair School of Nursing
Adopted by the NSNA House of Delegates, April 7-10, 2010, Lake Buena Vista, Florida

RESOLVED, that the National Student Nurses' Association (NSNA) encourage its constituents to support the research of human-animal interaction and its effects on chronic diseases; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the NSNA encourage its constituents to advocate for human-animal interaction research as part of community health projects; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the NSNA publish an article in *Imprint* supporting the interaction of pets and humans on reducing cardiovascular disease, if feasible; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the NSNA send copies of this resolution to the American Obesity Association, the American Association of Human-Animal Bond Veterinarians, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the American Nurses Association, the National League for Nursing, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, the National Organization for Associate Degree Nursing, each state board of nursing, and any others deemed appropriate by the NSNA Board of Directors. **DN**

Visit http://www.nsna.org/Portals/0/Skins/NSNA/pdf/Final%20Resolutions%202010%20_2.pdf to read the entire Resolution.



NSNA Board of Directors Implements 2010 Resolutions

Beginning with the 2011 Convention Program Book, a new icon is being used to indicate a session that is provided as an implementation strategy for one of the NSNA Resolutions adopted at the previous House of Delegates (e.g. 2010 NSNA House of Delegates, Lake Buena Vista, FL).

Implementation Strategies for 2010 Resolution #2

- 2011 NSNA Convention in Salt Lake City, UT
Focus Session: *Milk-Bones® are the Best Medicine*
Sponsor: Rehabilitation Nurses
Thursday, April 7, 2011, Salt Palace Convention Center
2:30-3:30 p.m. and repeated 3:45-4:45 p.m.
- Tip Sheet developed by the NSNA Community Health Committee to educate and empower NSNA constituents to implement 2010 Resolution #2 (see below)

NSNA Community Health Committee Tip Sheet

2010 House of Delegates Resolution #2: In Support of Promotion and Awareness of the Effects of Human-Animal Interaction on Chronic Disease

Studies show pet owners' overall psychological and physiological health scores rated higher than those of non-pet owners. In addition, evidence shows pet owners with coronary heart disease survive longer than those who do not own pets. Exercising pets and pet social support have also been associated with higher rates of physical activity and mental health, respectively. Overall satisfaction with life and reduction in chronic disease is yet another benefit of human-animal interaction.

- Family pets may serve as a defense mechanism for autonomic nervous system responses associated with acute stress.
- Some longitudinal studies show a link between healthier cardiovascular rates and pet ownership.
- Pet exposure can reduce rates of anxiety and stress and ultimately may prevent chronic disease.
- In one study, dog owners' physical activity increased substantially post adoption due to the physical activity associated with ownership of a mobile canine.
- Studies of pets in nursing homes showed residents experienced an improved psychosocial outlook when compared with the non-pet control group.
- Animal therapy may increase group cohesion and socialization in group therapy.
- Pets can serve as a nostalgic means to convey personal history (in terms of pet ownership) between differing generations and provide a time to communicate about cherished memories.

- Animals can be seen as a trustful source for the individual – a non-judgmental source of stability in the individual's immediate environment.
- Even short-term exposure may increase positive experiences for some individuals. **DN**

Web Sources

<http://www.iahaio.org/>
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