

# Nephrology nurses put the care back into the healthcare system

Paul N Bennett

Bennett, PN 2009 Nephrology nurses put the care back into the healthcare system: Editorial  
*Ren Soc Aust J* 5(3) 112

Although hard to define, all nephrology nurses know what good care is, and what caring means, when nursing people with kidney disease. We don't need a concept analysis, critical ethnography or phenomenological study to know what caring nursing is. However, there are many aspects of caring and nursing care that we are all learning about through our professional journeys. Thankfully, in this issue of the RSAJ, caring in nephrology nursing is a theme found in all six articles.

Following analysis of interviews with six indigenous people with kidney disease, Lisa Burnette and Marion Kickett (2009) challenge us to be more culturally aware in our daily nephrology nursing care. They challenge us to incorporate cultural awareness training in order to provide culturally appropriate care for disempowered Aboriginal renal patients. Culturally appropriate care may be different depending on person and context, so this article provides valuable insights into this challenging area of nephrology nursing care.

A major component of the care we provide addresses health educational needs of people with chronic kidney disease. San Miguel and colleagues (2009) have provided some strategies to improve understanding of phosphate binding medications including the successful use of a leaflet to enhance educational outcomes. Importantly, Owen et al. (2009) have furthered the development of educational materials by measuring literacy levels of people with chronic kidney disease. By modifying our education brochures Owen et al. (2009) have ensured that the brochures meet the literacy levels of the patients so they can understand the treatment and lifestyle regimes required for their disease treatment.

To improve our patient education strategies we require knowledge of current practices and strategies to better these practise. In a pilot study exploring CKD nurse education practices, Morton et al. (2009) uncovered some preliminary findings relating to education information, treatment options, timing of information and the involvement of carers in education programs. These results will no doubt inform a larger study providing strategies for health educators.

A fundamental aspect of nephrology nursing care is to contribute to the improvement of people's quality of life. Al Wakeel et al (2009) have provided further evidence of influences on quality of life in the peritoneal dialysis (PD) population. Their findings urge us to critically analyse our care and ensure that age, educational level and employment status of people receiving PD is taken into consideration in the provision of nephrology nursing care.

Data related to the nephrology workforce contributes to our understanding of factors influencing nephrology nursing work. Liz McNeill, Nick Polaschek and myself (Bennett et al. 2009) have presented the first Australian and New Zealand Workforce Survey demonstrating the regional differences in workforce profiles, providing recommendations for education, practice and research.

Nephrology nursing is a rewarding specialty that contributes to the lives of Australians and New Zealanders with kidney disease. Although there are frequent claims that the Australian and New Zealand healthcare system is crisis I frequently observe high quality care provided in renal wards, dialysis units, people's homes and outpatient departments. My conclusion is that nephrology nurses are putting the care back into the healthcare system.

## References

- Al Wakeel, J., Bayoumi, M Al Suwaida, A Al Harbi, A Askar A, Al Ghonaim M, & Mishriky A. (2009) Influences on quality of life in peritoneal dialysis patients  
*Ren Soc Aust J* 5(3) 127-132
- Bennett, PN., McNeill, L. & Polaschek, N. (2009) The Australian and New Zealand Dialysis Workforce.  
*Ren Soc Aust J* 5(3) 147-151
- Burnette, L & Kickett, M 2009 'You are just a puppet': Australian Aboriginal people's experience of disempowerment when undergoing treatment for end-stage renal disease  
*Ren Soc Aust J* 5(3) 113-118
- Morton RL, Moustakas, J., Howard, K., Webster, AC. & Snelling, P. (2009) A national audit of information provided to new chronic kidney disease stage 4 & 5 patients – results from a pilot study  
*Ren Soc Aust J* 5(3) 138-146
- Owen, J., Kohne., Douglas, L., Hewitson, T. & Baldwin, R. (2009) An Implementation Pathway for Matching Education Material with the Literacy Level of Dialysis Patients  
*Ren Soc Aust J* 5(3) 133-137
- San Miguel, S., Curtale, M, Knagge, D, Nhan, C & Chow, J (2009) Improving patient understanding of phosphate binders: A bony challenge.  
*Ren Soc Aust J* 5(3) 119-125