The School of Nursing and Center for Adolescent Nursing are proud to welcome Elizabeth Saewyc, Ph.D., RN, PHN to their faculty. Dr. Saewyc brings a breadth of research and practical experience in the area of adolescent nursing. She recently received her Ph.D. in Nursing Science from the University of Washington School of Nursing in Seattle, where she also completed a Masters of Nursing degree in Advanced Community Health Nursing.

While earning her masters and doctorate, she worked clinically in the University of Washington's Division of Adolescent Medicine, conducting research and serving as the manager of clinical services/public health nurse case manager in the Young Women’s Clinic and Out of Home Teen Pregnancy Project. These two programs provided comprehensive prenatal care, maternity support services, case management, and one year follow-up for homeless, incarcerated, and high risk pregnant teens. Dr. Saewyc also taught childbirth education in the Teen Pregnancy and Parenting Clinic of Group Health Cooperative of Puget Sound. She is an alumna of the University of Minnesota.

**Alternative and Complementary Therapies in Adolescent Health**

The trend toward increased use of complementary and alternative health medicine (CAM) suggests that a majority of people in the United States will soon be consumers and users of these modalities. Although there is a growing body of research on the efficacy and safety of many of these practices, little research has been conducted with adolescent subjects and it is not known how widespread the use of CAM is in adolescent populations. The Center for Adolescent Nursing (CAN) at the University of Minnesota has become actively engaged in this topic.

Most complementary healing practices are rooted in a philosophical and spiritual paradigm that emphasizes wholeness and balance of the mind-body-spirit. This holistic perspective has been part of nursing philosophy and practice since its inception, and nursing practice has traditionally employed complementary modalities such as massage, imagery, music, breathing, and the use of presence. The faculty of the CAN recognize that nurses working in adolescent health need to be educated in this area so that they can not only add to the body of research knowledge available, but also can appropriately advise adolescents who have used or are considering using CAM in their health maintenance or care.

The School of Nursing and the CAN

**Expanding Connections: Adolescent Nursing at the National Institutes of Health**

It’s off to Bethesda and the rolling hills of the NIH campus! This past year the Center for Adolescent Nursing’s connections with NIH have increased in a number of ways, all of which enhance the research visibility and capacity of our Center. Whether through grant review panels, presentations at NIH-hosted functions, or the launching of newly-funded research grant proposals, increased NIH involvement in nursing research with adolescents is taking hold and taking off.

Within weeks of arriving in Minnesota, Elizabeth Saewyc, Ph.D., RN, our newest Center faculty member was on her way to the NIH campus in Maryland. The NIH event, to which Dr. Saewyc was invited,
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covenanted experts from a variety of disciplines to define new approaches to research on sexual orientation, mental health, and substance abuse. Along with the American Psychological Association, four institutes of NIH collaborated to host the meeting. The National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH) and Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the Offices of Research on Women’s Health and Behavioral and Social Sciences invited senior as well as newer investigators. Dr. Saewyc, though weeks away from a dissertation defense, received an invitation. Her four first-authored publications, that all focus on sexual orientation, mental health, and substance abuse, gave her unique insights into research in the area.

Nearly in the air at the same time, Linda Halcon, Ph.D.,RN, responded to an invitation from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to share insights from her research on STD risk behavior among homeless youth. Using trained street outreach workers to interview homeless youth (90% agreed to participate), Dr. Halcon with a colleague from the UMN School of Public Health, found disturbingly high STD risk-taking. In addition to sexual behavior, the young people risked STDs through unclean needles for piercing and tattooing as well as those used for injecting drugs. These practices among females threatened their health more than among males. Though Dr. Halcon presented amidst a variety of other cancer-related research (including such topics as risks from sun exposure), the focus Hepatitis B and C and HIV risks by Halcon and colleagues, captured the interest of NCI researchers.

The Center for Adolescent Nursing’s involvement with the National Institute for Nursing Research (NINR) continues as well. Linda Bearinger, Ph.D.,RN, is in the midst of her second year reviewing institutional and individual research training grant applications for NINR. Interest in adolescent health issues among newer nurse researchers seems to be on the rise! Not in lieu of quantitative approaches, NINR’s support for qualitative proposals is most likely setting the pace at NIH.

News came first by e-mail that Dr. Bearinger (Principal Investigator), along with faculty colleague Renee E. Sieving, Ph.D., PNP (Co-Investigator) of the Center for Adolescent Nursing, were funded for a three-year investigation of the use of pregnancy and STD protection among sexually experienced adolescents. The National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development had put out a call for applications that examined so-called “dual method use” among teenagers. Minnesota’s interdisciplinary team (from the Schools of Nursing and Medicine) had first analyzed the Wave 1 data from National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) (see Resnick, et al, September 1997 JAMA article). We were well-positioned to respond to NICHD’s call. Since funding for this NICHD-supported R01 began in August, we are well on our way to exploring a multiplicity of issues around dual method use. With the merger of Wave 2 of Add Health, now we can truly address antecedent factors that encourage or discourage the use of both STD and pregnancy protection among adolescents.

**CENTER FACULTY AND STAFF ACTIVITIES**

**PRESENTATIONS**

Linda H. Bearinger, Ph.D., F.A.A.N., was the lecturer for the opening two days of a new week-long intensive certificate course on adolescent health offered to 80 nurses and other health professionals in Hong Kong. This course and the participants represented four of the major hospitals from various regions of Hong Kong. The set of lecturers in this February 2000 course, sponsored by the Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital, created a foundation for launching a five-year plan for adolescent health education, service and research across multiple institutions in Hong Kong.


**HONORS**

Linda H. Bearinger, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Director of the Center for Adolescent Nursing was inducted as a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing at its annual meeting in November 1999.

**PUBLICATIONS**

Under the mentorship of Dr. Bearinger, two masters students, Peggy Nerdahl and Deb Berglund, published their research paper in the Journal of Pediatric Health Care. Both Nerdahl and Berglund were supported by the Center for Adolescent Nursing in the School of Nursing, funded by a grant from the Federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA, DHHS).


**GRANTS**

Linda H. Bearinger, Ph.D., F.A.A.N., associate professor is the principal investigator on a newly awarded research grant (R01) from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (of NIH). With this three year award of $735,000, she and co-investigators from the Medical School will be examining the use of protection against pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections among sexually experienced adolescents.
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School of Nursing, where she received her BSN, and she is a former staff member of Graduate Studies in Adolescent Nursing.

Dr. Saewyc’s research focus is on teen pregnancy, the impact of sexual abuse, and health issues of sexual minority youth. In addition to studying risks for pregnancy and related health outcomes among gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth, she has examined models of prenatal care and health promotion for high risk teens, particularly those who are homeless or sexually-abused. She will be presenting a research paper on the health risks associated with adolescent victims of harassment in school at the March 2000 meeting of the Society for Adolescent Medicine.

She plans to further explore the findings and research begun in her dissertation work, “Meanings of pregnancy and motherhood among out-of-home pregnant adolescents,” which was funded by an NRSA Fellowship from the National Institute of Nursing Research. One of the surprising results of this study was that pregnancy appeared to be a positive coping strategy for homeless teens. She notes, “The pregnancy allowed the young women to step away from risk behaviors, access services only available to pregnant teens, and reconnect with estranged family. For most of them, the pregnancy was a statement of hope for the future, and it offered a profound change in their status, from ‘bad kid’ to ‘mother.’” She cautioned, however, that this is a preliminary finding for a very high-risk population: “Context matters. In researching negative health behaviors, you also have to consider how you define healthy. Collecting data from this vulnerable, less visible population, you can expect results that differ and even contradict findings for the general population.”

Dr. Saewyc says communities must find the means to meet the needs of this population such that pregnancy is not the chosen path for coping with the enormous adversity that many homeless youth face. “We need to connect with these kids before they become pregnant, understand what they need to change their life trajectories, and what obstacles they face in accomplishing this. In the overall population teen pregnancy has dropped 16% since 1990; those who are still getting pregnant tend to be kids with complex home and life issues.”

In addition to joining Center faculty in teaching a grantwriting institute in spring 2000 and the Center’s annual summer institute on advanced clinical interventions with adolescents, Dr. Saewyc is teaching public health nursing, nursing theory, and research. Dr. Saewyc’s goals include working toward improving health care access for high-risk youth and developing nursing theory to better define the roles of nurses who work with adolescents.

Therapies, 
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have initiated changes to fully incorporate alternative/complementary health philosophy and practices into all coursework. The aim is that students be grounded in a philosophy of body-mind-spirit wholeness and healing for themselves and for the individuals, families and communities they serve. Toward that end, students are encouraged to develop individualized plans of study utilizing University-wide courses and the expertise of nursing faculty in a variety of therapeutic modalities. Students wanting to deepen their study of CAM are encouraged to enroll in the interdisciplinary graduate minor program in Complementary Therapies and Healing Practices, open to all Graduate School students. CAN faculty member, Linda Halcón, Ph.D., RN, is a member of the graduate faculty for this minor.

There are many implications of incorporating CAM into adolescent nursing. The public looks to the health professions for competent advice about therapeutics. Nurses, as the most accessible and numerous of health professionals, are well-situated to provide such guidance. Holistic and integrative practice can also be a bridge to culturally competent care, as these therapies are often grounded in honoring cultural traditions, for example in the field of herbal therapeutics.

Our faculty are committed to providing opportunities for master’s level projects and doctoral research in CAM related to adolescents. A current doctoral student, Carrie Braun, M.S., PNP, has chosen to study adolescents’ use of CAM for her dissertation research. The School of Nursing is also engaged in exploring strategies for integrating post-baccalaureate certification programs into this academic setting. For nurses interested in CAM and adolescents, whether they are involved in research, practice or policy, this is a time of great opportunity as we move into new and rediscover old healing paradigms that offer broader possibilities for improving the health of adolescents.
DON'T MISS THESE EXCITING SUMMER INSTITUTES SPONSORED BY THE CENTER

Resource Development through Grantwriting

Date: May 15 (9:00-5:00), May 16, (9:00-3:00) 2000
Well-constructed grant applications stand out above the rest. This course teaches grantwriters how to have their proposals ranked at the top. Strategic grantwriting involves a host of skills from finding the best sources for funding to preparing polished proposals. Participants will learn how to effectively seek resources for programs and research through successful grantwriting. Sessions incorporate newer uses of computer systems and the Internet for grant proposal preparation. Participants will critique as well as create components of grant applications. Through faculty-guided small group sessions, participants will focus on unique approaches for preparing research, program and/or training grant applications.

Clinical Assessment and Interventions: Adolescent Violence

Date: June 13-16, 2000
Enhance your skills in engaging young people and responding to their health needs through homes, schools, clinics, and community settings. We will provide hands-on experience using the resources of an acting troupe of adolescents in combination with faculty who are experienced practitioners. This year’s institute will focus specifically on interventions related to violence, both violence perpetration and suicidal behavior, while also developing your skills for addressing a broad range of youth health issues. We will synthesize perspectives from clinical practice and youth development, discuss political concerns and legal issues, and integrate state-of-the-science research with innovative intervention approaches.

For more information or to receive registration materials, contact Christine Carlstrom in the Outreach Office at 612-625-7651, or email: carls020@tc.umn.edu.