INTRODUCING GRADUATE STUDIES IN ADOLESCENT NURSING

In July 1993 the School of Nursing at the University of Minnesota was awarded a 5-year grant from the U.S. Maternal and Child Health Bureau to develop a master’s program in adolescent nursing. Under the direction of Linda Bearinger, PhD, MS, RN, the program, Graduate Studies in Adolescent Nursing (GSAN), prepares advanced practice nurses for lead roles in the development and delivery of health services to young people.

The coursework for this master’s program is grounded in public health nursing while integrating theoretical, clinical, research and leadership skills in adolescent health. Graduates will be prepared for positions in clinical, administrative, educational, and advocacy/policy arenas. Clinical practica are in settings such as community-based and school-linked clinics, prevention programs for at-risk youth, and services for young people with chronic illness and disability. Graduate students can complete the program in 6 quarters full-time.

The first year of the new program has been a year of energetic development. Renee Sieving, M.S., CPNP, joined the faculty in January. In addition to her research in prevention programming for at-risk youth, she continues her clinical work as a nurse practitioner in Twin City youth clinics. She is designing a new graduate course in advanced clinical skills with adolescents to be taught spring quarter in the School of Nursing.

Also joining the teaching and program staff were Maggie Dexheimer Pharris and Elizabeth Carlson. Both have been active in developing recruitment materials as well as publishing and research activities.

In June 1994, the Advisory Board of the Graduate Studies in Adolescent Nursing voted to make the first year a transition year for the new program.

In the past several months, faculty and staff of GSAN have written and revised 2 chapters on adolescent health for Whaley & Wong’s pediatric text Nursing Care of Infants and Children (5th ed). Beginning with a review of fundamental changes in adolescence, Chapter 19 challenges notions of adolescence as a time of “storm and stress.”

While the new chapter supports a positive perspective of this life period, it also presents adolescence as a complex interplay of biological, cognitive, psychological, and social change, perhaps more so than at any other time of life. Teens experience biological changes due to puberty, changes in their abilities to think abstractly and imagine possibilities, and changes in their social roles and environments. Many also establish greater independence, form new and meaningful relationships, and develop workable value systems.

The second part of Chapter 19 addresses the question “How do we best promote the health of adolescents?” Defining health in broad terms, including physical fitness, psychological health, and social well being, we find teens are a group with substantial unmet needs. Recent documents such as Healthy People 2000 call for risk reductions for young people in areas of mental health, substance use, sexual behavior, violence, unintentional injury, nutrition, and physical fitness. This chapter sets the framework for a nursing approach to health promotion among adolescents.

Chapter 21 focuses on specific threats to adolescent health. Risk behaviors such as substance use, suicide, and disordered eating patterns are discussed along with factors that increase and decrease teens' engagement in gun violence and other forms of unintentional injury, nutrition, and physical fitness.
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Nursing guided us through an evaluation of the first year’s accomplishments. This prestigious interdisciplinary group of leaders in adolescent health from around the Twin Cities provided excellent direction as we shape a graduate program that will be responsive to the changing health care system and needs of young people.

WELCOME!

Welcome to the following students, who started during Summer Session:

Carolyn M. Porta, a recent graduate of the University’s BSN program, has worked as a Volunteer Disaster Health Nurse for the American Red Cross, and a nursing assistant at Fairview Southdale Hospital in Minneapolis.

James L. McLean, from Duluth, has worked as a public health nurse in St. Louis County, Minnesota, and in Bernette County, Wisconsin; he has also worked as a school nurse in Superior, Wisconsin. In 1983, Jim received a BA in biology, with a minor in chemistry, from the University of Minnesota Duluth.

Tabitha K Hanson has worked as a home care nurse with Minneapolis Children’s Medical Center, as a charge nurse at the St. Peter Community Hospital, and a staff nurse at Dakota County Hospital in Fargo. She received a BA in nursing and biology from Concordia College in 1991.

Hsuan-Ling Chen, from Taiwan, has worked in the Dept. of Nursing of the University of Dubuque, Iowa, as well as an RN at Der-Chung Hospital in Taiwan. In 1989, she received an associate degree in nursing from the Foo-Yen Junior College of Nursing and Medical Technology, Taiwan, and in 1993, she earned her BSN from Catholic University of America, Washington DC.


Renee has been appointed to the Public Health Nursing Graduate Committee.

Maggie Dexheimer Pharris: Maggie received her MSN and MPH degrees in June, and will begin doctoral studies in Nursing at the U of M in September.

In March, Maggie presented “The Nurse’s Role in Refugee Public Health” for Nsg 5433 at the Center for Victims of Torture; “Adolescence: Important Understandings for People Who Work With Youth” for the Youth Specialization Training in April; “Adolescent Sexual Behavior” for Pediatrics Residents Core Lecture Series, ongoing; and “Basic Concepts Identifying the Health Needs of Adolescents” for leaders in adolescent health in Arizona in June.


Maggie recently completed research which identified protective factors associated with decreased hopelessness and suicidality in sexually abused American Indian adolescents.

Elizabeth Carlson: Elizabeth presented “The Relative Benefits of Nurse Midwifery vs. Obstetric Practices for Certain At-Risk Populations” at the U of M Undergraduate Research Fair in February; she also presented “Nurse Midwifery: Feminist Praxis or Medical Oppression?” in May at the Center for Advanced Feminist Studies, U of M.

Elizabeth received a UROP Grant of $870 for her study, "Demographics of Sexual Orientation Among Native American Adolescents," in June. In addition, she recently completed research which examined the occurrence and correlates of adolescent pregnancy among girls who identify as non-heterosexual on one or more dimensions of a multidimensional scale of sexual orientation.

Elizabeth has been appointed to both the Abstract Review Committee and the Conference Planning Committee of the research conference, “Multidimensional Models of Sexual Orientation in Research,” an interdisciplinary conference endorsed by the School of Nursing, which will be held May 1995.

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risk of involvement in these behaviors. Nursing approaches to intervention and prevention of these threats to adolescent health and well-being are considered.

This edition of Nursing Care of Infants and Children will be available January 1995.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Bearinger will co-teach PubH 5650, Teen Pregnancy and Parenting: Models for Intervention, on Fri. Oct. 14 in Rochester, and Sat. Oct. 29 in Minneapolis. This one-day workshop can be taken for 1 graduate or undergraduate credit. For information, call (507) 280-2831 (Rochester) or (612) 624-3300 (Minneapolis).