

## RCN Research Society Marjorie Simpson New Researchers' award

### **Statement**

I would like to attend the RCN Annual International Nursing Research conference because, as a second year doctoral nursing student, this would be a great opportunity to further develop my knowledge and skills about different research methods and how they can be used to produce research that will lead to improved patient care. Every nurse has a professional responsibility to promote the use of evidence-based practice, and as a critical care lecturer I am passionate about achieving this. If my own abstract submissions are accepted, attendance at conference will provide a forum in which I am able to disseminate my current research findings. It will also provide a valuable opportunity to learn from listening to the presentation of other researchers, both from nursing and other relevant profession groups. Doctoral study can be a lonely experience and forums, such as the RCN Research Society, are vital to enable support and encouragement during the process. Attendance at this conference would provide a fantastic opportunity to meet fellow international researchers, exchange ideas and discuss common research challenges and how to overcome these. A final key reason for wanting to attend the RCN Annual International Nursing Research conference is the opportunity to contribute to a discussion of the importance of nursing research as an important element in the design and delivery of effective multi-professional strategies to enhance patient care. This is a message that I have promoted within my role as both a critical care lecturer and intensive care nurse over many years. I hope that by winning this award I will have the opportunity to further achieve these aspirations.

## Outline of current research

### Title

Adult critical care discharge information; development and evaluation of a strategy which encompasses user participation and investigates the potential for self management.

### Background

Discharge from critical care to a general ward is stressful for patients, relatives and health care staff. It is also a period during which patient safety could be compromised (NICE 2009). Information giving is a complex intervention (MRC 2000). Despite the enormity and complexity of the problem little evidence exists to guide practice. Current methods of information delivery used at critical care discharge have not proven effective in reducing transfer anxiety, improving perceptions of ward care or reducing length of hospital stay. Effective and timely information has been identified as one of the key factors affecting psycho-social well being during early critical care recovery. The development and evaluation of more effective strategies is recommended (NICE 2007).

### Aims

This project reinvestigates current methods of information support with an aim to develop future models, which actively engage the patient in both design and delivery. Coulter and Ellis (2006) support this and argue for development of patient focused interventions, which '*recognise the role of participants in the process of securing appropriate, effective, safe and responsive healthcare*' (P:7). The aim of this project is to develop and evaluate the clinical effectiveness of information strategies, which focus on active user participation, to support adult critically ill patients and their families upon discharge to the ward.

### Plan of investigation

Using the MRC (2000) framework for the development and evaluation of complex interventions, following pre-clinical work and completion of a phase I focus group study, a new information strategy will be developed. A single centre prospective cluster RCT (n=135 adult critical care patients) will evaluate clinical effectiveness. The primary outcome measure (sense of psychological well being) will be assessed using the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale. Data will be analysed using statistical regression analyses.

### Anticipated benefits

The new information strategy should lead to an improved sense of psychological well being, in particular, it will encourage user participation and self management (to some degree). This should enhance perceptions of control and lead to improved recovery. It also has the potential to reduce the anxiety felt by healthcare staff in the support of critical care patients and their families at the point of discharge to the general ward.

### References

Coulter A, Ellis J (2006) Patient focused interventions; a review of the evidence. London, The Health Foundation.

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NICE (2007) Acutely ill patients in hospital; recognition and response to acute illness in adults in hospital. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. Available online at: [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk). Accessed 21.09.2009.

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