

Journal of Nursing Research Society of India

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GLOBAL RESEARCH NURSES' NETWORK COMPETITION - NURSE FROM KERALA WINS A PLACE AT AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN GLASGOW.

Athira Rani,

Kerala

Nicola McHugh

Global Research Nurses Network University of Oxford

Email: nicola.mchugh@ndm.ox.ac.uk



Nurses are working on clinical research studies across the world, but job titles and role responsibilities vary. The Research Nurse is now recognised in the UK as part of the research team, and research nursing is recognised as a speciality within the nursing profession. In the UK, the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) was established in England in 2006 'to provide the infrastructure that allows high-quality clinical research to take place in the National Health Service'. NIHR, 2014. There are equivalent organisations in the other parts of the UK. The infrastructure includes a comprehensive training and development structure for clinical researchers to provide a recognised career pathway for Clinical Research Nurses in the UK. The role is still relatively new, and in 2014 for the first time, Clinical Research Nurse is one of the categories for which a Nursing Times Nurse of the Year award will be made. Nursing Times, 2014.

We know from our global network that nurses are employed in similar roles as Clinical Research Nurses across the globe. The Global Research Nurses' Network, (GRN) www.globalresearchnurses.org is part of The Global Health Network, (TGHN). www.tghn.org. Its goal is to provide resources and support to nurses who are working in research, predominantly from low and middle income countries, to invite all nurses to join the network and have their role in research recognised. GRN offers online networking, and also holds regional events, where research nurses from a local area meet to share experiences and develop collaborative links. In India during 2013 and 14 Workshops have taken place in

Trivandrum and New Delhi and study days have been held in Tamil Nadu and Bangalore. More information and photographs can be seen on the website.

In 2013, The Global Research Nurses' Network was invited to present a Fringe Event at the Royal College of Nursing International Research Nursing Conference. The annual International Nursing Research Conference is a huge and prestigious 3 day event, and presents information and discussion across a spectrum of research interests for nurses from across the globe. At the GRN Fringe Event, and during attendance at the Conference, it was observed that there were relatively few delegates present from Low and Middle Income Countries. In response to this, GRN approached the Steering Committee to discuss the possibility of running a competition, open to members of GRN who live and work in LMIC, with the winner to be invited to the 2014 Conference with all expenses paid. Discussions took place to explore how the competition could be organised and how the prize could be administered and recognised. The RCN has strict criteria relating to awards, so while the RCN agreed to recognise the prize winner, they could play no part in organising or judging the competition.

The competition challenged research nurses to write an article of a maximum of 1,000 words, to answer the question "With reference to a research study that you have worked on, describe how nurses contribute to clinical research and discuss what support is needed to enable greater involvement for nurses in clinical research." The competition opened on the GRN website in mid-August 2013, with a closing date of 30th October

2013; the question, and the Terms and Conditions of the competition were published on The Global Health Network sites. Publicity was also sent to individual members of the Global Research Nurses' network, to Nurses' organisations and Associations, including the International Council of Nursing Research Society and the Indian Nursing Research Society, and to other nurses' networks such as the Global Alliance for Nursing and Midwifery. The competition was funded by British Airways, who donated a return flight, and from Eli Lilly who gave a generous sum to pay the conference registration fee. Clinfield (<http://clinfield.com/>) invited the winner to the Conference dinner. In addition, Wiley & Co gave two more prizes, of one year subscriptions to 2 online journals. We are very grateful for these donations which made it possible to proceed with the competition.

By the closing date, we had accepted 60 entries from 17 countries. Most entries came from nurses who had not previously been members of the network, Table 2 shows when entrants joined.

Table 1: showing where entries came from

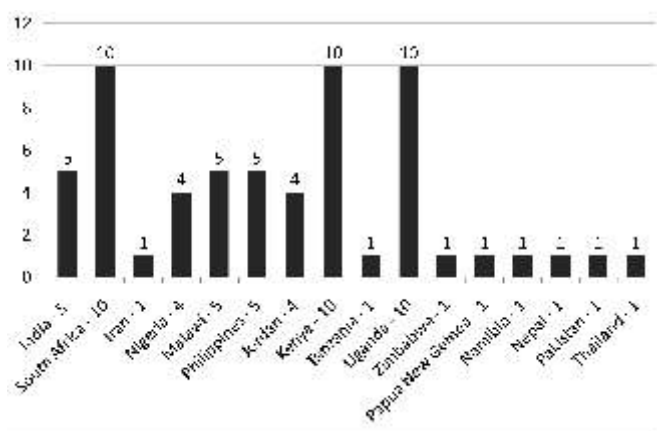
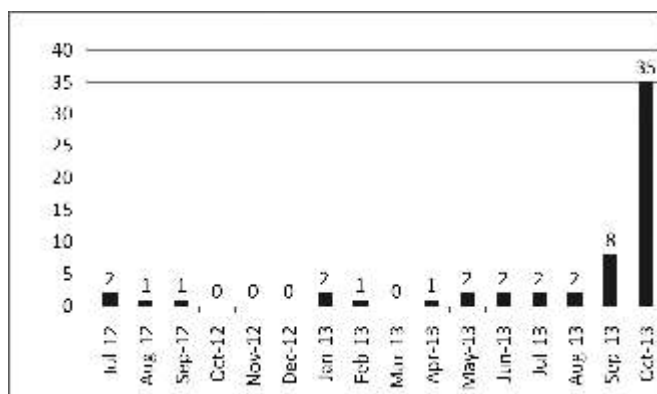


Table 2; showing when entrants joined The Global Health Network



All entries were read by members of the Global Health team, and a short list of 16 was selected for consideration for the prizes. The short listed entries were sent to a panel of 3 independent judges. The judges were Dr Violet Nour from Amman Al-Ahlyyah University, Jordan, Ruth Northway, Professor of Learning Disability Nursing at the University of South Wales and Esther Kivala from Kemri, Kenya. Unfortunately, Esther had to withdraw before judging was done. The judges considered each entry against criteria based on the competition question. The criteria were that the article show:

1. An understanding of the research process
2. A description of the role and responsibilities of the nurse in the research team
3. Clear points about the importance of nursing skills for the research team
4. Identification of and insight into challenges faced by research nurses
5. A well-structured and thoughtful discussion presenting original ideas about how nurses can be more involved in clinical research

Each judge identified entries that they thought were most deserving of a prize. On the 6th December there was a group Skype call, which produced a lively discussion via Skype, to discuss and agree the winning entries.

The winning entries were selected. The winner was Athira Rani from Kerala, who accepted the invitation to attend the Conference in Glasgow in April 2014. Winners of the online journal prizes were Bertha Maseko from Malawi, and Priyanka from Nepal. Congratulations to all three!

We are delighted that the competition has provided the means for a nurse from Kerala to attend the conference. During the event, Athira had the opportunity to present a concurrent session to talk about her research - A randomised controlled trial to compare outcomes between warm and tepid sponging to relieve fever in babies. She also attended keynote sessions, concurrent sessions,

We also noted that while the competition was open,

membership of GRN went up as did the number of visits to the website; we are pleased to welcome all new visitors. Athira has written about her experience on the Global Research Nurses' network; this is part of what she said

The standard of entries received for the competition was very high. The articles submitted provide valuable information about the role of the research nurse, challenges faced by research nurses and suggestions of how difficulties might be resolved. All of the articles are available to read on the website. GRN is very grateful to all who sent in entries.

The main themes to emerge from the articles were:

What nurses need in order to be more involved in research

- Confidence
- Mentoring
- Support academic training and professional support
- Curriculum change
- More autonomy
- Pay and conditions, reduced clinical workload, more nurses
- Resources
- Inclusion in the whole of the research process - inclusion in reporting and disseminating results as well as managing the study day to day
- Networking, sharing experiences
- Reassurance
- Need to recognise the need for research - motivation

Barriers faced by nurses doing research

- Lack of motivation research not seen as relevant
- Lack of research skills
- Lack of recognition of role
- Role conflict
- Lack of time demands of workload

- Gap between clinical and academic spheres within the profession

Skills that nurses have that are used in research

- Communication with participants (patients) and the research team (MDT)
- Expertise in advocacy
- Patient education skills
- Clinical care of study participants, holistic care
- Awareness of needs of participants
- Rapport with participants, gain trust
- Problem solving approach
- Assessment skills
- Documentation skills

Research management skills, understanding research process SOPs, recruitment, retention, ensure compliance with protocols, support and safety of patients, IT skills, interpretation of lab results

“Gives clinical research a human face” Jean Redi Briones

- Philippines.

These themes reflect other analyses of the role of the research nurse. For example, Gordon Hill & Juliet MacArthur (2006) concluded that the role of the Research Nurse is to provide the skills of an advocate, an educator, a care giver and a coordinator of care/ research.

Information provided in the competition entries has extended understanding of the experiences of research nurse, and the challenges and opportunities associated with the role. This informs the development of the Global Research Nurses' network by identifying what content research nurses are looking for, and recognising that nurses value membership of a network to provide peer support and a validation of a new professional identity.

Thank you to the RCN for encouraging this initiative, to British Airways, Eli Lilly, Clinfield and Wiley for giving us the prizes, to all our competition entrants and to our

judges. We are pleased that the competition aroused such interest and response, and provided valuable data from nurses working in research. It also offered an opportunity for a nurse from Kerala to attend the conference in Glasgow. We hope that all nurses working in research will continue to use and provide resources and support on the Global Research Nurses network.

References

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- Nursing Times (2014) Nursing Times awards: <http://www.ntawards.co.uk/categories> (accessed 24/04/2014)
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"The most important thing which I got from the conference is that I got many research ideas, discussion with few members leads some initial threads for collaborative research. And I was able to understand the research priorities of different countries and how they intervene in a research question."