

FROM THE EDITOR - Heather Dawson-Byrne

NURSING MEASURES PROVIDING POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR THE NEWBORN

While midwifery education in Australia is the focus of intense debate both from within and outside the field of midwifery (Byrne P 2000), practitioners and researchers continue endeavouring to develop ways of improving the care for both the mother and newborn. For centuries this has been the focus of midwives and the year 2000 is no different. Confinement may be in hospitals, at home, or in birthing centres, regardless, the midwife puts the health and wellbeing of the child and mother as the prime reason for practice.

In the guest editorial, Professor Rhonda Griffith discusses the effects economic rationalism has had on the funding and practice of nursing, including midwifery practice.

The themed papers in this issue of *The Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing* focus on nursing measures aimed at increasing positive outcomes for the newborn.

Caroline Homer, Gregory Davis, Peter Petocz and Lesley Barclay compared obstetric outcomes, primarily caesarean section rates, of low-risk women presenting in spontaneous labour to the birth centre with those attending the hospital's conventional labour ward. This study showed no significant difference suggesting that, contrary to popular belief, the site of birthing does not effect clinical outcomes.

Along a similar theme, the second paper, authored by Margaret Cooke, Richard Mattick and Elizabeth Campbell, describes the adoption of a 'stop smoking' program in antenatal clinics. The 'stop smoking' program was specifically designed to be implemented by antenatal clinics with the aim of discovering what did, or did not, influence

clinic managers decision to adopt the program. Not unexpectedly, the intensity of program dissemination positively effected the program up-take rates. However, and perhaps more importantly, reasons for not using the program included insufficient time available to run the program, lack of support from fellow colleagues, inability to provide follow-up, staff turnover and poor access and storage of the program materials.

In the original papers section, Marie Gertz and Tracey Bucknall report on research conducted in Australian emergency rooms to investigate triage nurses decision-making and describe their scope of practice. The study revealed a marked variability in education for triage nurses with over half stating that no unit-based specific triage education was provided. These findings provide guidance for education and triage practice.

The fourth paper, 'The role of the psychiatric consultant-liaison nurse in the general hospital' by Julie Sharrock and Brenda Happell, examines the effect this role has on clients now that 'mainstreaming' of psychiatric clients is the norm in Australia.

The final article, by Wendy Day discusses the use of massage for clients with cardiac pain and the positive effect this may have on clients following an acute cardiac event.

REFERENCES

Byrne, P. 2000. The South Australian Nurse Practitioners project: A midwife's perspective on a new initiative. *Collegian*. 7(3):37-39.