

FROM THE EDITOR - Heather Dawson-Byrne

NURTURING NURSING RESEARCH

This issue of the *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing (AJAN)* marks the 19th year of publication. Over this period the journal has undergone substantial refinement to facilitate and complement the changes that have occurred within nursing.

It is to the credit of the Australian Nursing Federation - the journal publishers - that they have nurtured and supported so many nurse researchers, clinicians and academics during this 19-year period. There are many nurses within the country, myself included, who can say that they first published in *AJAN*.

Issue 19.1 introduces a new look cover and a new section titled *Research Roundup*. In addition to a brief synopsis of current research, this section will publish brief abstracts on theses completed by Masters or PhD students. *AJAN* is calling for the submission of suitable abstracts of newly completed theses that have importance for nursing for inclusion in future editions.

Within this issue Joan Harvey, Wendy Moyle and Debra Creedy describe the lived experience of women who had experienced early miscarriage. Their study demonstrated three major themes, the loss of the baby, the loss of the role of motherhood and the loss of hopes and dreams the women possessed for their baby. The authors recommend a number of changes to practice including the need for increased sensitivity toward women following early miscarriage.

The second paper, by Kim Usher, Joanne Tollefson and Dawn Francis, outlines a research project aimed at changing the levels of reflection of pre-registered nursing students in an Australian tertiary institution. These authors undertook a descriptive exploratory study using van Manen's (1977) levels in a structured way to facilitate the students' understanding of their level of reflection.

The findings of the study indicate that students' self-evaluation and identification of their levels can lead to change in the levels of critical reflective writing achieved by undergraduate students.

Alan Pearson and Mary FitzGerald describe a study commissioned by the Australian Nursing Council which sought to develop an approach to the maintenance of continuing competence in nursing that was broadly acceptable to all States and Territories of Australia. The results suggest that from a sample of 4,133 from all States and Territories, the most favoured approach was a signed declaration of competence for all nurses seeking annual relicensing, and the conduct of random competency audits by nursing regulatory authorities.

The fourth article, by Susan Helmrich, Patsy Yates, Robyn Nash, Alan Hobman, Valda Poulton and Lyn Berggren, describes a study that investigated nurses' beliefs and attitudes toward the use of non-pharmacological therapies as adjunct to current pain management strategies. Results suggested that nurses believe non-pharmacological therapies help in a hospital setting however there are significant barriers hindering their use.

In the final article Liz Hanna describes the results of a cross case exploratory study that used semi-structured, in-depth interviews to gather information about issues in rural nursing. Findings revealed that the nurses believed there were widespread problems because they felt that Government rural health strategies continued to overlook nurses' concerns regarding the nurse-practice environment. Her research indicated that the resignation of rural nurses and concomitant diminished health care delivery was a result of the frustration caused by this.