

## **Enhancing Gerontological Content into Nurse Practitioner Education**

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As the time frame for the complete implementation of the Consensus Model for APRN regulation (APRN Consensus Work Group and NCSBN APRN Advisory Group, 2008) draws near, nurse practitioner (NP) programs in the United States are moving towards compliance with the mandate to design new adult-gerontology (A-G) primary care and A-G acute care NP programs. The new A-G primary care NP programs will replace the stand alone adult, gerontological, and current dual adult and gerontological nurse practitioner programs. Adult acute care nurse practitioner programs will need to transition their curricula to meet the needs of the newly defined adult-gerontology population. The model also stipulates that all APRN programs whose graduates will manage the care of older adults are required to include gerontological content and clinical experiences in the curriculum of these non- A-G practitioners (APRN Consensus Work Group and NCSBN APRN Advisory Group, 2008).

Complicating the initiative to deliver more gero-enriched curriculum, is the shortage of nursing faculty with expertise in geriatrics (Auerhahn, Mezey, Stanley, & Wilson, 2012). Bragg and Hansen (2010) note that “only 43% of nursing schools reported having full-time faculty for geriatrics and only 32 percent reported having part-time faculty with expertise in geriatrics obtained at the master’s level (page, 12).” This number however does not necessarily reflect faculty preparation as NPs. While the number of NPs in the future equipped with gerontological knowledge and exposure to older adults across clinical settings is predicted to increase, Van Leuven (2012) cautions that it remains unclear whether the impact of the consensus model “will increase geriatric knowledge or dilute it further. (p. 557).

Having identified the need for educational resources and guidance to enable faculty in NP programs to increase gerontological content in their programs (Auerhahn, Mezey, Stanley, & Wilson, 2012), the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) and Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing, with funding from the John A Hartford Foundation, engaged in a collaborative initiative to meet these needs. A variety of web-based resources, including a series of archived webinars, interactive evolving case studies, a slide library, sample curricula and worksheets that can be used to match the A-G APRN competencies to curriculum, were developed. The culmination of this project resulted in the development of The APRN Faculty Resource Center which can be accessed at <http://consultgerirn.org/aprncenter>

In addition, APRN faculty challenged to find relevant clinical gerontological educational resources to embed in the curriculum are encouraged to familiarized themselves with the abundance of Web-based repositories for gerontological and geriatric E-learning materials currently available (Auerhahn & Kennedy-Malone, 2010). The Portal of Geriatric On-line Education (POGOe) available at [www.pogoe.org](http://www.pogoe.org) contains a wealth of up-to date geriatric educational materials for use by faculty for free or a small nominal fee. Faculty will need to register for the site and are highly encouraged to sign-up for the monthly electronic newsletter. APRN faculty who develop gerontology specific educational materials are encouraged to submit their products to POGOe for inclusion in this digital clearinghouse.

Advanced practice nursing organizations are also acknowledging the demand for providing cutting edge gerontological content support for faculty. This year for the first time at the annual meeting of the Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association (GAPNA) in September, 2013, an interactive poster session was organized by the GAPNA Education Committee. Topics of posters ranged from an interdisciplinary approach to providing geriatric educational opportunities in the community, integration of gero-pharmacology and nutritional assessment in NP programs, to the delivery of successful distance and hybrid adult-gerontology NP programs. Each poster presenter had the opportunity to talk directly to a circulating group of participants interested in educational topics for approximately 10 minutes. The session was well-received; participants left with new ideas on how to be creative in enhancing gerontological content using a variety of gerontology specific web based resources and ways to link content to national competencies. Based on this years' experience, this type of interactive, informative poster session targeted specifically to nurse educators teaching gerontological content to APRNS, will become a tradition at future GAPNA conferences. The posters will be available later this fall for perusal on the GAPNA website at [www.gapna.org](http://www.gapna.org).

Finally, in this issue of the *International Journal of Nurse Practitioner Educators*, four articles written by faculty members from GAPNA are presented here as strategies for use by NP faculty in the enhancement of gerontological content in their programs. Harrison, Baker and Prothe describe the development of the Adult-Gerontology APRN Preceptor Toolkit designed by members of the GAPNA Education Committee as a resource that can be provided to preceptors of NP students. Available in this toolkit are links to on-line gerontological assessment tools, valuable geriatric resource websites as well as self-assessments for NPs preparing for the role of preceptor for students who will be managing the care of older adults in the clinical setting. This toolkit which can be accessed at <https://www.gapna.org/resources/adultgero-aprn-preceptor-toolkit> will be

periodically updated by the GAPNA Education Committee with up-to date resources and links to important gerontological clinical references. Cacchione presents strategies for faculty to incorporate gero-psychiatric content into NP programs. She provides brief descriptions of these educational resources from nationally recognized professional organizations available for faculty to embed in the curriculum. A timely article by Wollman addresses ways for faculty to consider addressing transitional care models in the NP curriculum. Duffy identifies geriatric and gerontology specific applications for both faculty and students to access in the clinical arena. She recommends links to both free and nominal cost applications that provide current up-to date references for faculty and students.

The shortage of gerontological advanced practice nurses is not unique to the United States. As the world's population continues to age at a rapid pace, NP faculty are charged with ensuring that geriatric education be approached from a "developmental perspective as the health care needs of a 65 year old differs greatly from those of a 100 year old." (Van Leuven, 2012, p. 557). The editors of the *International Journal of Nurse Practitioner Educators* welcome future articles from our colleagues' worldwide demonstrating commitment to enhancing gerontological content in advanced practice nursing curriculum.

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