

GUEST EDITORIAL

Guest Editorial: Karen Holland MSc RNT RN,
Editor: Nurse Education in Practice (An Elsevier Publication: <http://www.elsevier.com/nepr>),
Subject Chair: Nursing/ Health Professions, SCOPUS Content Selection Advisory Board (CSAB),
Elsevier (<http://www.info.sciverse.com/scopus/csab>)

Developing Scholarship: the Future for the Nursing Profession in Lithuania

Nursing Education, Research, & Practice (NERP) is a new journal established by the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. Its aims and scope 'is to advance knowledge and disseminate research findings that are directly relevant to the practice of nursing and midwifery' and it 'publishes scholarly papers on all aspects of care in the nursing and midwifery professions, including theory, clinical practice and education, history, policy and administration, ethics and new technologies'.

This first Issue of the journal is also the first step on a journey of discovery, by the Editorial Committee, the University, present and future authors and most importantly practitioners, educators and managers who will be reading the journal and utilising its content to enhance their practice and ultimately the care they deliver to the patients or the education they deliver to their students. I am privileged to have been invited to write this first Guest Editorial by Editor and a driving force in the development and implementation of this new journal, Dr. Olga Riklikienė.

You will note that the title for this Editorial is focused on the topic of developing scholarship in relation to the future for the nursing profession in Lithuania. I shall contend that the focus of this new journal encapsulates the concept of scholarship in its aim and scope to promote the development of nursing and midwifery practice in Lithuania. Scholarship of course will mean different things to all of us according to our own professional practice in either academia or clinical environment. Rolfe [1] for example highlights what he considers could be a 'traditional understanding of scholarship' whereby it:

'might include the application of various methods of inquiry approved as 'scholarly' by the academic community, perhaps including critical commentary, philosophical speculation and debate, rhetorical and polemical argument, as well as primary and secondary empirical research. The term 'scholarship' would also, of course, describe the resultant body of work, which would have been available for scrutiny and critique and approved by academic peers'.

He draws here upon the seminal work of Boyer [2], who considered what the role of the 'professoriate' in academia should be, which according to

Starck [3] offered a challenging proposal at the time where he 'urged educators to enlarge the restricted view of scholarship as only research and publication, pointing out that in earlier times scholarship referred to a variety of creative work carried on in a variety of places, and its integrity was measured by the ability to think, communicate and learn'.

Boyer [2] had proposed that there should be four dimensions of scholarship, namely: discovery, integration, application and teaching.

Briefly the scholarship of discovery is linked to that of research and the discovery of new knowledge; scholarship of integration relates to the creation of synergies across disciplines where the knowledge from one discipline can either add to the body of knowledge in another or be integrated with it; scholarship of application resonates with the development of an evidence-based practice culture in nursing, whereby there is a focus on using research findings and developments in practice, and also a focus on the building and adding to the knowledge that is known in a discipline but that also benefits people or communities; the scholarship of teaching is where one could argue is where all the other three types are brought together in the expert knowledge of teaching and education of the teacher who then ensures its transition and shared experience with the student.

In my journey of discovery of Lithuanian nursing for the purpose of this editorial, I found examples of where these dimensions of scholarship have already emerged in scholarly publications, either by Lithuanian scholars themselves or by others who have undertaken to either research or comment on Lithuanian nursing profession issues. In the Lithuanian nursing and health profession community, Dr. Olga Riklikienė is one such scholar, with the publication of her evidence-based textbook on mentorship for nurses, which has now been recommended by the Lithuanian Scientific Board and can be used as a core text for nursing education programmes in Lithuanian Universities and Colleges; Prof. Jūratė Macijauskienė, Dean of the Faculty of Nursing at Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, is another scholar, who led the Lithuanian element of

the partnership in ENABLE, an EU funded project in 2004 (see <http://www.enableproject.org/>) looking at independent living and dementia, publishing the Lithuanian report and co-authored a number of articles; Jolanta Toliušienė and Eimantas Peičius [4] from Vilnius and Kaunas published an article that considered the changes in nursing ethics education in Lithuania, focusing on the various issues for an inter-disciplinary approach to ethical decision making in the curriculum and practice and lastly an inter-disciplinary paper published in the *Journal of Advanced Nursing* by Vilija Malinauskienė et al. [5] focused on health and well-being issues and hospital nurses.

Examples of other authors who have published papers related to scholarship and the development of nursing and nursing education in Lithuania are Karosas [6], Kapborg [7] and Trus et al [8].

It has become apparent in my journey to understanding the position of Lithuanian nursing, midwifery and other health professions that a journal such as *Nursing Education, Research, & Practice* (NERP) will be an invaluable addition to the de-

velopment of all aspects of Boyer's dimensions of scholarship, both for the experienced authors but most importantly for the future generation of nursing scholars in the Universities and in clinical practice. I am very privileged to be a part of this exciting and challenging development, brought about by a team of committed individuals who have excellent support at the highest levels of the Lithuanian academic community.

I would like to take this opportunity as a member of the International Editorial Advisory and Review Board to offer my congratulations to everyone who has been involved in engaging in and managing the launch of this new journal. From personal experience of undertaking, an identical initiative I can assure readers and the Editors that it is a challenging time, but that it is one of the most rewarding and enjoyable journeys to be experienced.

I wish you all every success for the future and to all Lithuanian nurses, midwives and health care professionals who will now have an opportunity to share their scholarship endeavours with the wider international health care community.

Karen Holland, MSc BSc (Hon) RN RNT (PhD student)
Research Fellow (Evidence-Based Nursing Education Innovation)
School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Work
University of Salford
UK

Editor

Nurse Education in Practice (Elsevier)
Contact address: k.holland@salford.ac.uk

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Note

On a personal note, I have recently visited this wonderful country, experienced the wonderful hospitality of Lithuanian people in all areas of community life. I am also returning again, as a member of a large EU funded project team, (EmpNURS see <http://www.empnurs.eu/%20>) at the end of September and I am looking forward to meeting up again with colleagues in the Faculty of Nursing and the project team. It is a privilege to be part of both the project and the new journal development.