

GUEST EDITORIAL

New Strategies in Nursing Education in Fragility Fracture Management

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It is recognized that nurses play a pivotal role in the care and management of patients with and at risk of fragility fracture. This role is integrated within the multidisciplinary team approach to planning and managing care through pathways designed to monitor patients at risk for osteoporosis and fragility fractures and includes patient education and health promotion, important determinants of health and wellbeing. Following fragility fractures, advanced nursing skills are integrated into structured care pathways aimed at the prevention of complications and maximisation of function through organisational models that promote multi-professional co-ordination and continuity of care.

Despite the need to bring together a complex set of advanced skills in surgical, orthopaedic and orthogeriatric care, there has not, to date, been a formal educational programme that supports the development and maintenance of such skills and associated knowledge. With this in mind, the Italian Intersociety Commission on Osteoporosis initiated a project entitled «New strategies in nursing education in fragility fracture management», with the sponsorship of FFN, ESCEO, EUGMS, IAGG and IOF and an unrestricted educational grant from UCB. The project was inaugurated with a two-day workshop, in May 2017, involving intense discussion among nurses experienced in fragility fracture management and care, with representatives from 24 different European countries. The event took place on the island of San Servolo, home of the Venice International University (VIU) and European Interdisciplinary Council on Aging (EICA).

The initial goal of the project was to generate a core curriculum for nurses involved in caring for patients at risk of or with fragility fractures to be distributed using peer education methods. The workshop included in-depth discussion of twelve issues related to fragility fractures:

- Osteoporosis and the nature of fragility fracture
- Frailty, sarcopenia and falls

- Fracture and fall prevention and models of fracture liaison
- Comprehensive assessment of the older person
- Orthogeriatric nursing in the perioperative inpatient setting
- Patient motivation: rehabilitation and post hospital care following fragility fracture
- Wound management and pressure ulcer prevention and management
- Mobility, remobilisation exercise and prevention of stasis
- Nutrition, fluid balance and elimination following fragility fracture
- The orthogeriatric nursing and care philosophy across different care settings
- Carer/family partnership, palliative care and end of life
- Nursing the patient with altered cognitive function (including delirium, dementia and depression) following fragility fracture

Nurses with expertise in various aspects of fragility fracture care and prevention participated in the workshop, led by a team of facilitators and supported by representatives from each of the organisations sponsoring the project. This group (Fig. 1) represented many European countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and the



Fig. 1. Members of the Fragility Fracture Nursing Education Project at the Venice International University, San Servolo, Italy, May 2017

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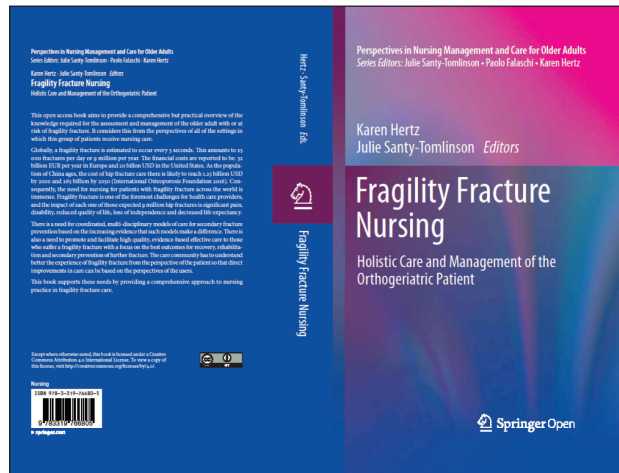


Fig. 2. Fragility fracture nursing book

United Kingdom. One significant benefit of the meeting was bringing many enthusiastic experts in the field of fragility fracture nursing together for the first time. During the workshop, lasting collaboration and friendships were initiated that have resulted in a new network with immense potential to facilitate developments in nursing patients with fragility fractures across Europe.

Since the workshop, a book being published by Springer in June 2018, “Fragility Fracture Nursing” (Fig. 2), has been co-authored by many of the workshop participants. The book contains 12 chapters that reflect the topics discussed during the workshop. Several courses, based on the book and associated education programme, have already taken place in Bologna (Italy), Vilnius (Lithuania) and Athens (Greece). Many others are planned across Europe for the coming year.