

Research update

The Smith & Nephew Foundation is a charitable trust run independently of Smith & Nephew plc by an eminent group of Trustees, whose objective has always been to improve clinical practice.

The Foundation is actively involved in:

- ▶▶ Developing and enhancing nursing research capacity in tissue damage, tissue viability and skin integrity
- ▶▶ Influencing and developing evidence-based nursing practice
- ▶▶ Improving the practice of nursing professionals
- ▶▶ Improving the quality of life of patients and their families.

A key component of nursing focuses on maintaining skin integrity by providing quality nursing interventions which enhance hygiene, skin care, and tissue viability. The importance of developing a rigorous evidence base to inform these interventions cannot be underestimated. This need will escalate as the average age of the population increases and the incidence of chronic ill health grows. More energy will have to be directed towards the prevention of tissue breakdown and promotion of healing.

The Foundation aims to enrich the research community in healthcare. More importantly, by informing the evidence base for nursing interventions, it will enrich the lives of thousands of patients.

Some of the most outstanding wound care research has been led by nurse researchers, with their work ranging from epidemiology studies and international clinical trials evaluating treatment methods, to qualitative research that has illuminated the patient experience of living with a wound.

Developing research expertise

The Smith & Nephew Foundation is playing a major role in developing the research expertise within this field. We are using high profile lectures and our awards programme to meet our aims and have worked alongside the Department of Health National

Coordinating Centre for Research Capacity with a series of workshops.

The Smith & Nephew Foundation awards are focused on funding high calibre nurse researchers who will be role models and potential mentors for the profession. The Doctoral Nursing Research Studentships (£90k over 3 years) support nurse researchers with outstanding potential who are at the beginning of their research careers, while the Post-doctoral Nursing Research Fellowships (£120k over 3 years) seek to enhance nursing post-doctoral research capacity and support outstanding career nurse researchers. The awards are advertised in March each year and there is no doubt that the winners will join an elite group of nurses who have been given funding to enable them to further their professional training and education.

The awards are also designed to assist the development of nursing research units dedicated to understanding tissue viability and to portfolios of research that progressively develop an understanding of wound care and how we best improve the practice of professionals and the lives of countless patients and their families.

The Foundation at Wounds UK 2005

The Smith & Nephew Foundation will be joining Wounds UK at the Harrogate Conference in November to further its aims in developing the research capacity and capability of nurses in the fields of tissue damage, tissue vulnerability, and skin health.

The link between research and the clinician

Professor Christine Moffatt will start the session by reviewing the link between research and clinicians and the clinical challenges faced by the profession. Christine is Professor of Nursing at Thames Valley University, London and a Director of the Centre for Research and Implementation of Clinical Practice. She is also Nurse Consultant at St

George's Hospital and is responsible for the clinical leg ulcer service and research programme. Professor Moffatt also launched the Leg Ulcer Forum of which she is President.

Development of collaborative research

In the second part of the session, Professor Dame Jill Macleod Clark will examine the development of collaborative research in nursing and the allied professions.

Jill is Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Health & Life Sciences and Head of the School of Nursing & Midwifery, University of Southampton. She is spearheading the development of inter-professional learning within the Faculty and also contributing to a number of national initiatives and working parties related to workforce modernisation, including the National Workforce Development Board. She is Chair of the Council of Deans for Nursing and Health, has an extensive research track record, and has published widely in the field of health promotion.

The Foundation's progress

Dame Pauline Fielding held Nursing Director posts for NHS Trusts in the North West and in London, before retiring from full-time NHS work in 2002. She is a member of the Nursing Panel for the Research Assessment Exercise, and a Clinical Governance Reviewer and Professional Advisor for the Healthcare Commission. She became an honorary Professor of Nursing at the University of Central Lancashire in 2000 and received the award of Doctor of the University from Southampton in 2003. She will update the conference and will provide examples of how the Foundation is progressing with the development of its research network.

There will be an opportunity to meet the trustees for help and advice for those seeking a career in this field of nursing research on the final morning of the conference. **WUK**