Celebrating 10 Years of Geriatric Nursing through the BAGNC Program

What does a foundation or government funding group look for over time in programs that receive funding? How do we define success? In the case of the John A. Hartford Foundation (JAHF) program Building Academic Geriatric Nursing Capacity (BAGNC), the measures of success were developed and evaluated by two different groups over 10 years. The Measurement Group conducted the evaluation between 2001 and 2006 (Huba, Northington, & Melchior, 2010) and the Baruch College Hartford Geriatric Nursing Initiative Evaluation Team between 2007 and 2011 (Sofaer & Firminger, 2011). These evaluations revealed superb outcomes in publications, research funding, faculty appointments, leadership activities, and the like.

As one of the designers of the Hartford program and its first Director, I look on the scholars and management of the program as a continuing example of excellence in achieving objectives of the JAHF and of everyone involved in it—from its current director, the American Academy of Nursing team, and the splendid JAHF officers who guided and supported us. Our scholars, carefully selected and mentored, are a source of pride to all of us. At this time they have organized a very active alumni association that envisions an evidence-based, multidisciplinary, integrated health care system where all older adults are cared for by providers skilled in gerontological health. They have made plans for future collaborations in policy, dissemination, and peer mentorship.

Now we have an example of leadership in action in ways that could only be dreamed of 11 years ago at the start of the program. This special issue of Research in Gerontological Nursing, celebrating "10 Years of Geriatric Nursing through the BAGNC Program," demonstrates the impact scholars and fellows are making through leading-edge research. The articles cover a wide spectrum of unexplored or partially explored areas, including family perspectives on end-of-life care for rural older adults dying with a chronic disease; predictors and correlates of geriatric traumatic brain injury, particularly looking at pre-existing conditions; the exceedingly important area of medication reconciliation as older adults are discharged home from hospital; and measuring symptoms of depression, using both the Patient Health Questionnaire-9-Observation Version and Cornell Scale for Depression in Dementia. Every one of these reports adds to the literature and furthers our understanding in ways that will improve care for older adults.

The BAGNC alumni featured in this special issue represent cohorts throughout the first decade of the program and are working in schools across the country. The internal review committee carefully selected papers that captured the depth and breadth of scholarly work alumni are undertaking to make an impact in gerontological nursing. Several of the authors of these articles have been recognized by appointments to prestigious groups studying related problems and all are already teaching and mentoring future nurses in this area.

The 2008 Institute of Medicine report Retooling for an Aging America: Building the Health Care Workforce emphasized the need for nurses prepared to care for our growing aging population. What these geriatric nursing leaders are demonstrating in this special issue attests to the vigor of the nursing community to respond to this need: to define areas of vital research, to teach and inspire neophyte nurses, and to disseminate their work through publication.

I could not be prouder.
REFERENCES


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