

Home-based nursing care prolongs lives



From left are Tony Keeghan (Alphapharm), Monica Higgins (St Andrew's), Simon Stewart (The Baker Research Institute), Katherine Jackman (Mater Hospital) and Daniel Hayes (Alphapharm).

Nurse-led home-based care for patients with heart failure prolongs their lives by an average of 1.2 years, a heart researcher told a Brisbane seminar of the Australasian Cardiovascular Nurses College.

Professor Simon Stewart from the Baker Heart Research Institute in Melbourne said this was compared to technological devices that would prolong a similarly affected person's life by between only three to six months.

St Andrew's War Memorial nurse educator Monica Higgins, who attended the seminar, said she agreed that the key to supporting heart failure patients was home visits by nurses.

"They provide assistance with monitoring of medications, adherence to diet and fluid restrictions. They also liaise with family, medical and allied health services."

Higgins said seminar participants discussed the controversial issue that while home-based care for heart failure patients was well established in the public health system, there was no home care for patients with private health insurance in Queensland or wider Australia.

"The 'Young @ Heart' study – is planned for the future to investigate home based care for patients with chronic heart disease who are privately insured.

"An earlier study was also discussed which highlighted that one in four heart failure patients at

home were clinically unstable following a hospital admission. Furthermore, one in two patients were not adherent to prescribed therapy and eight in 10 patients had poor knowledge of their condition.

"Clearly the role for nurses in the community is vital for the support of heart failure patients and those with other forms of chronic heart disease. The role of the Australasian Cardiovascular Nurses College is to help educate nurses about cardiovascular care," Higgins said. ■

Partnership in postgraduate renal education

A corporate partnership between Deakin University and biotechnical company Amgen Australia has developed a suite of renal nursing modules.

A Deakin spokesperson said challenges facing tertiary and professional education in the workplace, including the impact of globalisation and the continuing development of new technologies, have created a need to rethink and challenge traditional forms of professional development and education.

"The most recent ABS working arrangements survey indicated that in 2003, 67 per cent of nurses worked shift work in the previous four weeks compared to 16 per cent for the general population, and in 2001, 49 per cent of nurses worked part-time, compared with 37 per cent in 1986.

"Of 412 education preference surveys collected at the 2007 Renal Society Australasia Conference, 122 respondents stated that modular style distance learning was the preferred method of

First direct-entry in NSW gr

The first students to undertake a bachelor of nursing degree in NSW have graduated from the University of Technology, Sydney.

The seventeen graduates are from 13 different universities in the state's first direct-entry midwifery program. The course made it possible to study for a degree in maternity care without first doing a nursing degree.

"These graduates have achieved great things as pioneers in midwifery in NSW," said Jodie Gray, UTS midwifery studies at UTS.

"The bachelor of midwifery was developed to address the dire shortage of midwives and the limited choices available to pregnant women.

"After completing their studies at UTS, 16 of the graduates had already secured positions as registered midwives.

"The graduation of these students marks the end of 10 years of hard work and passion on the part of UTS midwifery academics and other midwifery professionals.

"Before establishing the degree UTS worked closely with the midwifery profession and consumer groups to address the need for this course, and then worked with the Midwifery Association to lobby for legislative change.

The program allows graduates to choose to work independently or as a member of a team in a range of hospital maternity units. Supervised placements begin in the first semester with students continuing to support mothers-to-be throughout their pregnancy and postnatal care.

"Our first graduates are working in a variety of settings including hospitals and community based settings," Gray said.

UTS also continues to provide the opportunity for nurses to become registered midwives.

seeking renal postgraduate education," UTS academics at Deakin University's Faculty of Health, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences have been supported by expert current practitioners.

Case study based assessments allow students to build on their previous clinical knowledge and experience with their new learning. Other module features include flexibility and a scholarship program.

"These key factors ensure that nurses have access to postgraduate renal education that is relevant and tailored to meet the life of busy nurses. The development modules can also bridge the gap between work experience and scheduling difficulties that nurses working in the community face," according to Deakin.

The first intake of students will soon commence in the first semester of online study. ■

For more information see www.hbs.deakin.edu.au

Your education – advancing your career

The College of Nursing delivers a comprehensive range of accredited Graduate Certificate courses

The College of Nursing's Continuing Development Program (CDP) is designed for busy nurses