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The Current Status of Family Nursing Education and Research in Asian Countries and Promotion of International Exchanges

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I. Introduction

The Japanese Association for Research in Family Nursing (JARFN) has, from its inception, engaged in activities with the view of supporting international exchanges, such as through participation at seminars outside Japan, at international symposiums, and so on. Presently 15 years into its existence, it seeks to promote international exchange activities, and the members of its Committee for International Exchanges plan to further exchanges with instructors, researchers, and practitioners of family nursing, particularly in Asia. In so doing, it aims to clarify the current status of family nursing education, research and practice in Asia. With the objective of gaining a foothold on the development of a network for exchange of information and communications related to education, research and practice of family nursing in Asia, it hereby reports on the results of a questionnaire survey.

II. Methods

1. Subjects of Study

The subject institutions consisted of 35 universities, junior colleges and specialty training schools, including nine in the Kingdom of Thailand, 49

in the Republic of Korea, one in the Republic of Singapore, nine in Malaysia, two in Republic of China (Taiwan), three in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 83 in the Republic of the Philippines, 16 in the Republic of Indonesia and 153 in the People's Republic of China. The subjects of the survey were nursing school instructors in faculties of nursing or related departments affiliated with the above. In cases where no individual applied, the subjects were personnel involved in nursing education in other fields or personnel concerned with the overall activities of the nursing faculty.

2. Survey Items

The three members of the Committee for International Exchanges considered the items to be surveyed, and, in addition to the basic attributes of the subjects, organized five key items as follows: a) family nursing; b) family nursing education; c) practical teaching concerning family nursing; d) surveys and research concerning family nursing; and e) international exchanges on family nursing. After a sample questionnaire sheet was produced, pre-testing was conducted on six individuals, a reevaluation was made based on the results and the contents were finalized.

3. Survey Method

In March 2008, a set consisting of the survey

instructions, questionnaire sheet and a leaflet introducing the Japanese Association for Research in Family Nursing was sent to the subject institutions. Responses to the questionnaire were received via regular mail, by facsimile and by input into a Web site set up exclusively for that purpose. Each communication received was treated as an agreement to participate in the survey.

III. Results

As of 5 September, 2008, 15 responses had been received. Broken down by country or area of origin, these included Thailand (2), Korea (2), Taiwan (1), Philippines(5), Indonesia (2), and China (3). The affiliated institutions of the respondents consisted of four undergraduate schools, three schools with masters programs, five schools with doctoral programs and two others.

1. Family Nursing

Subjects who responded they “know of” and “have interest in” family nursing numbered 13

each.

2. Family Nursing Education

With regard to the existence of independent subjects in family nursing, respondents from three undergraduate and five graduate institutions replied in the positive (Table 1). Respondents whose institutions offer independent classes or fields in family nursing numbered two at undergraduate and three at graduate level (Table 2).

3. Practical Teaching Concerning Family Nursing

In response to the question “Does your institution foster specialist practitioners of family nursing?” three responded yes and 12 responded no. To the question, “Do you practice family nursing?” eight responded that they did and seven that they did not.

4. Studies and Research Concerning Family Nursing

In response to the question, “Are you involved in research activities related to family nursing?” eight responded yes and six responded no and one responded previously (Table 3). Fourteen respondents replied they do not belong to any family nursing association as opposed to only one respondent

Table 1. “Is family nursing taught as an independent subject at your institution?”

	Undergraduate	Graduate
Independent subject	3	5
Part of another subject	11	8
Not taught	1	2
N=15		

Table 2. “Which of the following applies to the form (class, fields, etc.) in which family nursing is offered at your institution?”

	Undergraduate	Graduate
Independent subject area	2	3
In conjunction with another subject area	10	3
Not provided	3	9
N=15		

Table 3. “Are you involved in research activities related to family nursing?”

	No. of respondents
Yes	8
No	6
Previously	1
N=15	

who did.

5. International Exchanges on Family Nursing

In response to the question "Do you know of the International Family Nursing Conference?" six replied "yes" and nine replied "no." Three (two from Thailand, one from Korea) replied they had participated in the International Family Nursing Conference. To the question as to whether or not they themselves had participated in studies or exchanges with family nursing researchers outside their own country, one positive and 14 negative responses were received.

To the question concerning approving or disapproving the plan to establish an Asian network of family nursing researchers, 13 approved and two disapproved. To the question regarding wish to be included in a mailing list, etc. for the setting up of a network for exchanges of information between family nursing researchers in Asia, 21 wished to be included (with multiple names given on one of the responses). In addition, a non-member requested to join the Japanese Association for Research in Family Nursing.

IV. Summary

As of this writing, the response rate to the questionnaire has been low, and suggesting the possibility that family nursing studies have still not penetrated into Asian countries. However, the authors were able to receive responses from all countries and regions with the exception of Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong, and it is hoped that the data received, while limited, may

be useful in future international exchange activities.

Concerning education in family nursing, the percentage of its being treated as an independent subject at the graduate school level is more numerous than at the undergraduate level. Furthermore, the number of institutions with graduate schools offering independent classes or fields related to family nursing has become more numerous, which leads us to believe it is possible that family nursing education will be conducted as a highly specialized subject or area. In order to raise awareness of family nursing in Asian countries, we suppose the adoption of family nursing into the nurse educational curricula at an earlier stage will be desirable.

Moreover, many were in agreement that exchanges of information and the setting up of a network for such exchanges would be desirable, it will be necessary to plan means of exchanges between family nursing specialists in Asia through such means as creating mailing lists, holding of symposiums and issuing of publications, etc. Along with the setting up a network for such exchanges, the Committee for International Exchanges, Japanese Association for Research in Family Nursing, through these networks for exchange, invites submissions of papers from outside Japan for its journal and calls for participation at its symposiums, with the aim of fostering family nursing activities in Asia.