

Nurses at forefront of genomics in healthcare

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On April 14, 2003 a map of the human genome was completed, ushering in a new era of genetics in medicine with applications that include genetic testing; newborn screening; susceptibility to diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, or psychiatric conditions; screening, diagnosis and monitoring of disease; and treatment planning. A special Genomics Issue, including an evidence review by researchers from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), published by Wiley in the *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* on behalf of the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International, addresses these genetic applications that are essential to advancing nursing knowledge and patient care.

"With nurses at the forefront of clinical care, their understanding of genomics and genetic applications is important to enhancing healthcare and improving patient outcomes," said Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, Susan Gennaro RN, DSN, FAAN, Dean and Professor at the William F. Connell School of Nursing at Boston College in Chestnut Hill, Mass. "Our editorial objective is to publish articles that are most useful to our nursing readership and genetics and genomics studies are some of the most widely read articles in the journal. I am pleased to have NIH authors contribute to the Genomics Issue which will assist nurses on the frontlines of patient care."

In response, this Genomics Issue highlights evidence that bridges genetics and nursing in order to educate nurses around the world who play an important role in improving patient care. For example, Dr. Deborah MacDonald, formerly with the Division of Clinical Cancer Genetics at the City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center in Duarte, Calif and now with the NIH in Bethesda, Md., details how nurses can impact cancer patient care with awareness of the underlying genomic factors involved in the development of malignancies.

Dr. MacDonald confirms, "Genomics, which encompasses genetics, is rapidly advancing and changing the scope of cancer care. It is important for nurses to understand how genomics contributes to cancer risk assessment, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and long-term management, so that they may educate cancer patients and their families." The authors suggest that when nurses advocate use of evidence-based genomic guidelines they help to reduce cancer risk and improve health, quality of life and safety of patients in their care.

"The purpose of this Genomics Issue is to provide evidence reviews about the genomics of common healthcare conditions relevant to nursing practice," explains editorial author Kathleen A. Calzone, PhD, RN, APNG, FAAN with the NIH. "Eleven articles focus on current and emerging technology including genome sequencing, evidence of genomic variation and applications for diseases such as [cancer](#), metabolic syndrome and heart disease; and ethical, legal, social and research issues with application of genomics in health care, facilitating the effective use of genomic information to promote and protect the public's health."

"We are excited to be able to offer this Genomics Issue highlighting the relevancy of genomics to healthcare and nursing practice in response to an expressed interest by Nursing Deans for an updated clinical genomics resource," added Dr. Jean Jenkins with the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI), NIH. "Such knowledge is essential to assuring the nursing expertise needed not only for today, but also for the future."

Provided by Wiley

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