

**REPORT OF THE 7<sup>TH</sup> ICCHNR CONFERENCE HELD IN JOHANNESBURG SOUTH AFRICA FROM 20<sup>TH</sup> – 22<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017.**

**BY**

**Mrs Obasohan Dorcas Nike,**

**Chief Nursing Officer, Federal Medical Centre,/Comprehensive Health Centre  
Zungeru, Niger state, Nigeria**

**Introduction**

I got an email on the 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2017, conferring on me the approval of grant by International Collaboration for Community Health Nursing Research (ICCHNR), UK via Mary McClymont Fund to attend ICCHNR 2017 in Johannesburg, South Africa; it was like a dream of the night, but real. This year's conference has its focus "Community Nursing: Action for Change" was co-hosted with University of South Africa at the Montecasino Resort, Johannesburg, South Africa September 20<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> , 2017.

Indeed, my joy knew no bound as this was going to be the first time I will be attending an international conference and to present a paper. It was also going to be an opportunity to meet with colleagues, tutors and great minds I have read about in the field of community health nursing from different part of the world, such as Professors Sally, Ros and Patricia to mention, but a few.

Furthermore, I was going to look forward to seeing the following objectives attained in my life:

- To further broaden my knowledge in the area of community nursing practice.
- To increase my knowledge on how to carry out community health research and collaboration especially the way is done in advanced economy as may be different from the way it is being done in developing countries.
- Know more about the operations and opportunities available from organisations that give grants to low income countries to assist them in research work.
- To disseminate my research findings and practices, be criticised constructively in order to bring about a better work.

- Seeks to know of opportunities that may be available to me to pursue my postgraduate studies in community health related field.

### **Arrival Day (19<sup>th</sup> September, 2017)**

It was a chilly morning welcome to Tambo International Airport, Johannesburg when we arrived at about 3.55am after about 26hours trip. The weather was a sharp contrast to the equatorial hot weather from where I was coming from (Nigeria), but indeed the serene was so beautiful. After all immigration checks were over, I was driven on a prior arranged airport transfer to my accommodation by two young men who were well dressed and with a very neat car. I felt honoured from the way I was attended to. Soon we arrived at Sunsquare Montecasino

My accommodation was well furnished with all basic necessities that will make my stay memorable. I showered, took my breakfast and a call from Rosamond Bryar, an official of ICCHNR and promised to see me later in the day after I have rested. We had dinner later with other delegates and met with other Mary McClymont awardees such as Margaret, Brenda, from Ghana, Amara Frances from Nigeria, and other friends from Rwanda, Togo, etc.

### **Day 1 (20<sup>th</sup> September, 2017)**

The first day of the conference started with registration of delegates from different countries which include UK, USA, CANADA, JAPAN, SOUTH AFRICA, NIGERIA, GHANA, TOGO, BOTSWANA, MALAWI, RWANDA and SWAZILAND. The majority of participants were from UK and South Africa. In all 44 oral and 8 poster presentations were registered.

The opening Ceremony of the conference commenced at 10.25am and was presided over by Professor Gisela Van Rensburg, a representative of UNISA, South Africa. The Gumboot dancing and song cultural group (from Cornerstone College, Pretoria) came on stage to sing the South Africa national anthem and later entertained the audience in a cultural dance. Indeed, we all enjoyed it.

The first keynote address titled “Releasing Potentials, Improving Lives: The Global Nursing Agenda” was delivered by Jane Salvage (UK). In her paper, she drew the attention of all present to the role of nursing in improving the lives of people in our communities and was chaired by Professor Sally Kendall. The

second keynote paper by Abel Malaka (SA) was on “Household Health Intervention: An Innovative Approach to Improving Community Health Status” and was chaired by Sheila Mokoboto-Zwane. I particularly enjoyed this presentation because of its direct impact it will have on my community nursing practice. In fact, the knowledge gathered from this presentation will go a long way to help me and other healthcare providers in our clinical area of practice.

After the lunch we all broke out into 6 groups: A – F, to discuss various community research topics and we were admonished to go to the group that is relevant to our area of interest. I was in group A, where community research paper was presented by Solina Richter (Canada) with the title: ‘Contemplating the impact of Community-Based Research and the importance of action’. From the discussion, we learned that it is not enough to carry out research, but it must have impact on the community and our action must be geared towards improving the lives of the people. The second paper by Rosamund Brayer (UK), on Public Health Education Needs Assessment, was conducted in Togo West Africa towards improving the health of Togo people. It became evident to us from this session that public health education needs assessment is needed and applicable to improving health of people in most developing countries. This session ended with a paper discussed by Sue Latter (UK): A Community Nurse-led Intervention to Support Carers to Manage Pain Medication in Cancer Patients.

Next we moved into another plenary session where we had group presentations: Perspectives of Nurses of Community Nursing in sub-Saharan Africa (Department of Nursing Education, University of Witwatersrand) the session was facilitated by Sue Armstrong and Christmal Kpodo. The presenters were Christmal D. Christmal Oluchukwu L. Obiora (Nigeria), Marie. C Uwamaho (Rwanda), Tinalipi Ketlogetswe (Botswana), Tikondwe Sichinga (Malawi) and lastly by Sithembile Shonwe (Swaziland). These presenters are all PhD students studying different fields of nursing in South Africa. The last paper for the day by Ida Du Olessis (SA) titled: Gaining Access into Formal Settlement Relevance to Mothers and Pre-term Infants. This topic was also very vital to my work as a community nurse and I learnt so much. Dinner was planned for all presenters and participants in the evening.

## **Day 2 (21<sup>st</sup> September, 2017)**

Second day was full of activities, the conference commenced at 08.45am, with keynote speaker by Priscilla Diamini (Swaziland) she spoke a lot concerning indigenous knowledge systems, CAM and collaboration with the western health care system: a community health care perspective. This topic generated a lot of questions to the extent that our time was fast spent; the session was facilitated by Rosamund Bryar. Another topic that was so much discussed is titled: Gaining Access for Research in Communities, Gate keeping, ethics and related elements. The importance of gate keeping was emphasised to a greater length that it generated contributions by many participants.

At the return from mid-morning tea and coffee break, participants broke out into our various groups. The first paper in my group (Group A) was presented by Solina Richter (Canada) focused on supporting the well-being of service provider who care for homeless women. She illustrated with examples of women leaving on the streets that need care. Another paper by Rosamund Bryar, "Evaluation of a Training Programme to enable School Nurses to Provide Enhanced Support to Promote Emotional and Mental Health in Children and Young People". This session really blessed my heart because the knowledge I gained from it is going to be adopted in School Health Services we carry out in our health facility in Nigeria.

The Mary McClymount Scholars then came up to present their papers and this session was facilitated by Professor Patricia Wilson. Gnayame Moumouni Boassiba and Ralph Akwei (Togo) presented a paper which has to do with the work on "Vision Togo" a project they are carrying out with Rosamund Bryar. Some of pictures of the project were projected to show the good work they are doing in that part of African continent. We pray that God reward them with good success.

The next paper presentation was my presentation titled: "Ante Natal Care Services Utilisation among Women of Childbearing Age in Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger state, Nigeria: Analysis of Barriers". My motivation to carry out this investigation was brought about by an ugly experience I had with an expectant mother who was rushed to our health centre from a weekly village market she came for on that day. On cross examination, the foetus had died in

her womb in the last three days and she was not even aware. It was discovered she had never attended ANC for this pregnancy and not even in her previous. In this presentation, I had stressed that in most developing countries, accessing Ante Natal Care (ANC) remains a major problem leading to high maternal mortality rate (MMR) and, of course, a leading cause of death among women of reproductive age. I reported that in previous studies by scholars that ANC situation in Nigeria was 61% translating into MMR of over 560 per 100,000 live births which is on a very high side clearly above the Africa and global average of 500 and 210 globally respectively in 2013. The poor maternal health outcome in Nigeria could be a result of poor ANC utilization.

The presentation revealed that factors such as: location of respondents; not receiving support from husband; ethnicity; preference for traditional birth attendants; not aware of ANC and not knowing there was need for ANC were all significant barriers to accessing ANC among women of child bearing age in Wushishi Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. My aim is to see that ANC utilization in this Local Government Area reaches a target of more than 90% in the next two years. Therefore, in the paper, I had highlighted future plans for actions following availability of resources which are tailored toward eliminating the identified barriers. This include a three level training and intensive advocacies focusing on (i) the Community Leaders which include village heads and religious leaders (ii) Selected men of reproductive age to including transport operators (iii) Traditional Birth Attendants and selected women of reproductive age especially from most vulnerable areas.

Brenda Poku from Ghana, a PhD student from University of Manchester, UK also presented her paper on “Fatigue Experiences of Adolescents with Sickle Cell Diseases in sub-Saharan Africa context: A Grounded Theory Inquiry”. She explained the pains and stresses adolescents with Sickle Cell go through in the time of their crises and recommended how their health can be improved upon. The next paper in the series of Mary McClymont Scholar presentations was that of Margaret Wekem Kubeka (also, from Ghana). Her paper was on the “Socio-cultural Environment within which Children live and eat” specifically dwelling on the ethnography of households cultural feeding practices of children, in Ghana. In her paper, she gave a demonstration of nutrition practice showing the way children’s food is prepared in some households and the manner culture of the

people effect the nutrition of children and teach them how to improve on their children's feeding. The last presenter in this series was a scholar from Nigeria, Amara Frances Chizoba. Her paper was on "Epidemiology of Geriatric Conditions in Rural Area of Nigeria: A community-based approach". She showed to us the project the organisation she is working with is doing in the Eastern part of Nigeria. It was very impactful in the sense that if elderly people will be cared for they can we live better life. This session was followed by poster presentations by different presenters from Japan, UK, SA and Sudan. The poster presented by Hassan (Sudan) came out the best and was given the best award during the closing ceremony.

### **Day 3 (THE CLOSING CEREMONY- 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2017)**

The last session in ICCHNR 2017 was facilitated by Jeannette Maritz. The panel members were: Jane Salvage, Priscilla Dlamini, and Sally Kendall. They talked on doing research in the post truth age: Implications for communities' research and methods. This segment generated lots of questions and all presentations were very impactful.

After the mid-day tea and coffee break, we entered in for plenary session group presentation and workshop which was facilitated by Neitijie van Wyk. Here the presenters looked at how to care for vulnerable population (i.e. mothers, children and their nurses). The topic also stimulated lots of questions as to how to help these vulnerable women, children and even the nurses caring for them.

Molly Case, Poet in Residence, was then brought to the floor and performed her poem: *Nursing the World* (which can be seen on the ICCHNR website: [icchnr.org](http://icchnr.org)). It was a great inspiration to all the participants,.

The summary, feedback and way forward were presented by Professor Sally Kendall and the presentation of prizes and Scholar's certificates were performed by Professor Fiona Ross, ICCHNR President. The next International Symposium will hold in Swansea UK, 2018.

Thank you to ICCHNR for the award of Mary McClymount fund for me and some other African Community Nurses to attend ICCHNR SA 2017