

Report / Feedback on The International Collaboration Of Community Health Nursing Research (ICCHNR, 2017)

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Background

This report represents my experiences and the outcome of the **ICCHNR** 2017 conference relative to my aims for attending the conference. I can confidently report that I have exceeded meeting the objectives for which I attended the conference.

Conference attendance aims

My aims for attending the 2017 ICCHNR were to:

- To communicate part of my findings on child feeding in rural Ghana to community health nursing professionals, who are stakeholders in the implementation of my recommendations
- Learn from other researchers how to engage stakeholders and ways of translating the research findings into practice interventions
- Find networks that could impact my research career
- Identify mentors who could coach and me polish my research skills to grow my research career

Outcomes from conference

I had the opportunity of identifying and connecting with individuals, some of whom I have started to work with on my aims. For instance;

Learning from Molly Case's creativity

With regards to highlighting some of the daily challenges that impact how rural women feed their children, I will be producing short documentaries on the complex daily challenges rural women go through with the assistance of Molly Case, the poet in residence.

One of the findings of my study was that children were not fed age appropriate foods. It also appeared mothers had limited ideas on how to use locally produced food to feed children appropriately, and current health information on food choices appeared limited. In relation to that, I had developed the idea of writing a child food preparation recipe book that would help mothers use local foodstuffs to prepare and feed children. I was not confident in my style of writing and almost abandoned the idea. However, Molly has assured me to carry on and she could review aspects of the work to ensure that it was in shape. Due to the diverse nature of Ghana, Brenda has come on board to collaborate with me in writing the recipe book. We have set a dateline for producing a summary of what the content of the recipe book could look like and we both cannot wait to complete the work, which we think could contribute to reducing malnutrition among children under the age of five years in Ghana.

Work with Elize Pierteresen of Global Research Nurses

We had a lengthy chat on starting a bespoke clinical nurse research role in Ghana. We have plans to hold a sensitization workshop in Ghana in 2018 to give nurses the platform to explore the importance of nursing research and to learn how to use their basic skills to carry out research that could help improve health outcomes in the community. There are plans for me to attend the second global research network workshop in Nigeria to learn from them how the workshops are organised. Elize, has linked me with the focal person in Nigeria, and we have started talking. We also started recording potential researchable topics for forming research themes in Ghana. This is towards commencing a bespoke nurse researcher, who could commission their own research independent of the clinical trials, most of which do provide evidence that promotes best practices in the work of Ghanaian nurses. Upon encouragement of Elize, I have started to organise a research interest group, and hope to commission a simple research that could inspire the interest of nurses in research study.

Professor Azwihangwisi Helen Mavhandu-Mudzusi; University of South Africa

I have identified a potential funding opportunity to undertake a postdoc at UNISA. I intend to conduct a comparative study of south Africa and Ghana, on the topic "**experiences of mothers with still births and neonatal death rural communities**". Professor Helen has replied to an email based on our interaction at the conference, for her to investigate the research interest of UNISA, and how my topic could fits in. Whilst there is still no clear way forward on this issue, I am very hopeful that, the outcome will be positive.

Upon interacting with the senior community health professional participants at the conference, I identified a mentor, an individual I belief could help shape my future ideas on community health work, and signpost me to funding to enable me to execute my research goals.

Other benefits

I also learnt how I could engage with the public and create some interventional activities from my primary research work. One of the findings of my study shows how indigenous knowledge was sourced and applied in child feeding, and I gathered from some of the presentations at the conference that, it might be useful to apply a participatory approach to engage traditional medical practitioners in getting a community to accept certain interventions, such as early initiation of breastfeeding as a strategy for implementing my research recommendations.

Though, I had an idea that it was important to frame research evidence in appropriate language for different stakeholders, I had not appreciated it in a way that I did during the conference. I have therefore become more sensitive to the use of language, and plan to apply this principle well in my research work in future.

I also made and kept other networks for future partnerships. For instance, nursing education policy is currently unclear in Ghana, and there is a proliferation of perceived substandard nursing training institutions. This appears to be resulting in unprofessionalism and poor-quality care to clients in both community and health facilities. One of the presentations at the conference offered me the opportunity to reflect on this issue. Consequently, I have communicated with one of the presenters to replicate their methods to show the trend of nursing education in Ghana to enable me to infer on the consequences of what is currently ongoing. This may contribute evidence for stakeholders to reconsider the lack of standardised approach to nursing education.

I am in the process of registering a nursing consortium in Ghana. This registration is to offer me the mandate to conduct nursing research and provide continuous professional education for nurses. Listening to Jane Salvage has inspired me to be more serious with this process as I am almost certain that I could be an independent nursing champion. I also hope to contact her soon to find more information on how to manage my plan effectively.

Conclusion

The conference has served as a catalyst to most of the ideas I harboured. I harboured many ideas on how to contribute to improving nursing care in the community and health facilities especially for children. However, I had remained somehow afraid of my own dreams and thoughts, I perceived the latter as sheer fantasies considering my understanding of my settings. However, I am now certain that, it is possible to achieve some of the things and I look forward to bringing my dreams alive.

I also strongly believe that goals of ICCHNR are particularly essential for nurses in the areas that I work. Evidence based knowledge is sparse in my area, and it is not actually clear what nurses know about evidence-based practices and the ways of generating evidence to guide practices. Meanwhile, these areas are under resource constraint and the use of evidence-based practice could contribute to realise better health outcomes at minimal cost.

I would, however, be grateful if I could be signposted to funding to implement some of my ideas. There are no funding sources in my country to nurture these kinds of ideas.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the organisers and managers of the Mary McClymont fund for providing the funding that enabled me to attend the ICCHNR, 2017. enumerated.