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# INTERNATIONAL BRAIN WAVES

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## *From the President*

On May 16 Belgium allowed Euthanasia as the second land in the world after the Netherlands. It will be effective in September. When we look at history, we see that in 1996 the Northern Territories in Australia were the first to have a law on euthanasia (allowing doctors to administer a lethal injection) but this law was annulled by the Australian Parliament after a brief 6 months. Since Ballot Measure 16 was accepted in November 1994 and became law in October 1997, Oregon (USA) was for a long time the only place where assisted suicide was allowed for terminal patients. Since April 2002 euthanasia is officially allowed in the Netherlands after a long time of allowance policy.

What do we mean by Euthanasia (coming from eu- thanatos: a good dead)? By the Dutch Government Commission on Euthanasia (1985) it was defined as the termination of life by a doctor at the expressed wish of an adult patient. The request to the doctor must be voluntary, explicit and carefully considered and it must have been made repeatedly. Moreover, the patient's suffering must be unbearable and without any prospect of improvement. Stopping or not starting medical treatment, even so increasing pain medication and so causing a faster death is not considered as euthanasia. In 2001 there were 2054 reports of euthanasia in the Netherlands.

The Belgian law on euthanasia goes even further now, allowing euthanasia also on patients with unbearable psychic suffering and is the cause of discussion, mostly about euthanasia on non-terminal patients and on patients with continuous psychic suffering.

In Belgium there are two opposite fronts regarding this law: a first one who is glad and proud that there is now a legal framework considering something that is practised at many places in obscurity and a second one who says that no one has the right to end a life. Belgian members of Parliament will question the new law on Euthanasia at the European Court and Commission for Human Rights because of the following precedent. In November 2001 the highest British Court of Justice, the Law Lords Diana Pretty, who was paralysed totally because of a nervous disorder, didn't have the right to commit euthanasia with the help of her husband. He risked to be sentenced to 14 years imprisonment. End April 2002 the European Court and Commission for Human Rights in Strasbourg made the same decision. After this verdict she said: "This law has taken all my rights". She died on May 11 after 10 days of severe breathing problems, the phase that she feared the most.

Now on May 22, the 69 year old Nancy Crick from Queensland, Australia, took a deathly dose of medication and died in the presence of family members and friends a soft dead. She suffered from bowel cancer and decided to make an end to her life but she didn't want to die alone. Therefore she risked being sentenced to life. You can read her last diary entry just before she died at <http://www.protection.net.au/nancycrick/diary/0521.htm>.

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## **From the President** *continued from page 1*

It would be very interesting to know what the members of the WFNN think about this issue: is there, together with the right to live also, in certain circumstances, a right to die? Who can decide what is unbearable suffering? Has euthanasia to be allowed and if so on what conditions? Many questions and certainly many opinions. Your reactions are welcome at herman.ubachs@pi.be and we will try to bundle and publish it in the next International Brainwaves.

Herman Ubachs  
President, WFNN

## **Annual Activity Reports**

### **Dutch Association of Neuroscience Nurses**

#### **Membership**

At the end of the year 2001 the NVNV had 400 members. That is about the same as the year before. The membership fee was € 28,-.

#### **Meetings**

In November there was a successful congress on Neuro-oncology in Zwolle. Speakers were neuroscience nurses, nurse practitioners and physicians. There were 200 attendees.

The workgroup Neurorehabilitation (101 members) had a spring meeting and an autumn meeting.

The workgroup Parkinson's Disease (15 members) had three meetings.

A new workgroup was grounded: the workgroup MS.

#### **Journal**

The NVNV publish the journal together with our Belgian colleagues. The outfit changed at the end of 2000 and it took a while to get used to it. It seemed the new journal stimulated the Dutch neuroscience nurses to write more articles. This caused a little misbalance between Dutch and Belgian oriented information. But in the end the new outfit is a great success. The journal was published 5 times.

#### **International co-operation**

10 members of the NVNV attended the WFNN congress in Sydney. Six members presented a paper.

#### **Other activities**

- Together with the Parkinson's Patient Association the NVNV published evidence based guidelines for the care of patients with Parkinson's disease. This was the first time guidelines were made in co-operation between caregivers and patients. The project was financed by the AVVV, the Dutch national association for nurses.
- The NVNV published the Function profile of the neuroscience nurse. It took several years to bring this project to a successful end. But now it's ready and we are very proud of it. The main part of the Function Profile is based on three areas of care: multy system impairments, neurorehabilitation and neuropalliative care. Furthermore for the development of the profile the ICIDH was used. The function profile now will be worked out into a national plan for the education of neuroscience nurses.
- In 2001 there was a meeting of the delegations of the NVNV and the National Association of Neuro Physicians. This meeting was initiated by the physicians to discuss the problem of shortness of nurses. The meeting resulted in appointments for closer co-operation.

#### **Finances**

The activities of the NVNV are financed by membership fees, advertising and sponsoring, and by project financing by the AVVV.

Submitted by: Paul van Keeken

### **Danish Association of Neuroscience Nurses**

The Danish Association of Neuroscience Nurses (DANN) still has approximately 530 members. The annual fee is 23 euro.

The activities of the DANN for the last year includes the following:

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## **Annual Activity Reports** *continued from page 2*

### **Danish Association of Neuroscience Nurses** *continued*

#### **EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

##### **Biannual Symposium**

The biannual symposium took place in May 2001. There were 12 presentations with topics like for instance: Dissociative illnesses, teamwork, implementing clinical guidelines, nutrition for patients with stroke, how to establish focus groups and neurotrauma. 120 nurses participated.

##### **Biannual Conference**

The biannual conference was held in March 2002 and the topic was "Stroke – A Nursing Challenge". The focus was primarily nursing from the acute phase to the end of rehabilitation. Focus varied from practice knowledge to research based knowledge. It was a two-day course and 81 nurses participated.

##### **Annual Rehabilitation Course**

Every year, usually in the fall, we arrange a 5 day course in Neuropsychological Rehabilitation together with Centre for Rehabilitation of Brain Injury, University of Copenhagen. The course is held in two different parts of the country and this year 50 nurses participated. The program is organized with an interdisciplinary focus. We invite doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists to speak about their special approach. This years course was with both concurrent and joint sessions. The concurrent sessions had a specific focus on rehabilitation of the patient with stroke and the patient with trauma respectively.

Altogether 260 nurses have participated in the educational activities this year.

##### **Annual Study Day**

The 2002 annual will take place in Odense on November 6. This year's topic will be "Caring for the relatives of brain injured patients".

#### **NEWSLETTER**

The newsletter "Hovednerven" was published twice.

#### **REPRESENTATIONS**

DANN has been invited to participate in the following work at national level:

- Member of the Danish National Board of Health task force on transplantation,
- Member of the executive committee and research committee of The Organization on the Prevention of Brain Diseases
- Member of the Danish National Board of Health committee on quality indicators of nursing related to stroke
- Member of the Danish Nurses' Organisation committee on establishing a Scientific Nursing Society

#### **EANN CONGRESS 2003**

The 7th. Quadrennial Congress of the European Association of Neuroscience nurses will take place May 19-21, 2003 in Copenhagen. The venue will be The Scandic Copenhagen Hotel. The second announcement will be out in summer 2002 and eadline for abstracts will be November 1. We hope to see a lot of colleagues from All Over The World. Please consider to have an oral presentation or a poster or simply to come and join the rest of us in Wonderful Copenhagen. Information about the congress will continuously be available on the EANN website at: [www.eann.dk](http://www.eann.dk)

Submitted by: Bente Hoeck

#### **Japanese Association of Neuroscience Nurses (JANN)**

The 28th Annual National meeting was held last November in Tokyo.

There were 11 speakers and 3 paper presentations. The other program was a forum and the speakers were a doctor, 2 physiotherapist and 2 nurses. They spoke on Rehabilitation Nursing approach for the neurodisorder patients. 204 nurses attended and had a useful time with the discussion and advice.

Our reports for the members are usually three times a year. Last year, after the 8<sup>th</sup> Sydney WFNN, we reported on the event and about the topics of the two Japanese presenters. Also, we encouraged members to join in at the 9th WFNN in Spain.

We always tried to introduce IBW news topics and translate them into Japanese.

Our 29th Annual Meeting will be held Saturday November 16th at Sizuoka-pre.

Submitted by: Teiko Yumi

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## **Annual Activity Reports** *continued from page 3*

### **American Association of Neuroscience Nursing**

This year is off to a great start for members of the American Association of Neuroscience Nurses. The 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, held in Chicago, Illinois, was attended by 950 nurses. Topics ranging from neurotrauma, oncology, spine, pain management, and professional issues were presented.

AANN now offers nurses the opportunity to obtain ongoing, educational credits for select articles published in the Journal of Neuroscience Nursing *and* on the organization's web site. These credits are useful for nurses who wish to document ongoing education specific to neuroscience nursing. To visit the AANN web site, go to [www.aann.org](http://www.aann.org).

Future plans for the organization include total reworking of the Core Curriculum for Neuroscience Nursing. This text is the staple of most neuroscience nurses as they first begin to learn about the neurosciences and necessary nursing care. It also serves as an excellent reference manual. Under the co-editor direction of Mary Kay Bader and Linda Littlejohns, over 50 experts in neuroscience nursing are revising the current text. The revised Core is expected to be published in 2003.

Current AANN President, Nancy Villanueva, welcomes any comments from international members. You may reach her at [nvillanueva@miami.edu](mailto:nvillanueva@miami.edu).

Submitted by: Virginia Prendergast

### **Canadian Association of Neuroscience Nurses (CANN)**

#### **Association canadienne des infirmières et infirmiers en sciences neurologiques (ACIISN)**

At present our association has over 300 members and eleven chapters across the country. The annual Scientific conference and Annual Meeting is scheduled for June 18-21, 2002 in Vancouver, BC. Abstract submissions were received from Canada, USA, Cuba and Switzerland. This venue includes two and a half days of plenary or concurrent educational sessions. Poster presentations are done in conjunction with the Canadian Congress of Neurological Sciences who also hold their annual scientific meeting during this time. The collaborative date and city with neurologists and neurosurgeons across Canada provides an opportunity for networking and learning across disciplines. CANN also distributes the Neuroscience Bursary (The Jessie Young Award-named after the founder of our association) for educational support at the Annual Scientific Conference. The Codman Award and Brain Tumour Foundation Award papers are also selected and presented. A pre-conference workshop: From Research Question to Proposal is being offered this year by Dr. Marlene Reimer, known by many of you at WFNN.

CANN publishes a peer-reviewed journal quarterly. The journal publishes scientific articles of interest to neuroscience nurses and local chapter updates. For example, the last issue (March 2002) published an excellent overview on Epilepsy as well as an article describing an interdisciplinary approach to meeting nutritional needs of severe dysphagia in stroke patients. All topics are of interest worldwide! Have you read it? Axon, L'Axone is indexed in Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature, International Nursing Index (INI) and Nursing Citation Index. Information regarding our Association can also be found on the web. [www.cann.ca](http://www.cann.ca).

CANN also liaises with the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) and other professional groups on behalf of neuroscience nurses across Canada. There is an initiative involving CANN in the evaluation of best practice guidelines relevant to neuroscience nursing practice. CANN was also invited by Health Canada to a consensus meeting to finalize the Infection Control Guideline on Creutzfeld-Jacob disease in Canada. As well, CNA provides the opportunity for neuroscience nurses to be certified in their specialty. Currently there are 158 certified nurses and approximately thirty-five neuroscience nurses who recently wrote the exam.

For CANN, at the Board of Directors level, the last year has been one of operationalizing the strategic plan and moving ahead with discussions and ideas regarding fiscal responsibility.

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## **Annual Activity Reports** *continued from page 4*

### **Canadian Association of Neuroscience Nurses (CANN) continued**

Although I was supported by both the local and National CANN Associations to attend the WFNN Congress in Sydney Australia, it was not at all possible due to the events of September 11. Therefore I too will be pleased to read the next IBW Newsletter as our means of connecting internationally. The European Association of Neuroscience Nurses Meeting is in Copenhagen 2003, perhaps it will be possible for me to see you then. Remember should anyone visit London, Ontario be sure to give me a call or e-mail Wilma.Koopman@lhsc.on.ca.

Submitted by: Wilma Koopman

### **Belgian Association of Neuroscience Nurses**

In 2001 the BANN organised two national Congresses. The main topics of the first Congress were Neuropsychology, Obtained Speech and Language Disorders, Psychophysiology and Psychosurgery, At the second Congress we discussed Neuromodulation, Parkinson, Brain Mapping and Skull-Base Surgery. There were about 400 attendants at each meeting.

We went also with a group of 36 persons to the WFNN Congress in Sydney in September and two Belgian nurses were presenting a lecture at this meeting. The attendants enjoyed very much the lectures and the social Programme of this very well organised Congress. Despite of the problems caused by the terrorist attack in New-York and the bankruptcy of the air company Ansett we made a pleasant after Congress trip to South –East Australia.

Last April we organised a two-day Congress at the Belgian coast. We invited excellent speakers from the most important Neuro-centres in Belgium to speak about the new developments in Neurology and Neurosurgery. About 450 nurses enjoyed not only the scientific part but also the dinners and the dancing evening.

We organised also for the first time a special local Neuro course in Belgium from September to June and about 150 nurses registered. It was a course for Neurology and Neurosurgery Nurses. We asked the participants their opinion about this course and the result was that almost everyone wanted another year of lessons but with separated courses for Neurology and Neurosurgery Nurses so that nurses can choose if they want to attend only the Neurology or Neurosurgery courses or both. The first exam will be in September and there are plans to organise courses on the same base at different locations in Belgium.

We have now about 300 members who receive 2 Congress books and 6 Newsletters of the BANN every year for the same low membership fee since more than 15 years: 25 Euro. It is strange that the membership increased but that there is no less attendance at the Congresses. We think that the main reason here fore is that most hospitals are paying the whole fee for the Congress (member or non-member) but don't contribute for the membership fee. About 2/3 of the attendants are non-members! Is there a same trend in other countries?

Submitted by: Herman Ubachs

### **German Association of Neuroscience Nurses**

Currently the German Association of Neuroscience Nurses (danp) has approximately 100 members, the annual fee is €51,-.

The activities of the danp for 2001 include the following:

- The last annual meeting was held in Lünen/NRW in May, about 250 nurses attended. The next one will be held in Hattingen, Klinik Holthausen, at the beginning of May 2002.
- Because of a lot of technical problems we published the newsletter "Synapse" only one time, but meanwhile the problems has been solved so we intend to release at least two issues.
- Early this year the danp and "Tempur", a german producer of clinical suppliances, have started a joint venture project testing the effects of a new anti-decubitus-matrice and placeholders used in surgery. Two hospitals in Mannheim and Gießen will present first results in June.
- Our main caring topic this year is Stroke and a designed group of nurses is currently working on guide lines for the care of stroke patients. First results were already presented at a meeting with the "Hessischen Krankenhausgesellschaft". The expert group showed great interest in our work and decided to support the danp in future projects.

Submitted by: Susann Schultka

Homepage: [www.danp.de](http://www.danp.de) Email: [info@danp.de](mailto:info@danp.de) or [redcockvillage@t-online.de](mailto:redcockvillage@t-online.de)

## ***Nursing and Neurological Restoration***

Author: **Elizabeth Padilla Puentes**, RN, MN

*WFNN would like to welcome new member, Elizabeth Padilla Puentes from Cuba.*

*She gives us a glimpse of Neuro Nursing in Cuba:*

The International Center for Neurological Restoration; CIREN(abbreviation by initials in Spanish), is a medical scientific institution that works wholly focussed in increasing the quality of life of patients with lesions or diseases of nervous system through new, multifactorial and intensive methods to stimulate neuroplasticity.

Our center is structured in two major therapeutic programs, seven highly specialized clinics (movement disorders and neurodegenerations; static encephalic lesions; spinal cord lesions, neuromuscular diseases, and neuropaediatrics) and one area for basic investigations. We have 113 nurses, most of them are dedicated to clinical practice in specialized clinics and others services; less than the 10% work in a methodological control group, and in basic investigation. Nurses working in clinics try to do the best and give our patients the best nursing care. We organize and an Annual Meeting of Nursing every year; and last year 2001, we dealt with different themes such as management in patients with refractory epilepsy, quality of life in Parkinson's disease, before and after surgery; and an update and overview of various other neurological conditions, both in adult and paediatric, including the strategy of nursing in the administration of antiepileptic drugs, critical illness polyneuropathy, cerebrovascular disease and infantile cerebral palsy. The meeting was very successful and also provided opportunities to network. During the meeting we discussed professional problems, shared new ideas, and took note of new treatments, and management issues, as well as clinical matters.

In our institution nurses have a high scientific qualification, and to increase their participation in biomedical investigations is one of our principal objectives for this year. A relevant work have been done at the Clinical Neurophysiology Department where nurses are trained to perform many different electrophysiological tests, and actively participate in the analysis of each patient; there we have two lines of work, one dedicated to the evaluation of Autonomic Nervous System, and an unit for telemetric monitoring of epileptic patients, in which nursing has been recognized as the principal activity due to its importance. Nurses participate actively in the evaluation of each patient, and to contribute to define the origin of seizures and contribute to the correct diagnosis of epilepsy.

We have for a full rest: The Sleep Clinic. This clinic takes care and evaluates patients of all ages moaning insomnia, snoring, nocturnal motor episodes, among other sleep disorders, where the nurse do the techniques, for exploration at behaviour of the patient during sleep.

The nursing attention process, is a scientific method which allows to organize all the tasks and is a tool for the basic investigation in promotion, prevention, support and, recovering the health of patients; and is our purpose to increase the total number of nurses who are enrolled in research activities within the main research lines in neuroscience at our institution.

Our next Annual Meeting will be International of Neuroscience Nurses in November 26-29, 2003 in Havana. We would like to invite all of you to meet us in our meeting, your contribution will be very welcome, and is essential for the well development of our young nurses.

Please contact me for more information: Elizabeth Padilla, Department of Clinical Neurophysiology, International Center Neurological Restoration, Havana,

Email: [elizabeth@neubas.sld.cu](mailto:elizabeth@neubas.sld.cu); Fax (537) 336020, 336339, 332420

## ***Announcements***

### **HAVANA, CUBA - November 2003.**

The next Annual Meeting will be an International meeting of Neuroscience Nurses in November 26-29, 2003 in Havana. For information please contact: Elizabeth Padilla.

### **EANN 7<sup>th</sup> QUADRENNIAL CONGRESS: COPENHAGEN - MAY 2003**

The 7<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Congress of the European Association of Neuroscience Nurses (EANN) will be held from 20-22 May 2003 at the Scandic Copenhagen Hotel in Copenhagen, Denmark, in conjunction with the Danish Association of Neuroscience Nurses – **Faglig Sammenslutning af NeuroSygeplejersker**

Please see the following two pages for additional information on the meeting.