



SNI 2011 - The Role of School Nurses:
Evidence-based Practice, Globalization and Policy Formulation
Submitted by Katharine "Kit" Dreyfuss CSNO,SS. NASN.

The traveling U.S. nurses got to Hong Kong a day before the conference opened, and used their free time to see sights (I took a ferry to Macau.) Six of us stayed in Hong Kong Polytechnic University's freshman dormitory with the delegates from the other countries, the rest at the elegant Harbor Plaza Metropolis, closer to the University meeting rooms than the dormitory was. However, the dorm residents had (air-conditioned) shuttle bus service to the campus, a definite boon in the Hong Kong heat.

The conference's welcome reception was held Monday afternoon (July 25) on the campus lawn, where the formalities were impacted by an employee union demonstration, complete with bull horns. But Mary Henley staunchly welcomed us, Conference Organizing Committee Chair Dr. Regina Lee and other dignitaries spoke, a harmonica-cello duet performed, as did a parent/kids-with-Down-Syndrome tai chi group and Taikwondo athletes. We were introduced to the winner of SNI's first scholarship (named for Kathleen (Kit) S.Hite, who worked for years with Mary Henley in Mountain View S D, EL Monte and later at LAUSD): Mercy Vanderpuije, Lincoln Community School, Accra, Ghana. All enjoyed a buffet dinner and then walked home.

Tuesday morning's Opening Ceremony at the Jockey Club Auditorium (on campus) was even flashier than the previous afternoon's, with a rousing bagpipers parade, astonishingly agile dancing dragons and another taekwondo demonstration. Then it was all business. The theme: Role of School Nurses. Keynote Address 1 by Kathleen Fritsch (WHO Regional Adviser in Nursing), "Future school Nurses: A Global Public Health Perspective;" Keynote Address 2 by Dr. Chan Chok-wan (International Pediatric Association past president), "Role of the School Nurses in the Healthcare Professional Team for Children." A half-hour tea break and then a professional seminar conducted in English by four Japanese school nurses, "The Great East Japan Earthquake – How we managed at school." Time out for lunch, then Concurrent Session 1: a choice among three half-hour presentations, half an hour for tea, Concurrent Session 2 (a choice among three more half-hour presentations) and it was 5:00.

Concurrent Session Speakers were nurses from participating countries, and their topics and venues (adjacent rooms) were carefully outlined in the Conference's printed program. Samples: "Pupils' and School Nurses' Experiences of Using a Health and Lifestyle Tool in Health Dialogues" by Mrs. Marie Golster (Sweden); "Promoting Psychological and Emotional Well-being in Children and Young People: Primary Prevention Strategies" by Mrs. Gill Coverdale (UK.) It was a challenge to choose a topic and be at the correct venue in the allotted time.

At 5:30 we were scheduled for a Regional School Nurses Network Meeting, which we conducted over dinner back at the dorm. Led by Kathleen Fritsch, delegates discussed goals and tentative steps for ongoing internet communications.

Our second day was equally ambitious: on the theme "Evidence Based Practice," Dr. Mark Hayter (professor at the University of Sheffield, School of Nursing and Midwifery) gave Keynote Address 3: "Sexual and reproductive health: key issues for

school nurses and school health services.” Then Dr. John Howard (lecturer at the National Cannabis Prevention and Information Center, Sydney, Australia), led Plenary Session 1: “Evidence-based approaches to youth substance use: A brief intervention for cannabis use to increase the capacity of those who work with young cannabis users to engage and enhance motivation for change.” Half an hour off for tea, then a Symposium: “The Impact of Frontier Nursing Services on Child and Adolescent Health: the Hong Kong Experiences” by Hong Kong School Nurses Association members and advisers. Half an hour for Concurrent Session 3’s oral presentations.

Then it was play-time: we ate box lunches on the bus to Lantau Island, where we rode a high-flying cable car, the Ngong Ping 360, overlooking the airport, the South China Sea, a mountain with the Po Lin Monastery and a Giant Buddha at its top. We disembarked at the small village where we shopped, hydrated, and some stalwarts braved the heat and humidity to climb to the site of the Giant Buddha. The bus met us at the village and took us back to Hong Kong’s Disneyland Hotel for an elaborate buffet dinner (two roast beef carvers) with table prizes, speeches, photos, a magician, karaoke. Back on the bus, we ascended Victoria Peak for a view of Hong-Kong at night.

Thursday’s morning program (“Globalization”) included Keynote Address 4 by Prof. Albert Lee (Chinese University of Hong Kong), “Health Promoting School to Foster Positive Youth Development”, Plenary Session 2 featuring Prof. Il Young Yoo (Yonsei University College of Nursing, Seoul, Korea), “Attitude of Korean school age children toward the multicultural peers.” Tea break, Concurrent Session 4, Poster Presentation. (Full disclosure: after the first address, another delegate and I broke off to visit the nearby and exemplary Hong Kong History Museum. We got back in time for lunch.)

That afternoon delegates visited our choice among four schools: all private, each with a school nurse who led a facility tour and distributed gifts to the visitors. My choice was the Hong Kong International School, well-appointed and evidently highly competitive; others were CNEC Lui Ming Choi Primary School, Chan’s Creative School and HHCKLA Buddhist Po Kwong School. We returned to our quarters in time to change for the Farewell Party at the PolyU Staff Canteen, with delegates spread out in several small dining rooms and such loud piped-in music that attempted farewell speeches would have been inaudible. My solution: taxi with a couple of friends to see the famous Light Show at the port. We got there on time, but the show was canceled (Level 3 Typhoon alert), so we rode the ferry between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon and explored the neighborhood. Then we went back to our quarters to pack for our 8 AM dorm check-out.

Friday’s theme: Policy Formulation. Keynote Address 5 (Prof. Daniel Sheck, Hong Kong Polytechnic University) “School-Based Adolescent Prevention and Positive Youth Development Programs in Hong Kong: Practice, Puzzles and Policy.” Plenary Session 3 (Kwok Fai Poon and Lee Kai Ming, Principals of two Hong Kong religious schools) “Role of School Nurses in special schools of Hong Kong.” After the tea break, NASN President Linda Davis-Alldritt showed a motivational video and invited delegates to join NASN, Dr. Lee gave a closing speech and Mary Henley presented medals to helpful nursing students and Conference staffers. One more buffet lunch at the Staff Canteen, farewells to familiar and new-found friends, and the conference was over. We had time to explore Hong Kong a bit more, meet our traveling colleagues at their hotel and be bussed to the airport. Next SNI Conference: 2013 in Slovenia. Start saving up!