

Singapore workshop examines problem-solving skills

By Jill Derstine

“Problem Solving for Better Health” was the theme of a 10 July workshop in Singapore during the 19th International Nursing Research Congress, sponsored by the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International. The workshop was presented in collaboration with Dreyfus Health Foundation.

Dr. Alex Papilaya of Jakarta, Indonesia, and I were facilitators for the workshop. I’m a nurse educator who has worked in developing countries for more than 15 years. Professor Liu Jianfen of Beijing, China, and Xie Jun of Shanghai, China, assisted us during the all-day session. Papilaya, Jianfen and Jun are experienced facilitators who have worked on successful projects in their respective countries.



Front row: Erika Ward, Phoenix Arizona, USA; co-facilitator Alex Papilaya, Indonesia; Jill Derstine, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. Second row: Miu Chan, Seattle, Washington; Myrna Dial, Loma Linda, California; co-facilitator Jienfen Liu, China. Third row: Hae Young Kang, Korea; Shademan Reza-Masculh, Iran.

Six nurses, representing the Philippines, South Korea and the United States, attended the workshop. An additional participant from Iran observed the proceedings in the afternoon.

The working session commenced with a description of the Dreyfus Health Foundation’s problem-solving process. The participants then met as a group to identify, define and prioritize health problems from their own communities or work environments. Each participant identified a problem that was relevant and manageable for him or her to solve. Creating a good question with a possible desired solution was the next step. Participants worked together to design action plans, which included budget and evaluation methods. The final step was presentation of each action plan.

An array of significant problems was presented. The three participants from the Philippines, who were American nurse educators, were most concerned about health issues in ethnic villages in the Philippines. After much discussion, they decided to focus their problem on gathering data to support the need for intervention. Eventually, the educators will use that data to send Filipino nursing students to the villages to implement health care programs.

The participant from Korea runs a nursing center with 12 staff members. She informed the group that salaries had been cut. Her project centered on interventions to maintain morale until staff salaries return to their previous level.

A nurse from Singapore, who currently teaches at a community college in the United States, addressed the high attrition rate in nursing education and methods to improve retention at her college. Another participant, who works as

a nurse recruiter, talked about a problem concerning qualifications of nurses recruited from countries outside of the United States.

Pamela Hoyt, RN, BSN, international nursing program coordinator for Dreyfus Health Foundation, planned the workshop. Hoyt is passionate about nursing and global health. Her involvement with international nursing began shortly after she received her baccalaureate nursing degree from Georgetown University in 1986. She spent the next year in Peru, where she worked on a vaccination program in rural Chimbote and a cleft lip and cleft palate surgery project in Lima. Hoyt has helped nurses and student nurses launch problem-solving programs in several countries around the world.

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The nonprofit Dreyfus Health Foundation works to improve quality of life globally by fostering creative problem-solving and project sustainability at local and national levels. The foundation conducts training workshops in its Problem Solving for Better Health methodology. Previous projects have focused on topics such as improving water supply, preventing malaria, increasing HIV/AIDS awareness and educating people about communicable diseases. For more information, visit the foundation's Web site at <http://www.dhfglobal.org>.

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