

Report From the Fourth Nordic Conference on Family-Focused Nursing, Odense, Denmark, September 24-25, 2014

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The Fourth Nordic Conference on Family-Focused Nursing took place in September 2014 and was held in Denmark for the first time. The first three Nordic Conferences were held in Kalmar, Sweden, in 2002 (Saveman & Benzein, 2001), 2006 (Benzein & Saveman, 2006), and 2010 (Benzein, 2011). Family nursing education, research, and practice have been spreading throughout the Nordic countries over the past two decades with keen interest recently emerging in Denmark (Østergaard & Wagner, 2014). In 2013, the Danish Family Nursing Association was founded (http://www.sdu.dk/en/om_sdu/institutter_centre/klinisk_institut/forskning/forskningsenheder/sygeplejeforskning/samarbejde/dansk+selskab+for+familie+sygepleje) and the board members of the Danish Family Nursing Association were especially proud to be able to organize and host the Fourth Nordic Conference. The conference offered a unique opportunity for researchers, clinical nurses, educators, and nursing managers to share information about how nurses can support families in health and illness. Another goal of the conference was to broaden and define the Nordic perspective on Family Nursing, in order to support joint efforts for advancing knowledge in this area.

Eighty-four participants at the conference represented all of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland) and also included participants from Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States. The three keynote speakers came from three different Nordic countries and represented a variety of Nordic perspectives on family nursing.

The first keynote paper, “How to Support Family Systems Nursing in Palliative Care in Sweden,” was presented by Professor Eva Benzein, Linnaeus University, Kalmar, Sweden. In collaboration with her team, Dr. Benzein has established the Center for Collaborative Palliative Care (Family Nursing Network, 2013). In her keynote address, she reported on the educational package her team developed from the literature and in collaboration with patients and families, and her team’s experiences with the implementation process.

The second keynote presenter was Professor Erla Kolbrun Svavarsdottir, University of Iceland. Her presentation was titled "Implementing Family Nursing Into Clinical Practice and a Two-Year Follow-Up Evaluation on Family Nursing Practice and Job Satisfaction at a University Hospital." Dr. Svavarsdottir has led the ground-breaking Landspítali University Hospital Family Nursing Implementation Project (2007-2011) in Reykjavik, Iceland (Svavarsdottir, Sigurdardottir, Konradsdottir, et al., 2014; Svavarsdottir, Sigurdardottir, & Tryggvadottir, 2014; Svavarsdottir, Tryggvadottir, & Sigurdardottir, 2012). She presented data on this unprecedented family nursing knowledge translation project, its effect on patients and families, and the effect on the practice and job satisfaction of nurses.

On the second day of the conference, Professor Paivi Åstedt-Kurki, University of Tampere, Finland, presented the third keynote paper, "Families' Health and Family-Centered Nursing—Challenges for Research and Implementation of Results Into Practice in Finland." Dr. Åstedt-Kurki's presentation described research on family-centered nursing in Finland over the past 15 years, and the development from descriptive studies to instrument development, theory formulation, and testing (Åstedt-Kurki, 2010; Åstedt-Kurki & Kaunonen, 2011; Åstedt-Kurki, Tarkka, Rikala, Lehti, & Paavilainen, 2009; Mattila, Kaunonen, Aalto, & Åstedt-Kurki, 2014; Vuorenmaa, Halme, Åstedt-Kurki, Kaunonen, & Perälä, 2014).

Eighteen papers were orally presented at the conference, and there were 20 poster presentations. Oral and poster presentations illuminated the challenges of practicing nursing from a family perspective, and also featured clinical settings in which the family perspective has been shown to offer significant benefits to families' well-being and health outcomes. The presentations covered families across the life cycle, from families with newborn infants to families in which a member is terminally ill, and focused on various clinical settings such as oncology, medical, and psychiatry. Family nursing reflects society as a whole, and in this connection, two trends were apparent in the presentations. One trend focused on various social situations that influence the effects that illness has on a family's experience. This was illuminated from different angles; one example was several presentations on how immigration from one cultural setting to another implied the risk of becoming caught between different values and beliefs about health. Another example was how being given a cancer diagnosis as a teenager differs in relation to the experiences of adult patients, and requires a different family nursing approach to help the individual remain connected to his or her social network. Another trend in the presentations was the exploration of various ways that nurses engage families and offer family interventions. Some studies explored group conversations with families,

others explored the usefulness of family interviews, and still others examined educational materials offered to families.

The conference offered many opportunities for both formal and informal networking, especially during refreshment breaks and at the conference dinner that was held in a romantic old 19th-century restaurant. At the end of the Fourth Nordic Conference on Family-Focused Nursing, all of the participants were invited to participate in the 12th International Family Nursing Conference, which will be held in Odense, August 18-21, 2015 (for more information, see <http://internationalfamilynursing.org/2013/07/11/2015-conference>).

On behalf of the Organizing Committee of the
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