

## EDITORIAL

Attention to Elderly Health is the theme of this second edition of 2008. Nothing could be more appropriate than addressing this topic when our reality reveals the great number health care demands placed on our health care system from this segment of the population. The increase in life expectancy and the numbers of elderly among the total Brazilian population has already passed the level of demographic projections into concrete fact, expressed in census data and observed in our daily care of the elderly. Many of these elders enjoy quality health; however, some bring problems acquired in their adolescence or adult life into their senior years. Others develop diseases to which they are now more susceptible, due to the age level which they reach, such as neurodegenerative diseases, for example. As such, for this client base, care has a fundamental significance, for it is through care that these elders are able to minimize losses of their functional capacities and maximize their potentials.

Thus, the need for Brazilian Nursing to capacitate its professionals in care for an older population also increases, beyond seeking new care technologies which are able to provide better quality care to the elderly individual and his/her caring family. Clients in this role, the Undergraduate Nursing Courses through implanting new curriculum, have been inserting in a more forceful manner basic content concerning elderly care, seeking health promotion and the prevention of grievances. We verify still the growth in the number of students and faculty involved in university extension projects who seek to care for this clientele and their families in the communities in which they are inserted.

This is similar to the situation observed among Graduate Nursing Programs, in which research groups and lines of research have gradually arisen which have permitted the amplification of knowledge in the area of Brazilian Gerontology. From a brief search made in the Brazilian National Council of Scientific and Technological Development (*Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico*), we found registered 84 multiprofessional research groups who work with themes such as: elderly, aging, old, geriatrics, and gerontology. In Geriatric Nursing alone we found 24 research groups with 16 of these registered as of 2000. As such, it is with great pride that we report that the Graduate Nursing Program at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (PEN/UFSC) counts upon the second oldest Brazilian research group to work within this line of research.

The Study Group concerning Health Care for the Elderly (GESPI/PEN/UFSC) was founded in 1982 and commemorates its 25 years of uninterrupted production, including today. Through the pioneering leadership and vanguard vision of its founder and leader, Dr. Lúcia Hisako Takase Gonçalves, GESPI has established itself in the national scenario, contributing to the knowledge construction in the area of geriatric nursing, through the development of research, as well as served as a model for the creation of other research groups. It has also contributed to the formation of human resources through offering undergraduate and graduate-level disciplines (specialization in Gerontology, Master's and Doctorate in Nursing and Health Care); in orientations for senior theses, scientific initiation, specialization theses, Master's Theses, and PhD Dissertations. We highlight its insertion in the university extension as one of its highlights, in which has developed continuous flux projects for more than 14 years, as well as its integration with other projects of the same

nature, such as the Nucleus for Elderly Studies of the of the Dean's Office of Culture and Extension (NETI/PRCE/UFSC) and the Interdisciplinary Nucleus for Geriatric Research, Teaching, and Care of the University Hospital (NIPEG/HU/UFSC).

Facing this scenario, paying attention to elderly health care and their family members is a question which has been becoming part of the agenda of concerns for an ever increasing number of health care professionals, especially in nursing. The emergence of this interest is due to the consciences of these professionals concerning their role in the context of a generalized lack of social and health care resources, as well as professionals to assist these clients. As an ethical question, we must keep in mind that in order to offer quality care, we need to increasingly invest in research and human resource capacitation.

Dra. Silvia Maria Azevedo dos Santos

*– Adjunct Professor of the Nursing Department and Nursing Graduate Program (PEN) at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), Member of the Research Group about Health Care for the Elderly (GESPI/PEN/UFSC) –*

Dra. Lúcia Hisako Takase Gonçalves

*– Adjunct Professor of the Nursing Department and Nursing Graduate Program at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, Leader of the GESPI/PEN/UFSC. National Counsel of Technological and Scientific Development (CNPq) Researcher - Productivity in 1B Research –*