

organised the fun day, with a 5 km fun-run, bands, St John Ambulance display and a parade of banners depicting the history of nursing.

Funds collected will be used to send Mitchell's Plain nurses to the nursing association's centenary congress in Bloemfontein.

Nurses' Bank

Schemes: A

Potential Solution

to the reported

Shortage of Nurses

in RSA

Research conducted during 1989 to ascertain the professional educational needs of non-practising nurses registered with the SANC, yielded serendipitous findings which could be of significance in enabling larger numbers of non-practising nurses to re-enter the nursing profession successfully (Ehlers, V. J. 1990. *The professional educational needs of non-practising nurses registered with the South African Nursing Council*. D. Litt et Phil thesis. Pretoria: UNISA. p. 255).

Out of 380 usable postal questionnaires which had been returned to the researcher, the following findings emerged relative to the non-practising nurses registered with the SANC:

- the majority (71%) abandoned the nursing profession for family-related reasons;
- four factors had been identified as being most important in determining their potential professional re-entry; namely
 - the ability to work the hours of their choice (90%);
 - the assurance that they would work only in the department of their choice (88%);
 - earning a good salary (79%); and
 - the availability of an effective nurse re-entry course (76%).

Thus these findings would seem to indicate that the majority of non-practising nurses registered with the SANC would be willing to re-enter the profession *provided* they could work *when* and *where* they preferred to do so. However, the inability to work where and when they wanted to do so, prohibited these nurses from re-entering their profession. It could be exceedingly difficult for nurse administrators, already working beyond their capacities due to staff shortages, to face the burden of enabling nurses to work when and where they wanted to do so.

This problem has been addressed, especially in the United Kingdom, by instituting so-called "nurses bank schemes". These schemes imply that hospitals (and other employers of nurses) list their names with the nurses' bank in their vicinity. The bank also maintains records of registered nurses in its area, their qualifications and availability for specific duties. Each week the employers notify the bank of their needs for the following week. The bank then matches these requests with the nurses' available services and notifies the nurses concerned. The bank does not guarantee nurses to the services, nor jobs to the nurses, but merely undertakes to match the available nurses with the services' needs.

Not only non-practising nurses seem to participate in these bank schemes, but also many nurses who are no longer employed in the clinical field but who want to maintain their clinical skills. The only requirement would be that each bank nurse should work at least 6 hours per month.

No such scheme seems to exist in the Republic of South Africa. In order to determine the viability of instituting a nurses' bank scheme further research would be warranted.

Any nurse interested in becoming a potential 'bank nurse' should please write to:

Dr Valerie Ehlers
266 Pat Dyer Avenue
ERASMUSRAND
0181.

Please supply your name, address, telephone number, age, professional qualifications, and indicate where and when you would like to work.

To Name a Rose

A brand new rose, "Nursing Centenary" was handed to the President of the South African Nursing Association (SANA), Dr Anna-Marie Bruwër at a morning tea today. The rose was specially cultivated as part of the commemoration for SANA's hundred years of the State Registration of Nurses and Midwives.

The rose was grown by Mr Ludwig Taschner, a well-known rose grower of South Africa. This Noble Rose symbolises a century of professional nursing. The rose has a particularly sweet scent and the buds open very slowly.

Rose lovers will be able to buy the rose at Ludwigs Roses from August. Tel (012) 544-0144.

High HIV Infection in Natal

Dr Rina Venter, Minister of National Health and Health Services, has announced that the highest incidence of HIV positive pregnant women in South Africa occurred in the Natal/Kwazulu region.

In the survey conducted during October/November 1990, tests were done on 14 376 blood samples taken from anonymous pregnant women attending ante-natal clinics.

A positive geographic distribution was also found.

The highest incidence of HIV infection was found in Natal/Kwazulu (1,61 percent) followed by the Free State and Transvaal (0,58 and 0,53 percent respectively). The lowest incidence occurred in the Cape (0,16 percent).

The sample was selected from pregnant women because they are believed to be most representative of the general population.

Extrapolations from the results gave an estimated total of 73 948 HIV-infected people in South Africa at the end of last year.