NURSING COMPUTER USE STUDIES

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Moderator Statement

The use of computers is becoming common among youth, some of whom save their first $1,000 to buy their own computer, and they soon become fluent in a number of computer languages. They write their own programs, develop new games they can sell or swap, and on occasion contribute to the improvement in the way their school's computer system is operated. They develop electronic bulletin boards to share information, form software companies with shareholders, and one 15-year-old boy helped his physician-father manage his practice better by developing an accounts payable program and another program that charts patients' medical progress. These enterprising youths are not aided particularly by the computer and see it as a tool that works for them. They see the technology as something that allows them to be creative, but after awhile some students wonder where that will lead them and they may think of computer design, developing robots, and artificial intelligence as further challenges.

Nurses have not moved this rapidly in becoming facile with computers, partly because in their youth they were not exposed to them, and even today schools of nursing are slow to take on the responsibility for incorporating into curricula the use of computers in problem solving and research in nursing. This is beginning to change, because of the pressure in universities to see that all faculty and students become computer literate. In addition, more individual nurses are buying their own home computers, learning to use them, and becoming excited about the great assistance they are to them personally in such areas as teleconferencing, searching the literature, and writing for publication. With more nurses becoming comfortable in viewing the computer as a tool of use to them and their students, there soon should be evidence of greater use of computers in nursing. And, as nurses become comfortable in working with computers, they too may become creative in applying this tool to problems in nursing practice, nursing education, nursing administration, and the development of data bases that will be helpful in answering research questions in each aspect of nursing.

The papers in this session on Nursing: Computer Use Studies show efforts on the part of four investigators to learn about nurses' views of the benefits of computer use, as well as the facilitators and deterrents to having nurses move along in the application of computers to nursing. One of the papers pertains to nursing faculty's expressed learning needs and their willingness to accept and use computers. The second investigator is concerned with the degree to which deans of nursing have ready access to microcomputers and their use of these in the dean's day-to-day administrative activities. The third research team is interested in the difference between the so-called nurse pacesetters and the middle-majority in their expectations regarding the use of computers and the extent to which they are inclined to sell or swap, and on occasion contribute to the improvement in the way their school's computer system is operated. They develop electronic bulletin boards to share information, form software companies with shareholders, and one 15-year-old boy helped his physician-father manage his practice better by developing an accounts payable program and another program that charts patients' medical progress. These enterprising youths are not aided particularly by the computer and see it as a tool that works for them. They see the technology as something that allows them to be creative, but after awhile some students wonder where that will lead them and they may think of computer design, developing robots, and artificial intelligence as further challenges.

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