

The Index of Nursing Research

Debra Unsworth, Nursing Research Librarian, Room 105 Hannibal House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY.

For brevity, the term 'nurse' is taken to include midwives and health visitors also.

The Index of Nursing Research (INR) was established in the DHSS Library* in 1976. Initially a card index, it lists details of published UK nursing research, as well as details of research undertaken by nurses. It includes books, theses, reports and periodical articles plus details of research currently in progress and research completed but not published by conventional routes.

The criteria for inclusion of nursing research is that it should have implications for the profession, nurse education, practice, management or organisation.

In 1983, the DHSS Library set up its own database, DHSS-Data. This is effectively the catalogue of the DHSS Library and covers all the social policy issues of concern to the two Departments, such as health and personal social services, social problems, social security and health service administration. The holdings of the INR are now integrated into this database, which is available for searching online via DataStar.

All items listed in the INR contain

full bibliographic details, plus keywords and an abstract. Records can be searched by author / researcher, title, keywords, or using free-text.

All records prior to 1983 are also listed (including retrospective material back to 1968). These do not as yet contain keywords and are searchable only by free-text.

Information for the INR is collected by two main methods.

- i) The Librarian reviews current literature in nursing and related professions.
- ii) Details of unpublished research and research currently in progress are gathered by means of an annual mailing to all institutions involved in nursing studies, plus regional health authorities, and special groups such as Regional Representatives on Nursing Research who liaise with the Department of Health.

All nurses involved in research projects, however local or small-scale, are

invited to submit details.

The INR was set up to provide an information service to the Nursing Division of the Department, and to the nursing profession as a whole.

DHSS-Data is widely available online, and many institutions involved in nursing studies have access to the database. However, for those who are unable to access DHSS-Data, the Librarian provides an information service, including printed bibliographies produced on request, free of charge.

Recent additions to the INR are listed in the quarterly abstracting journal *Nursing Research Abstracts*. This began publication in 1978, and a retrospective volume covering the years 1968-1976 has also been published.

The journal is available from DHSS Leaflets Unit, PO Box 21, Stanmore, Middx HA7 1AY, at a cost of £14.00 per annum or £3.50 per issue for 1991. Earlier issues are available back to 1981. Issues prior to 1981 may be borrowed for photocopying by libraries. Details of prices and availability can be obtained by phoning the Librarian.

The INR is a valuable resource for the nursing profession. Whilst it cannot claim to be comprehensive, it aims to list UK nursing research completed and in progress. (The latter being a very 'grey' area).

Each issue of the journal contains a copy of the datasheet used to submit details of nursing research. This can be copied freely; or ring the Librarian to obtain copies of the datasheet - make it available in your library and encourage nurses (students, tutors, managers, practising nurses) to submit details of their projects.

Contact the Nursing Research Librarian, Debra Unsworth, Room 105 Hannibal House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY. Telephone 071 972 2551 (direct line).

* After the division of the DHSS into two departments in 1988, the Library Service, funded by the Department of Health, continued to provide a Service to the Department of Social Security. The common service is now known as the Department of Health & Social Security Library Service.