Occupational Health Nursing Around the World

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Occupational health nurses practice in towns and countries all around the world. Their job titles and responsibilities along with the services they provide may differ but one characteristic is the same—passion for ensuring healthy and safe work environments for the workers they serve. This calling to promote health and safety is at the core of occupational health nursing.

As the premier organization for occupational health nurses, dedicated to advancing and maximizing health, safety, and productivity, the American Association of Occupational Health Nurses, Inc. (AAOHN) is expanding its international reach. In May 2010, the AAOHN International Committee was established at the request of many members who have growing responsibilities for global health initiatives and the need to collaborate with their international colleagues. This committee is dedicated to developing partnerships with other international occupational health organizations, expanding the international membership base, understanding occupational health practice worldwide, and fostering discussion about trends in occupational health nursing around the world.

The AAOHN Board of Directors set forth a number of short- and long-term goals for this committee, including:
- Identification of global health and safety trends.
- Development of global nursing products for members with international responsibilities.
- Development of products, tools, and education to build skills for international practice.
- Development of a new membership category for international colleagues.

The committee’s 2010–2011 goals were:
- Short-term goal: To develop an International Resource Listing for South Africa, Western Europe, Asia Pacific, and South America.
- Long-term goal: To develop International Membership category recommendations.

In March 2011, the International Committee announced production of the first international tool, which is now available on the AAOHN website for members. The tool is an International Resource Listing that outlines:
- Basic nursing education by country.
- Training offered beyond graduation.
- Country-specific occupational health nursing education.
- Country-specific occupational health nursing certification.

The resource listing did not contain an exhaustive list of all countries when it was first published but is being currently expanded to include the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the Middle East, in addition to the initial key countries in South America, Western Europe, and Asia Pacific. The tool will continue to be updated at least annually by committee members.

The committee presented a proposal for an AAOHN International Membership category to the Board. 

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of Directors. This draft proposal was approved by the Board of Directors in February 2012. The value of international membership is to:

- Foster and encourage international membership growth.
- Bring global perspectives about the field of occupational health nursing to AAOHN members.
- Provide international networking and sharing of best practices, standards, and resources.
- Give international members access to the AAOHN national conference and webinars.
- Offer a cost-effective alternative to full AAOHN membership to those who may not have access to the same resources that are available in the United States.

The proposal approved by the AAOHN Board and sent to the By-Laws Committee for membership approval in the fall of 2012 includes:

- Membership would be open to all nurses practicing outside the United States, Canada, or U.S. Territories.
- Dues would be $60 on a revolving 12-month basis, with conference attendance fees the same as those for students and retirees. Reduced fees would encourage membership from other countries with other nursing associations (dual membership) or by nurses who practice in developing countries.
- Membership benefits would include:
  - Committee participation.
  - Online access to journals.
  - Electronic newsletters.
  - Networking.
  - Employment information.
  - Practice Standards.
  - Advisories.
- International Resource Listing.
- Access to AAOHN national conference and webinars.
- Offering quarterly webinars on global health.
- Featuring articles on international topics from the speakers at the Global Summit and articles on global topics on a quarterly basis in *Workplace Health & Safety*.
- Sponsoring a continuing nursing education trip to the 5th Annual FOHNEU (Federation on Occupational Health Nursing in the European Union) meeting in Tarragona, Spain, September 19 to 21, 2012.

The title of the 30th International Congress on Occupational Health, held in Cancun, Mexico, March 18 to 23, 2012, was “Occupational Health for All: From Research to Practice.” This theme resonated throughout the Congress in the symposia, mini-symposia, and special sessions focusing on proactive risk management practices and innovative solution-based approaches. The week was filled with lively discussions and debates among occupational health experts from around the world.

With this issue of *Workplace Health & Safety*, the AAOHN International Committee launches its quarterly focus on international occupational health nursing. Articles will feature U.S. colleagues who are providing occupational health programs and services around the world, along with spotlights on occupational health nurses who live and work in countries outside the United States. These articles will broaden understanding of and appreciation for those who deliver services to promote safety, health, and well-being for the hundreds of millions of workers worldwide.