

## AIHA's Nursing Quality Improvement Program Showcased at World Alliance for Patient Safety Meeting in Moscow

AIHA's Nursing Quality Improvement Program (NQIP), which was launched in Armenia and Russia in 2001, was highlighted during a session on nursing and patient safety the World Health Organization's World Alliance for Patient Safety Meeting held in Moscow last December.



Linda Aiken presents the results of research on nursing and patient safety performed at NQIP sites. (Photo courtesy of Linda Aiken)

"This is the first time the World Alliance has included nursing in its program and it was a great opportunity to demonstrate the success of the Magnet implementation in Armenia and Russia," says Linda Aiken, NQIP coordinator and director of the Center for Health Outcomes and Policy Research at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing.

Aiken is one of those dedicated researchers who took a risk four years ago to explore the applicability of the US hospital quality improvement model known as the Magnet Hospital Nursing Service Recognition Program in selected units of two Armenian and two Russian hospitals associated with AIHA partnerships. Prior to this, magnet experience had historically been with well-resourced healthcare systems in English-speaking countries. (For more information about NQIP, please see: ["Four AIHA Partnerships Receive International Award for Excellence in Nursing"](#)).

During a session titled, "Patient Safety, Nursing, Doctors and Teamwork," Aiken—along with Yakov Nakatis, president of Hospital No.122 in Saint Petersburg, which was one of the four NQIP sites—explained the AIHA partnership model and the importance of nursing to patient safety. In her presentation, Aiken shared the results of research linking nursing and patient safety in different countries, including Armenia and Russia.

The research was conducted at the NQIP sites and was a collaborative effort of the University of Pennsylvania, AIHA, and the Center for Health Services Research and Development at the American University of Armenia. "Our purpose was to gather baseline data on nursing care and work environment from the perspectives of both nurses and patients against which the impact of Magnet program will be measured," Aiken says, explaining that the research was also sought to pilot test the survey methodology and instruments used in previous similar studies in North American and European Hospitals.

Presenting the research findings at his hospital, Nakatis emphasized that the implementation of Magnet standards significantly improved the foundation for nursing quality, enhanced their managerial and leadership role, and influenced better doctor-nurse relationships. For example, the ability of nurse to handle managerial tasks increased from 10 percent in 2001 to 89 percent in 2004; decisions based on evidence-based practices rose from 5 percent to 80 percent; participation of nurses in hospital affairs increased from 30 percent to 72 percent; the number of doctors and nurses who have good working relationships increased from 50 percent to 92 percent; and at present 80 percent of doctors versus 50 percent in 2001 recognize the important contribution nurses make to high quality of care.

The improvements in patient safety, according to Nakatis, have also been evident. First of all, the medication errors decreased by one-third, the number of complaints lodged by patients and their families dropped by 30 percent, and the number of nurses reporting excellent quality of care went up by 10 percent.



Yakov Nakatis and Linda Aiken. (Photo courtesy of Linda Aiken)

According to Aiken, the research has proven that comprehensive organizational support, good practice environment for nurses, adequate nurse staffing, and appropriate education of nurses—all key principles promoted by the Magnet program—have contributed to the culture of safety. These principles also stimulate better patient outcomes, including fewer adverse patient events and lower mortality. "The research demonstrates that these associations can be documented in countries with differently organized and financed healthcare systems, including Russia," she points out.

Commenting on how the program was perceived by participants, Aiken concludes, "Our paper was exceptional for the conference in that it was data-based, demonstrated the applicability of safety issues in the Russian context, and actually included the only presentation by a Russian. Hopefully, our good showing will facilitate other positive outcomes in Russia and in other countries of the former Soviet Union characterized by a long-standing underinvestment in professional nursing."

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