

“New Kid on the Block”: Family Nursing Initiatives in the Netherlands

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The first Family Nursing initiative in the Netherlands was launched in 2015. The research group Nursing Diagnostics of the Hanze University of Applied Sciences in Groningen (the Netherlands) was granted 50,000 Euros by the Centre of Expertise Healthy Ageing (CoE-HA).

The CoE-HA defines an innovation lab (I-lab) as a network of organizations focused on practice, research, education, and entrepreneurship, aimed at open innovation and co-creation in “solving” problems in society (see Figure 1).

The I-lab Family Care established at the Hanze University of Applied Sciences focuses on the impact on society related to extensive changes in the Dutch health care system. Due to these changes, there is an increasing emphasis on the patients’ and families’ own responsibility for health. Families are increasingly expected to participate in the care of their family member. This caregiving role can be very demanding and potentially has a great impact on the life and well-being of these families. Family relationships may change dramatically as a result of caregiving.

The health care organizations participating in the I-lab Family Care acknowledged the potential value of family nursing principles in dealing with the current developments in health care. They recognized that nurses, in particular, fulfill an important role in strengthening family functioning and preventing burden in families experiencing illness.

The primary objective of the I-lab Family Care is to organize, support, and facilitate family care in a better way with help from professional health care. The I-lab specifically aims to do this by developing, implementing, and testing “Family Nursing Conversation” (FNCs) as a nursing intervention to promote or improve family functioning and to prevent burden in families who are dealing with health problems.

The I-lab Family Care recently developed and tested a 6-day training program for practicing nurses (and nursing students) with the goal of encouraging these learners to embrace a family-oriented approach and increase their capacity to offer FNCs. Results supported that the training program was effective in developing competencies necessary to perform FNCs (Broekema, Luttik, Steggerda, Paans, & Roodbol, in press). Furthermore,

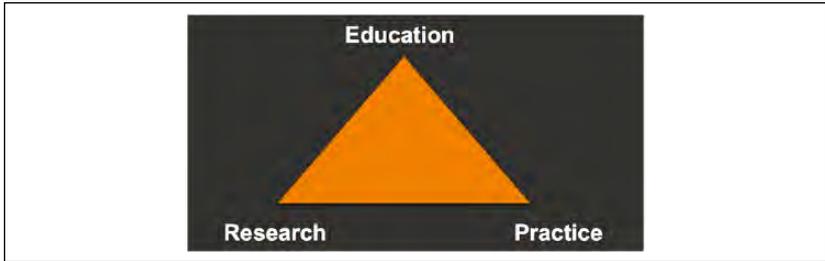


Figure 1. I-lab working in the triangle of research, education and practice.

FNCs have been applied in practice settings and are now being studied for nurses' fidelity to the guideline and for families' perspectives on the benefits of these conversations.

The I-lab Family Care has led to important results:

1. Family Care is now identified as one of the core themes within the multidisciplinary CoE-HA.
2. To build on the body of knowledge regarding this core theme, the research group Nursing Diagnostics formulated the following mission statement about its future program of research: "To gain knowledge and evidence needed to develop effective family focused approaches and interventions supporting families in different phases of life, dealing with different health issues, and in different health care settings."

A program of research has now evolved with four PhD trajectories addressing the following themes: *FNCs in primary care*, *Family involvement in hospital care for the elderly*, *Young adults growing up with a chronically ill family member*, and *Families caring for a family member dealing with addiction*.

3. A mission statement regarding the education of bachelor nurses at the Hanze University of Applied Sciences in Groningen was formulated and adopted within the nursing curriculum Bachelor 2020: "Nurses, graduating from the School of Nursing at the Hanze University of Applied Sciences in Groningen, view, think, and act from the care-situation as a whole in which the focus is always about the patient or client in conjunction with his family or social system. Furthermore, nurses feel responsible for the health and well-being of the patient and

his family or social system and have the competencies to carry out a family (nursing) conversations.”

The exciting accomplishments of the I-lab Family Care since 2015 were celebrated at the *International 2-day Conference: Family Health over the Lifespan*, held in Groningen, the Netherlands, in February 2018. Approximately 200 researchers, health care professionals, lecturers, and students from 13 different countries attended the conference.

The conference had a multidisciplinary focus and featured eight keynote lectures, 32 paper presentations, and 40 poster presentations. Forty nursing students participated in the conference by presenting their research which was conducted in the context of their bachelor thesis. Furthermore, participants were actively invited and engaged in round-table sessions to discuss strategies to develop a more family-focused health care around the world. For more information about this exciting conference see aftermovie (<https://youtu.be/WHgXLAS1n2A>) and abstract book (<https://indd.adobe.com/view/24b90ef0-1aa0-43ea-8f7f-05ea8b35d367>).

Although there is still a great deal of work to do, we feel that, as a “new kid on the block” within the international family nursing community, we have made important first steps and we hope to stay on this successful track in the coming years.

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Reference

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Author Biographies

Marie Louise Luttik, PhD, RN, is an associate professor at the Research Group Nursing Diagnostics, Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen, The Netherlands. She has become an experienced trainer in family-focused knowledge and skills as well as an experienced researcher with a focus on Family Care and Family Nursing. Her research interest includes Family Health Care Nursing over the full lifespan ranging from the care for newborn infant to care at the end-of-life. Recent publications include “Aspects of Family Caregiving as Addressed in Planned Discussions Between Nurses, Patients With Chronic Diseases and Family Caregivers: A Qualitative Content Analysis” in *BMC Nursing* (2017, with E. I. Hagedoorn

et al.), "Attitudes of Nurses Towards Family Involvement in the Care for Patients With Cardiovascular Diseases" in *European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing* (2017, with Goossens et al.), and "Exploring Partners' Perspectives on Participation in Heart Failure Home Care: A Mixed-Method Design" in *Journal of Advanced Nursing* (2017, with L. Nasstrom, E. Idvall, & A. Stromberg).

Wolter Paans, PhD, RN, is a professor at the Research Group Nursing Diagnostics, Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Groningen, The Netherlands. His research focus is on critical reasoning, communication, documentation, and hand over in the nursing process. The dynamic, systemic approach in family health care in acute and intensive care settings is one of his current research interests. Recent publications include "Aspects of Family Caregiving as Addressed in Planned Discussions Between Nurses, Patients With Chronic Diseases and Family Caregivers: A Qualitative Content Analysis" in *BMC Nursing* (2017, with E. I. Hagedoorn et al.), "A Dynamic Approach to Communication in Health Literacy Education" in *BMC Medical Education* (2016, with H. Veenker & W. Paans), and "Modern times in Nursing" (by Research Group Nursing Diagnostics, retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1TcmOtCBz54>).