

## **Madeleine M Leininger and Transcultural Nursing in Australia - an appreciation**

**Dr Akram Omeri, OAM, PhD, RN, CTN-A, TCN-Scholar, FACN**

Reflecting on the development of TCN in Australia, my thoughts for this paper turned to my friend and mentor, the late Madeleine Leininger, whose Culture Care theory has guided my research and teaching and made me someone with a life-time commitment to Transcultural informed theoretical perspectives as a discipline of practice and research.

I already had transnational experience when I came to Australia from Iran in 1971. My basic education had taken place in Lebanon, my midwifery certificate was gained in Manchester in England and my tertiary qualifications BSN and MN from the University of Washington in Seattle. I had been involved in healthcare experiences in these and other countries.

Once in Australia, I took a position as nurse educator, at Prince Henry, Prince of Wales hospitals, teaching maternal-child health as well as other health sciences such as microbiology...and supervising students in clinical practice. I was then invited to the position with the WHO Collaborating Centre for the Western Pacific Region, University of New South Wales. This position was created as part of health care reforms that aimed to shift the emphasis in health care from hospital to community care. The aim was to care for people within or near their communities and to cope with the increasing cultural diverse nature of the population. Immigration brought significant changes in health care. To promote social cohesion the Federal Government in the 1970s adopted multiculturalism a social policy that prohibited discrimination on the basis of race or culture.

I was well aware of changes in the healthcare system could see the necessity of preparing nurses to work with patients from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. I accepted a position as Team Leader of a Multidisciplinary Community Health Care setting in Newtown, an inner city suburb. This involved the management of a multidisciplinary healthcare team, including physical health, mental health and social welfare services, engaged in meeting the health care needs of a culturally and linguistically diverse population. This

position was the beginning of my planning with the team to deliver culturally congruent care for the diverse patient population.

I had read about cultural diversity and culturally and linguistically diverse communities and began to examine diversity and care. I came across *Nursing & Anthropology: Two Worlds to Blend By*, Madeleine Leininger (1970). I was eager to find out more and that is when my Journey in Transcultural began. I wrote to Madeleine Leininger and was welcomed by her and she invited me to do a course in Transcultural Nursing at Wayne State University in preparation for Teaching TCN.

Madeleine Leininger was a leading nurse theorist in Transcultural nursing as I began my search to expand my ideas and knowledge in nursing education and practice. I began reading transcultural nursing literature and to follow and apply its concepts as I saw the need in my practice to improve care for people of diverse cultures.

To achieve this goal, I conducted a survey of schools of nursing in 1991 to establish the status of transcultural nursing in the 47 schools extant at that time and I established the need for transcultural nursing education in Australia. I also facilitated collaboration between Transcultural Nursing Society and the Royal College of Nursing, Australia (RCNA) in an attempt to promote and encourage national leadership in transcultural nursing and to move beyond mono-cultural practices towards culturally meaningful care, congruent with diverse cultural values and beliefs, to improve care in ways meaningful to clients, families, communities and organizations.

To this end, after undertaking studies at Wayne State University with Dr Leininger in 1992 and 1994 and completing my doctorate at the University of Sydney in transcultural nursing, the first to do so in this discipline. I undertook research, using *Culture-Care* theory, to advance transcultural nursing. I began to design transcultural nursing courses at undergraduate and graduate levels and taught these courses at Cumberland College of Health Sciences and the Faculty of Nursing, the University of Sydney. I followed Madeleine Leininger's *Culture-Care concepts and her Culture Care Theory* and utilized them in my teaching, research and supervision of higher degree students.

Since then policies relevant and specific to Transcultural nursing have been developed nationally by the RCNA (now Australian College of Nursing ACN) as well as curricula at the Faculty of Nursing in Sydney. In this process of establishing Transcultural nursing in Australia collaborative conferences followed.

***The First Transcultural Nursing Conference was held in 1992 in Sydney and was followed in 1997, and 2000 by an international conference The first National conferences as a result of collaboration between Transcultural Nursing Society Global, Faculty of Nursing, University of Sydney and the RCNA. (see attached photos).***

All throughout such huge undertakings, Dr Leininger was generous in her support of my endeavours and assisted me to progress from student to independent researcher and advocate for TCN in Australia and Globally. She facilitated my participation in transcultural nursing courses and provided advice and supervision in my research. She was always available to give advice and guided me through a busy era of significant achievement in Transcultural nursing in Australia. Through her mentorship I realized the significance of Transcultural nursing and its place in nursing education and research to improve nursing practice in diverse care settings in Australia and wherever I travelled.

I pay special tribute to Madeleine M Leininger as a guide and leader in Transcultural nursing and human care, but also as a friend. Her ideas will carry into the future as no other nursing theory can fit today's world of nursing in providing meaningful care to people. I shall continue to be an advocate for her noble ideas that have added a new and significant field of study to enrich the profession of nursing.

***She will be dearly missed by me!***



Left to right: Patricia Malcolm (Faculty), Professor F M Jones, Head of School at Cumberland; Madeleine Leininger presenting a copy of her CCT Book to Judith Kinnear, Dean of Cumberland College of Health Sciences, Dr Akram Omeri, OAM, Lecturer and organizer; S ...Head of Continuing Education at CCHS



Professor FM Jones, Head of School of Nursing at Cumberland CHS welcoming Madeleine Leininger upon arrival and celebrating her Birthday at Wan Foo Chinese Restaurant Australia. Opening the first TCN Conference in Australia at CCHS. D. Angel representing the Australian College of Nursing.

## Annual Transcultural Nursing Founder's Course Attracts Nurses Worldwide

Each year since the early 1970's, the Founder of transcultural nursing has offered a graduate course to meet the critical need of helping interested nurses gain in-depth knowledge about the field of transcultural nursing. The Summer course of 1992 brought nurses from Australia, Belgium, Taiwan, The Netherlands, Guam, Canada, Finland, Thailand, Belgium, Philippines, Africa, and from many places within the United States of America. The three week intensive graduate course on transcultural nursing was held May 11-30, 1992 with Professor M. Leininger (see picture) at Wayne State University, College of Nursing. It was exciting and encouraging to

see the sharing of ideas from different countries and cultures with a transcultural nursing perspective. Several nurses found the course helped them to gain many new and important insights about the growing and relevant field of transcultural nursing under the guidance of the Founder. Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan remains a leader to provide master (MSN) and doctoral (Ph.D.) preparation specific to teaching, research, and clinical practice in transcultural nursing. The course is being planned to be offered from May 10-30, 1993 and is limited to 25-30 nurses. If interested, write to Dr. Madeleine Leininger by November 10, 1992.



*Some transnational nurse participants in the transcultural nursing course were: (back row, left to right) Virginia Lan of Taiwan, Maureen Fochman of Guam, Professor Madeleine Leininger, Deidre Giesen of The Netherlands, Anna Divina of the Philippines, (front row, left to right) Irene Buckland Foster and Bonnie Jarvis of Canada, Carolyn Wright of USA, and Akram Omeri of Australia. (Not pictured Ansa Kallinen of Finland and Margaret Phillips working in Thailand).*



## First Transcultural Nursing conference spells out the need to go beyond cultural rhetoric

The first Transcultural Nursing conference in Australia was conducted by the School of Nursing, in July and was opened by Dean Judith Kinnear. The two day event attracted an audience of nurse academics and practitioners from all states in Australia and the Western Pacific Region.

Keynote speaker was Dr Madeleine Leininger, Professor of Nursing and Anthropology at Wayne State University, Detroit, USA. Prof Leininger is a leader in human care research and theory, and the founder of Transcultural Nursing in the United States.

In her paper, Professor Leininger, stated that the care of people with widely different health concerns and cultural values was a challenge to all health personnel. The need for human care was especially critical in a world of stress, fear and violence. Nurses especially needed to focus on care, she said, as the central, distinct and major unifying component of nursing theory, research and clinical practice.

Other speakers at the conference were Professor Dorothy Angell, Monash University; Ms Veronica Arbon, Senior Lecturer, School of Community Health; Dr Barbara Ferguson, Senior Lecturer in Social Work, The University of NSW; Associate Professor Faith M. Jones, Ms Olga Kanitsaki, Senior Lecturer, La Trobe University; and Ms Marie Roberts, Associate Lecturer, School of Nursing.

### Cultural rhetoric

Earlier in the year, Nursing lecturer Ms Akram Omeri, completed a course in Transcultural Nursing under Professor Leininger. Ms Omeri supports the view of Professor Leininger that a network of nurses needs to be established to move beyond the traditional and rhetorical topics of 'cultural awareness', 'cultural sensitivity', and 'cultural diversity'. "I believe that we should be focusing upon establishing, developing and using Transcultural Nursing knowledge and skills to reflect this speciality area and to advance the discipline of nursing", she said.

Proceedings from the conference, organised jointly by the School of Nursing and the Centre for Continuing Education of Cumberland campus, will be available in the near future.



*Prof Madeleine M Leininger, Founder of Transcultural Nursing*



*From right Ms Shan Wolody, CCE, Ms Akram Omeri, Lecturer, Prof Judith Kinnear, Prof Madeleine M Leininger, Wayne State University, Detroit USA., Assoc Prof Faith M Jones, Ms Patricia Malcolm, Chairperson, Continuing Education Committee, S.O.N.*

First Transcultural Nursing conference spells out the need to go beyond cultural rhetoric. 13-14 July 1992. Cumberland College of Health Sciences, The School of Nursing and the Centre for Continuing Education of Cumberland Campus.

Incumber, August 1992, p. 3



**Dr Madeleine Leininger, Founder of *Transcultural Nursing and Culture Care Theory*, arriving at Cumberland College of Health Sciences, the University of Sydney, Lidcombe, NSW, Australia, in 1992, TCN Conference.**

**Dr Akram Omeri, is welcoming the guests...**

**PROFESSIONAL VISITS & STUDY:**

**Dr Akram Omeri, PhD, RN, CTN, FRCNA**

**1. DAR AL HEKMA COLLEGE & King Faisal Specialist Hospital & Research Centre,  
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, August 2006-February 2007.**

Thank you for welcoming me to DAR AL HEKMA COLLEGE & King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The experience has been rich and comprehensive in the special setting with emphasis on Islamic practices. I have learnt a great deal about lifeway practices and programs in day-to-day interactions with student and staff. Additionally, having taught 2 major Theoretical and clinical subjects namely Maternal – Infant care and community Healthcare Nursing, in the Department of Nursing, I have a **New** perspectives in nursing and health care in the Islamic world, with new experiences which have enriched my perspectives in nursing and healthcare towards a new vision for **Culture-specific & Competent care**, impacting health care and also role of women is Islam.

Thank you for the opportunity. It is with great pleasure to inform you that my experiences during the past six months have been **new, rich, different and challenging**. As such, it has equipped me with new perspectives with an insider perspective based on Islamic values impacting health and nursing care with a new vision impacting roles of women.

My report is of value to those who value diverse approaches to Care and caring.

Best wishes,

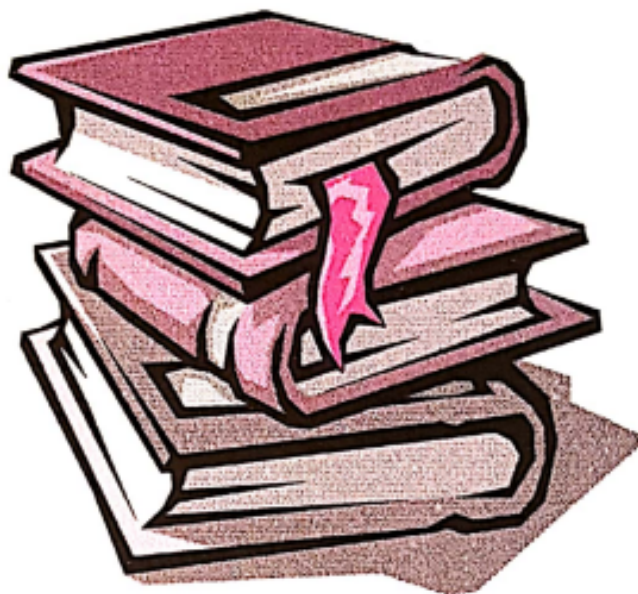
Akram Omeri, OAM, PhD, RN, CTN-A, FACN

For full report and details please contact Dr Akram Omeri on (Mobile: 0403 761 488).





The University of Sydney  
Faculty of Nursing



*Readings in*  
**Transcultural Nursing**

Flexible Learning Mode:  
Master of Nursing: FCNU5023  
Semester 2/2002

*Akram Omeri, RN, PhD, CTN*

C:TCNREADINGS2002

Teaching package in *Transcultural Nursing* for students undertaking a full course of study and research in Transcultural Nursing at Cumberland College of Health Sciences and the Faculty of Nursing, the University of Sydney, with modifications and revisions as necessary. Prepared by Dr Akram Omeri, OAM, PhD, RN, CTN-A, TCN-Scholar, FACN (Not for Circulation).

# New South Wales Charter of Principles for a Culturally Diverse Society

## Preamble

The Government of New South Wales (NSW) regards the cultural and linguistic diversity of the state's population as a valuable national resource which enhances all aspects of life.

In order to maximise this resource, the Government will adopt a Charter of basic principles to guide all Government activity. These principles will apply to all aspects of the social, cultural, political, legal and economic life of NSW on which public institutions impact.

Pursuant to the Government's commitment, all NSW institutions will be required to diversify their policies and activities in order to realise the full potential of the population.

## Principles for a Culturally Diverse Society

1. All individuals in NSW should have the greatest possible opportunity to contribute to, and participate in, all levels of public life.
2. All individuals and public institutions should respect and accommodate the culture, language and religion of others within an Australian legal and institutional framework where English is the primary language.
3. All individuals should have the greatest possible opportunity to make use of and participate in relevant activities and programs provided and/or administered by NSW government institutions.
4. All NSW public institutions should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the NSW population as a valuable resource and utilise and promote this resource to maximise the development of the state.

## Application

This Charter will be reflected in all Government policies, activities, and in its dealings with the non-government sector. It will inform and influence all public institutions. It will establish objectives for the NSW public sector. Public sector managers will demonstrate commitment to the Principles of this Charter.

Within this framework, the Minister for Ethnic Affairs will be the principal reference point for all Ministers and the Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales will be the principal reference point for all departments, instrumentalities, institutions and agents on issues related to this Charter.

Copied on .....(date) on behalf of the  
University of Sydney pursuant to Part VB  
of the Copyright Act as amended.

Sydney, February 1993

The University of Sydney  
Faculty of Nursing  
FCNU5023



This book of reading has been prepared to facilitate your learning and study relating to a variety of topics in the Unit of Study in Transcultural Nursing. Each section includes a number of readings, representing only few approaches and views on specific topics. These by no means are the only approaches, but a start to readings from a wide list of references provided relating to topics under discussion.

It is predicted that readings in this volume will give you an excellent overview of the major content areas of this unit.

Sincerely,

Akram Omeri, RN, PhD, CTN  
Senior Lecturer  
Unit Coordinator  
Phone: 61-2-9351 0583  
Email: [aomeri@nursing.usyd.edu.au](mailto:aomeri@nursing.usyd.edu.au)

*Akram Omeri, RN, PhD, CTN Transcultural Nursing: Book or Readings 2001*



# Nursing lecturer wins top international award

BY ANNE GARZIN

The Nursing Faculty's Dr Akram Omeri is the first Australian recipient of the prestigious Leininger Transcultural Nursing Award.

A senior lecturer in the Department of Nursing Practice, Dr Omeri received the 1998 Leininger Award at the annual Transcultural Nursing Convention held recently in Secaucus in the United States.

The Leininger Award for excellence in transcultural nursing is viewed as one of the most prestigious international accolades for workers in this area. The founder of transcultural nursing, Dr Madeleine Leininger, said in a letter to Dr Omeri that the award recognised her many contributions to this field.

"The award symbolizes your past and ongoing outstanding contributions to making transcultural nursing an integral part of education, research and practice not only in your home work area but worldwide," Dr Leininger wrote.

"Your contributions, which have

been unique, reflect the many opportunities and facets of transcultural nursing ... Thank you for all you have done in the past and will do in the future to make transcultural nursing a full reality worldwide."

Dr Omeri first established contact with Dr Leininger in 1990, writing to her for advice on graduate courses in transcultural nursing. "Aside from my clients, who motivated me to fight for more culturally meaningful care, I share this award with my students, who will take transcultural nursing leadership roles," Dr Omeri told the *News*.

"My colleagues have also supported consistently my goal to harness the resources of nursing education, research and practice in order to overcome prejudice, discrimination and racism."

Dr Omeri pointed out that the Royal College of Nursing, Australia, which welcomed her proposal for the creation of a Transcultural Nursing Society in 1994, played a

central role in gaining national and international recognition for transcultural nursing.

In 1994, Dr Omeri designed and initiated a University of Sydney graduate course in transcultural nursing. Between 10 and 15 graduate students completed the course every year, and Dr Omeri is currently supervising five doctoral students. The course has also attracted international students, including two leading nursing educators in Botswana.

Dr Omeri, who has also undertaken national and international consultancies in transcultural nursing, receives frequent requests for

advice from educators in transcultural nursing in Europe and the United Kingdom.

"Australia is in the forefront now

of developments in this field," she said. "Our Nursing Faculty is receiving recognition for its innovative role and contributions."



Dr Akram Omeri (left) receiving the 1998 Leininger Award from the founder of transcultural nursing, Dr Madeleine Leininger, earlier this month in the United States.

The University of Sydney News, 12 November 1998 - 5



Dr Akram Omeri, PhD 1996

The first recipient of PhD in TCN in Australia mentored, by Madeleine Leininger, at the University of Sydney, Australia.