The QNI is funding innovative nursing projects across the UK

Health visitors who taught parents how to perform abdominal massage on their learning disabled children led one of the projects, in Leicestershire. In the UK as a whole, 1.7 million children experience constipation and as many as 70% of children with a learning disability suffer from it. This can be very distressing to children who may have communication difficulties, severely affecting their quality of life.

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‘Katie’ was a severely disabled 17-year-old girl who had a history of constipation from an early age. Katie’s mother attended the first abdominal massage training session, which included a presentation on anatomy and physiology, and advice on toileting and massage. During the project evaluation, Katie’s mother reported that she was now passing stools every day, that all of the associated symptoms had reduced, and the use of medication and enemas was also much less. In all, 87.5% of the families involved in the project reported an improvement in their child’s condition.

Another project aimed to reduce the number of indwelling catheters among patients in the community through expert nurse training and intervention. Around four million people in the UK have some degree of chronic bladder or bowel control difficulty. Catheters increase the occurrence of urinary tract infections, and affect quality of life and confidence. The project developed ‘catheter champions’ within the district nursing service to assess people with long-term indwelling catheters and offer more appropriate alternatives.

‘Anne’ was a 47 year old who contacted the service as a last resort. Her problems with incontinence went back 15 years to the traumatic birth of her only child. She had been given a urethral catheter as a means of managing this problem, and then a suprapubic catheter, leading to loss of confidence, social isolation, pain, and relationship problems. Initial assessment revealed that Anne was going to hospital every eight weeks to have her catheter changed under heavy sedation, but she was afraid to challenge the consultant urologist’s opinion. In the event, Anne was able to very quickly learn how to self-catheterise and one month later had her catheter removed. In total, the project assisted in the removal of 60 out of 243 indwelling catheters.

More of the QNI’s projects are described on our website (www.qni.org.uk) and we will be adding more information about recent projects this year.

Find out more...
The QNI works extensively to:

- Disseminate knowledge of the community nursing sector, via its website and publications
- Act as a trusted authority on the challenges of an ageing population and the increasing need for health care at home
- Provide practical support for nurses seeking to improve patient care

Visit the QNI website at: www.qni.org.uk to read more...