Health care moves to the home

Knight Steel & Henk Tjassing

A high technology monitoring device enables the nurse to provide cardiovascular care in the home.

To underline the importance of home care to all nations of the world, WHO is sponsoring a conference entitled “As the World Ages, Health Care is Homeward Bound”, scheduled for 22-23 October 1994, in Chicago, Illinois, USA. Held under the auspices of the World Organization for Care in the Home and Hospice, the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs, and the Alton Ochsner Medical Foundation, with a number of leading nongovernmental organizations as co-sponsors, the two-day conference will provide four concurrent “tracks” of interest: International models, Accreditation and education, Economics and policy, and Research.

International models will focus on a comparative analysis of present-day home care programmes, taking into account the diversity of present practices, expectations, needs and resources around the world. There can be no single international model for home care, and indeed the use of “high tech” home care is only beginning to be considered in most countries. By studying what has been successful and what has failed in the policy and practice of home care, we can design new and better systems to meet the world’s forthcoming needs.

The track dedicated to Accreditation and education will concern itself with the training needs of doctors, nurses and other health workers who must function in the home setting. Special attention will be given to the educational needs of family members and other informal care-givers.

Economics and policy will highlight the political and economic climate in which care is being provided. Home care is not an isolated issue and must be seen in the context of limited resources and competing agendas. The emergence of new democracies and the costs of providing new technologies will come under discussion. The needs of the aged and the terminally ill will also be addressed, as well as the issues surrounding the provision of health insurance for all.

The fourth track, Research, will concern itself with three quite separate research agendas: health services research, the study of diseases frequently seen in the home (such as Alzheimer’s disease), and preventive medicine. Comparisons between home care and institutional care, both acute and chronic, will be considered, with emphasis given to such items as nutrition, pain management and iatrogenic or hospital-caused disease (especially infections). Diseases seen predominantly in the home need to be a new focus of attention for researchers, since the functional deficits of chronic diseases create hardship for the enlarg-
A health worker on her rounds provides home care for the villagers.

The increasing older population as well as for those who are younger yet afflicted with disabling illnesses.

This conference will bring together health care providers, researchers of many types, cultural anthropologists, educators, corporate representatives and policy-makers at both the national and international levels. While the agenda cannot satisfy all the questions pertaining to home health care, it will mark the beginning of a better understanding of this increasingly predominant setting of care.

Caring for the sick: this has always been a traditional role for the family.

As populations grow older, there will be increasing need for the care of functional disorders.

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First International Home Care Week

The World Organization for Care in the Home and Hospice (WOCHH) in association with the National Association for Home Care (United States) would like to collaborate with all nations of the world in designating the week of 27 November to 3 December 1994 the First International Home Care Week. Interested parties should please contact Dr. Knight Steel, Director-General of the WOCHH, 519 C Street NE, Washington, DC 20002-5809, USA. Tel. 202-546-4756. Fax 202-547-7126.