



## GUEST EDITORIAL

## Charting Future Directions in Nursing Research: NINR's Innovative Questions Initiative

For many Americans, the extraordinary discoveries in the health sciences of the past several decades have extended the lifespan and turned what were once acute terminal illnesses into manageable long-term conditions. Given these developments, it is critical that improving the quality of life for those with chronic illness remains a primary focus of health research. Individuals, regardless of their condition or age, should be able to experience a high quality of life minimally burdened by adverse symptoms, with the ability to successfully manage their own healthcare regimen. Perhaps more importantly, individuals, families, clinicians, and communities should be equipped with evidence-based strategies for maintaining wellness and preventing illness from occurring in the first place. The science supported by the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) plays a major role in addressing these health challenges by building the scientific foundation for clinical practice, and by engaging the scientific community and the public in shaping the future of nursing science through initiatives, such as the recently launched NINR Innovative Questions (IQ) Initiative (<http://www.ninr.nih.gov/aboutninr/ninr-mission-and-strategic-plan/iqinitiative>).

The mission of NINR is to support research to promote and improve the health of individuals, families, and communities. In developing a research agenda for nursing science, NINR is guided by its strategic plan, *Bringing Science to Life* (<https://www.ninr.nih.gov/sites/www.ninr.nih.gov/files/ninr-strategic-plan-2011.pdf>). Based on this strategic plan, past scientific accomplishments, and research gaps, NINR has identified the following themes (<http://www.ninr.nih.gov/aboutninr/keythemes>):

- Symptom science: promoting personalized health strategies;
- Wellness: promoting health and preventing illness;
- Self-management: improving quality of life for individuals with chronic illness;
- End-of-life and palliative care: the science of compassion;
- Promoting innovation: technology to improve health.

In November, 2013, NINR began the next stage in the implementation of its strategic plan with the launch of the NINR IQ Initiative. Inspired by similar successful efforts at NIH and other grant-making organizations, NINR is initiating a dialogue with its stakeholders to encourage creative thinking in identifying novel scientific questions that promote results-oriented innovative research, and that will guide NINR-supported science over the next 5 to 10 years.

The IQ Initiative consists of two components: a series of scientific workshops and a public website. The workshops, each one hosted by NINR and focused on a particular theme area, are bringing together leaders and experts in nursing science to identify, discuss, and debate new research questions. The public website solicits innovative research questions directly from the scientific community, professional organizations, and members of the general public. Visitors to the website have an opportunity to review and comment on questions submitted by others and to submit questions of their own. The questions and feedback generated from the workshops and the website will be reviewed by NINR, and then used to guide future research directions and new research opportunities.

We look forward to hearing from our stakeholders and to reviewing their ideas for pointing the way forward for nursing science. The research engendered through the IQ Initiative offers the promise of generating the new knowledge and interventions vital to the advancement of nursing science, and to building the scientific foundation for clinical practice now and in years to come. For more information on the IQ Initiative, and to submit your own innovative questions, please visit the NINR IQ Website: <https://ninriq.ideascale.com/a/panel.do>.

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