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2021 Mary Decker Mentorship Award

Susan B. Fowler, PhD RN CNRN CRRN FAHA FCNS

Nominated by Suzanne Ashworth



Excellence and clinical expertise in the care of pediatric or adult neuroscience patients

I am honored to nominate Dr. Fowler for the Mary Decker Mentorship Award. Dr. Fowler has been a dedicated neuroscience nursing expert for the past 39 years. She has had a variety of roles within the adult and pediatric populations during her extensive career. Currently, AA is a licensed clinical nurse specialist/advanced practice nurse and works as the Research Scientist for Orlando Health. In her role, she facilitates and mentors' nurses in research for 7 facilities within the Orlando Health organization from pediatrics

to adults. Dr. Fowler has also served as a Director of (neuroscience) Clinical Trials, Director of Research, and Interim Manager of a Stroke Program. Dr. Fowler has maintained her neuroscience CNRN certification since 1985. She continues to speak and educate nurses on numerous neuroscience topics such as stroke caregivers, NIHSS assessment, telemedicine and stroke, and new treatments in stroke.

In addition to her many years of acute neuroscience nursing, Dr. Fowler also has expertise in rehabilitation nursing and has previous experience in the role as a Nursing Director within in a pediatric rehab hospital. Over the last year, Dr. Fowler has changed the professionalism of our rehab nurses through her mentorship by increasing their knowledge of research and advancing enrollment within professional nursing organizations and assisting them with performing research studies and poster presentations. She has personally raised the level of engagement for this nursing team to another level. Dr. Fowler has provided education for rehab nurses on care of the low-level brain injured, cognitive stimulation, pediatric tracheostomy safety, hope in the rehab setting, resilience, and rehab research. Her expertise not only has been requested by the nursing team, but the rehab therapist have also requested her assistance in mentor them with research ideas.

Dr. Fowler's knowledge, expertise, and skill was noted when she was selected to represent AANN in writing the 2011 ASA/ACCF/AHA/AANN/AANS/ACR/ASNR/CNS/SAIP/ SCAI/SIR/SNIS/SVM/SVS guideline on the management of patients with extracranial carotid and vertebral artery disease. She has taken her expertise to the international level with the Cochrane Nursing Care Field where she is on the Wikipedia Project bringing citations of neuro and ophthalmology reviews to Wikipedia.

Dedication to patients

Dr. Fowler has remained dedicated to the neuroscience population in her evidence-based practice (EBP) and research efforts throughout the continuum of care, from the emergency department to acute rehabilitation setting. Her passion is to advance the science of nursing through generation and dissemination of research. Presently, she is mentoring or has mentored nurses in neuro related topics of 1) Intermittent Urinary Catheterization in Traumatic SCI: A Longitudinal Study of Quality of Life Using the Intermittent Self-Catheterization Questionnaire; 2) Blood Pressure in Acute Ischemic Stroke Patients during Hospitalization; 3) Perceptions of Sleep Disordered Breathing of Acute Ischemic Stroke Patients; 4) Evaluation of the e-NIHSS to Identify Poster Circulation Strokes; 5) Impact of a Diagnostic Change in Acute Stroke; 6) Impact of Standardized Telemedicine Services on Stroke Outcome Metrics; and 7) Sleep in Aneurysmal Subarachnoid Hemorrhage (aSAH) Patients During Critical and Acute Care.

Communication

Dr. Fowler X has the most approachable personality and nonthreatening manner. Research can be intimidating but she makes it easy to understand and makes learning EBP and research fun! Recently she spearheaded a research meeting with team members engaged in making their thinking caps with pipe cleaners and other materials, and playing research jeopardy. Another example of exceptional communication is her innovative project that focused on a 'chain of survival' in traumatic brain injured patients in the Neuro ICU. The chain replaced a written diary. Family members, visitors, or healthcare providers wrote messages or updates on strips on construction paper that looped together to form decorative chain of hope. The purpose of this chain was to serve as a reminder of the significant recovery and journey after surviving a brain injury. In the picture below, this one patient kept the chain as a remembrance of the journey and reminded the family of all the love and support they received during the most difficult days.

Teaching and educating in neuroscience

Dr. Fowler is a past clinical nurse specialist and director of neuroscience clinical trials. In those roles she educated nurses and resident physicians on stroke, epilepsy, brain tumors, headaches, and cerebral hemorrhage. She continues to mentor and is well respected by nurses, therapists, and physicians in neuroscience related practice and research. She is the 'go to' person for data analysis and statistics. Her sound knowledge in the neurosciences makes neuroscience research flow.

Inspiring others

Dr. Fowler inspires others to grow professionally. She works closely with pediatric neuro/orthopedic nurses. She has inspired them to grow in their quality improvement (QI) and evidence-based practice skills. As a result, one of their QI projects was published in the Journal of Pediatric Nursing with her guidance. Another publication is pending in the same journal about an EBP for blood drawing from established peripheral intravenous catheters. Additionally, Dr. Fowler inspires others to write! In the last two years, she has facilitated 14 accepted or pending publications for over 20 nurses, most of whom had never published before. Prior to her current position, as a clinical nurse researcher, she guided completion of 26 research investigations by nurses within three years. Findings were disseminated at 17 local, regional, and national presentations, and resulted in eight peer-reviewed publications with 78 citations. Her efforts were recognized during their successful Magnet re-designation visit. She inspires the excellence in nursing that the Magnet designation stresses. She is continuing guiding nurses today to reach for the Magnet journey.

Dr. Fowler is inspired by others, as much as she inspires them. She has nominated numerous nurses for awards nationally, regionally, and locally. She sees the talent in nurses and seeks to get them recognized for their knowledge, skill, passion, and compassion. This past year, she recognized an amazing new graduate nurse working in

the Neuroscience ICU. Her recognition of this talented new nurse earned her the Rising Star award.

Leadership

Dr. Fowler is a born leader. She is a past president of a national nursing organization, former treasurer of another, and presently a member of the board of directors of yet another organization. She is not only involved in specialty organizations but also the American Nurses Association where her leadership is being tapped on the honorary awards subcommittee. She is a past board member for a state nurses' association. Most recently, she received the leadership award from a local Sigma Theta Tau chapter.

Passion and Nurturing

Dr. Fowler is passionate about life, nursing, and mentoring. She acknowledges that she has never had a mentor and that is what drives her passion for mentoring. Twenty one years ago, the American Association of Critical Care Nurses honored her with a mentoring award at which time she was a neuroscience clinical nurse specialist. Her selfless, nurturing spirit makes research and evidence-based projects as well as writing comfortable for staff nurses which excites them in advancing the science and art of the profession. I am honored to have her as my mentor and colleague, and I share this admiration with numerous nurses who all have the same feelings.