

33rd Euro Nursing & Medicare Summit

October 08-10, 2018 | Edinburgh, Scotland

The language of health care

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There is no doubt that the language of health care is nuanced and can confuse as well as inform if one is not familiar with these nuances. Health care vocabularies fall into the category of a specialized language also known as a language for special purposes (LSP). Recently lexicographers are using a new term, academic and professional languages. This new term refers to the type of language used by specific knowledge communities or groups of professionals, and the language of nursing best falls within this category. Academic and Professional Languages (APL) include the common language, or language that is used in all types of communication, but specific terms, or lexemes, from the common or general language often have a specialized meaning in an APL. There are also terms that are in a grey area between the general language and the APL that are used in both, with different meanings depending on context. Neither the broader language of health care, nor the language specific to the nursing profession, is unique as a scientific vocabulary. A large number of words in academic and professional language are derived from Latin and Greek but scientific language is supplemented by new words added as the science evolves and research adds to the body of knowledge. This presentation will highlight the language of healthcare used to describe innovations and advances in nursing and healthcare as represented in contemporary health care dictionaries.

Biography

Marie T O'Toole has completed her EdD in Rutgers University Graduate School of Education in 1992 and MSN as well as BSN in University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing. She has served as the Editor of multiple editions of dictionaries and encyclopedias, including the award winning Mosby Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing and Health Professions. She continues to edit the Mosby series of dictionaries. She has been involved in international outreach related to rehabilitation and curriculum development. In 2017 she served as a Fulbright Specialist in Jordan. She was the Founding Chair of Nurses Overseas, a division of Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO). The nursing division provides an opportunity for nurse faculty to work with their colleagues in developing countries. She is a Member of the 2003 Robert Wood Johnson Executive Nurse Fellow cohort. Her Fellow project focused on supporting transcultural expertise in undergraduate students. While serving as the Chair of Nazareth College her faculty received the Innovation Award for the establishment of a dual degree program with two schools in the European Union. She currently serves, as the Senior Associate Dean at Rutgers, Camden School of Nursing. In recognition of her work, she has garnered numerous awards including an honorary doctorate from Semmelweis University in Budapest, Hungary, the presidential "Call to Service Award" from the G W Bush Administration, and Fellowship in the American Academy of Nursing.