Report from the Chair
Susan J. Pressler, DNS, RN, FAAN, FAHA

Scientific Sessions 2008 offered nurses the opportunity to learn new information about cardiovascular disorders and care, disseminate results of their research and network with colleagues from across the world. We have a wealth of talented, dedicated nurses who attend Sessions to learn new ways to maintain cardiovascular health globally and to improve the science and care of patients with cardiovascular disorders and stroke.

One of the highlights of the Cardiovascular Nursing Council’s program at Sessions was Coletta Barrett’s presentation entitled “Putting Passion into Action…Changing Your City’s Health Profile.” Ms. Barrett, vice president, mission, Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, received the Gold Heart Award in 2008 for her many contributions to the American Heart Association. In her engaging presentation, she told us how nurses in her community were working together to better the cardiovascular health of citizens; then she gave us strategies to use in our own communities. Other highlights included nurse scientists presenting their research results covering the spectrum of cardiovascular conditions — from health promotion to end-of-life care. Depression in cardiovascular conditions received focused attention in presentations, consistent with AHA’s recent advisory statement about screening and managing depression in persons with cardiovascular conditions. Methods for facilitating translational and interdisciplinary research were presented in panel presentations by nurse scientists from across the country. Practicing nurses shared expert knowledge about the daily aspects of managing care.

The Annual Business Meeting and Dinner provided a time to honor our seven new Fellows of the American Heart Association. Following a moving tribute to Dr. Marie Cowan, we were pleased to present the first Marie Cowan Promising Young Investigator Award to Yoshimi Fukuoka, RN, PhD. We initiated this award in honor of Dean Cowan – an outstanding cardiovascular nurse scientist with longstanding contributions to the American Heart Association — who passed away last spring.

2009 marks the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Cardiovascular Nursing Council

We plan to have a history of the Council completed under the leadership of Dr. Karyn Holm. We are inviting Cardiovascular Nursing Council members to take part in the completion of this history — please let us know if you are interested or have a piece of our history to share. We will celebrate the past accomplishments of the Council as we move forward into the future.

Pediatric Cardiovascular Nursing Subcommittee Report
Debra Hanisch, RN, MSN, CPNP

I’d like to thank Patricia O’Brien, RN, MSN, PNP, for her excellent leadership on the Pediatric Cardiovascular Nursing Subcommittee for the past two years. She and Karen Uzark, PhD, CPNP, will continue on as our liaisons to CVDY and the Program Committee respectively. We welcome new committee members Angela Green, PhD, and Maureen Rorke, RN, MSN, as they join members Constance Cephus, RN, MSN, CPNP; Nancy Rudd, RN, MSN, CPNP; Katherine Sheehan, RN, MSN, CPNP; and Jennifer Strawn, RN, BSN.

At Sessions 2008, we presented three successful pediatric nursing “How-To” sessions on pulmonary hypertension, medical outreach, and sedation. In addition, a cardiovascular seminar on anticoagulation issues in children with heart disease was jointly sponsored with CVDY. These sessions were well attended with representation from multiple disciplines. Carrying forward momentum from Sessions 2008, the Pediatric Cardiovascular Nursing Subcommittee is hard at work planning projects and sessions for 2009.

Our Research Networking Luncheon, themed “Pediatric Cardiovascular Nursing Research: Past, Present, and...”

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Future,” was also well attended at Sessions. A project conceived at a previous networking luncheon has led to a multicenter study evaluating feeding strategies in infants with complex single ventricle physiology. Dr. Uzark reports that, to date, 137 infants from nine institutions have been enrolled in this study; the goal of 150 infants should be attained by the end of this year. Preliminary data are currently being analyzed. This year, ideas for other future multicenter projects were generated, including examining immunization practices for infants undergoing cardiac surgery and exploring the needs of adolescents with heart disease.

Several other projects are in progress. A scientific statement on anticoagulation issues in children with heart disease is being sponsored by CVDY, and Kathy Hinoki, RN, MSN, is included in the writing group. A scientific statement on transitioning adolescents to adult care has been rekindled and refocused, based on recent initiatives by the Adult Congenital Heart Association, and will be jointly sponsored by CVDY and CVN. Also, a number of our nurses are collaborating on a journal article aimed at school nurses that will address school issues for children with heart disease.

I look forward to working with our great team of pediatric cardiovascular nurses on these important projects as well as planning stimulating programs for the 2009 Scientific Sessions.

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Report from the Awards Committee
Debra Moser, DNSc, RN, FAAN, FAHA

Each year at Sessions a highlight for the Council on Cardiovascular Nursing is the awarding of a number of prestigious honors at the Council dinner. This year we were delighted to offer two new awards, the Marie Cowan Promising Young Investigator Award and the Competence in Aging Award. The Marie Cowan Award was won by Dr. Yoshimi Fukuoka of the University of California, San Francisco. Dr. Shirley Moore at Case Western University was the winner of the Competence in Aging Award.

The 2008 Katherine Lembright winner was Dr. Mariann Piano from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Our Excellence in Clinical Practice Award was presented to Ms. Rose Shaffer from Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia. Dr. Lynn Doering of the University of California, Los Angeles was the recipient of the Best Abstract Award. Three finalists competed for the Martha Hill New Investigator Award, Drs. Rebecca Cross, Barbara Graves, and Eunyoung Lee. Dr Lee was the winner.

Please consider applying or nominating a deserving colleague for these awards for 2009. All awards, criteria and applications are posted on the Web site. The following awards will be awarded in 2009: The Katherine Lembright Award, Martha Hill New Investigator Award, Marie Cowan Promising Young Investigator Award, Competence in Aging Award, Arteriosclerosis/Heart Failure Translational Research Prize, Excellence in Clinical Practice Award, Research Article of the Year Award, Clinical Article of the Year Award, Stroke Article of the Year Award, Fellowship in the American Heart Association.

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Pediatric Subcommittee
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Heart disease continues as the leading cause of death among women in the United States despite an increase in women’s awareness of the disease’s high mortality rate1-3 (improved awareness is due in no small part to American Heart Association outreach efforts). While over half of the women in the United States know that heart disease is the leading cause of death, there are disparities in awareness: 69 percent of African-American and 71 percent of Hispanic/Latino women, compared to 32 percent of Caucasian women, were unaware of this fact.1

Unfortunately, the “awareness” gap has not narrowed significantly over the years. This lack of awareness is particularly worrisome given the parallel trend of increasing cardiovascular risks for African-American and Hispanic/Latino women. An exemplar is diabetes. Mortality from heart disease in women with diabetes has increased 23 percent in the past 30 years compared to a 27 percent decrease in women without diabetes.4 In fact, the prevalence of diabetes is at least two to four times higher among African-American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, and Asian/Pacific Islander women than among Caucasian women. Yet there have been relatively few studies of awareness and knowledge of risk for heart disease conducted in women with diabetes, in particular minority women.

While one third of the U.S. population today belongs to an ethnic/racial minority, the U.S. Census Bureau projects that minorities will collectively constitute the majority by 2042.5 In particular, the U.S. Hispanic population is projected to nearly triple and is projected to comprise a third of the total population. In addition, the number of individuals who identify themselves as being a member of two or more ethnic backgrounds/minority races is also projected to more than triple. Thus, it is imperative that we participate in strategies to close this awareness gap.

One effective way to communicate to women about heart disease risk is to participate in “Go Red For Women.” The AHA has multiple resources to assist you in spreading the word about heart disease in women including a discussion guide targeted to women! Take time to affect the heart health of women, especially those of racial/ethnic minority groups.

The AHA is in a unique position to help close the awareness gap. It is well established that racial and ethnic groups frequently share unique beliefs, customs, languages, values and behaviors toward health. These, in turn, influence awareness, perception and knowledge of heart disease and its risk factors. Appreciating and targeting healthcare research and messaging about cardiac risk factors and mortality in culturally sensitive and appropriate ways holds the promise for narrowing both the awareness gap and potentially, mortality. Long-term educational plans and goals that are tailored to the cultural differences of America’s diverse population are central to any efforts. Our efforts have yielded success for a great number of women, but to reduce the burden of heart disease for all women, we have a long road still to travel.

References