
From the Editor

Physiology and the idea of holism

As the due date drew near for this issue of *Advances in Nursing Science (ANS)*, I realized that the manuscript submission level was far too low, which extended the time frame for this issue. I sent a message to members of the Advisory Board and Review Panel, announcing the very unusual extension of the date for submitting manuscripts for this issue, and received a reassuring response. This prompted me to ponder a number of issues related to the journal, as well as issues more broadly situated in our discipline.

From the perspective of *ANS*, I realized that perhaps this journal is not reaching colleagues whose research and scholarly interests fall within the realm of physiologic health dynamics. The journal has developed a general conceptual, theoretical, and philosophic focus, and although we regularly publish empiric research and articles that reflect or address physical phenomena, these are not typically associated with *ANS*. Therefore, scholars whose work revolve around empiric research and physical phenomena may not think of *ANS* as a journal that addresses their interests.

However, *ANS* has regularly included issue topics and articles that encompass physical phenomena, for example, "Childhood Health and Illness." More fundamentally, through our descriptions of topics for forthcoming issues, we

have consistently reflected an underlying commitment to the fundamental nursing value of holism, calling for works that embrace holistic approaches to the development of nursing knowledge, including empiric research and the full range of human experience, including physical experience. The level of theoretic and philosophic abstraction that *ANS* tends to emphasize, however, may ironically lead us more toward phenomena that are perceived to be outside the realm of the physical, with the unintended consequence of straying from a truly holistic approach.

As nurses and as nurse scholars, all of us have a long tradition of seeking to embrace the whole. At the same time, the sociopolitical structures of practice, education, and science remain fragmented into parts and particulars. As a result, the mental structures through which we experience the world, and from which we work, make it extremely difficult to truly embrace the whole. It is my hope that the articles in this issue of *ANS* will prompt readers to consider the dilemmas involved in embracing the irreducible whole. Send us letters expressing your thoughts and ideas about this dilemma, and perhaps we can initiate some stimulating discussion in the months ahead!

—**Peggy, L. Chinn, PhD, RN, FAAN**
Editor