

HYPNOTISM AIMS TO CUT STUDENT STRESS

A university is planning to hypnotise its nursing students in an attempt to improve their course grades and help them cope with exam stress.

Ursula James has been appointed visiting professor in clinical hypnosis at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen after impressing senior staff last year with a workshop on self-hypnosis during childbirth.

Professor James – renowned for her research into the effects of altered states on cognition and the bio-medical markers of stress – will offer hypnosis to students who are having difficulty with their courses.

She said: 'I look forward to working with students and staff on a number of exciting projects designed to reduce stress, improve personal abilities and enhance skills. There is a fantastic can-do attitude at the university and, as part of my appointment, I aim to improve professional standards in hypnosis and develop further research in this field.'

Professor James plans to develop an Master of Science degree in clinical hypnosis, looking at its role in helping people give up smoking and lose weight.

Pledges to act over failings in learning disabilities services

The government has promised to improve health and social care for people with learning disabilities after two reports highlighted serious neglect and avoidable deaths.

Care and support minister Norman Lamb said the NHS might introduce patient-held records and named contacts to co-ordinate care for those with multiple conditions.

National clinical director for learning disabilities Anne Williams will draw up best practice guidelines on health and social care provision, he said.

Mr Lamb's announcements represent the government's response to the confidential inquiry into premature deaths of people with learning disabilities, and the Six Lives – Progress Report on Healthcare for People with Learning Disabilities.

Learning disabilities nurse consultant Jim Blair was unhappy about the lack of a national body to investigate deaths in this patient group. 'GPs have difficulty identifying people with learning disabilities on their lists,' he added.

IN BRIEF

Leading nurse researcher Kate Seers has been awarded a doctor of science qualification from the University of Warwick in recognition of her work investigating acute and chronic pain.

Dr Seers, pictured, director of the RCN Research Institute at the University, said: 'This award reinforces my commitment to developing and implementing evidence to promote the best possible patient care.'



Midwifery academic Lindsay Reid has been made an honorary fellow of the Royal College of Midwives. College chief executive Cathy Warwick called Dr Reid a role model and inspiration to all. 'Her impact on the development of her profession and its standing is there for all to see.'

Nurses' employment and working conditions have improved greatly due to the UK's membership of the European Union (EU), but further expansion of European policies on health is unnecessary, according to the RCN. The college's senior international adviser Susan Williams said: 'These [EU policies] are extremely positive arrangements for nurses and we would not want them watered down, but we do not see the need for greater EU intervention.'

4%

Nurses in Jersey have agreed to pay rises of 4 per cent this year and the same next year, after protracted negotiations with the Jersey States Employment Board. RCN lead on the discussions

Kenny McNeil said: 'We are not cracking open the champagne just yet. We still have concerns about recruitment and retention on the island. One member had to leave because of poor pay, low quality housing and an inability to make ends meet.'

The Welsh Government is seeking healthcare professionals' views on a draft framework for improving services for older people.

The Framework for Delivering Integrated Health and Social Care for Older People with Complex Needs, published last week, says more preventive services are needed so this patient group can manage their own conditions and therefore reduce unnecessary hospital and residential care. The consultation ends on October 15. Go to tinyurl.com/padl3rd

More than 100 hospitals and care homes have been given a share of Department of Health funds totalling £50 million to develop dementia-friendly care environments. Pioneering projects given money include almost £1 million for the Designing the Dementia Journey initiative at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital in London, in which an older person's unit has colour-coded bays to help patients remember the way back to their beds.

Charity Marie Curie Cancer Care will be riding on the back of British cycling wins by Chris Froome and Sir Bradley Wiggins by becoming the official charity for next year's Tour de France.

The charity, which provides care to terminally ill patients in their own homes and hospices, will benefit from a raised profile during the race, which will start in Leeds before moving to France. Tour de France director Christian Prudhomme said: 'We will be able to help the charity raise vital funds to continue the amazing work of their nurses.'

