

EMORY Health Sciences News

Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing
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Institute of Medicine Appoints Emory Nursing Professor to Sleep Medicine Committee

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ATLANTA — Emory nursing professor Kathy P. Parker, PhD, RN, FAAN, was recently appointed to the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Committee on Sleep Medicine and Research, an influential advisory body in the burgeoning field of sleep study. She is the only nurse to serve on the 15-member, multidisciplinary committee.

Dr. Parker, one of the country's leading researchers in sleep/wake disturbances in hemodialysis and cancer patients, is the Edith F. Honeycutt Endowed Chair in Nursing at Emory University's Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing and director of the school's Center for Research on Symptoms, Symptom Interactions and Health Outcomes.

The field of sleep medicine and sleep research has grown exponentially over the last two decades, with sleep problems afflicting those of all ages and ethnicities. To more widely address the field of sleep, the IOM recently convened this ad hoc committee of experts in public health, academic and medical administration and health sciences research to:

- review and quantify the public health significance of sleep health, sleep loss and sleep disorders;
- identify gaps in the public health system relating to the understanding, management and treatment of sleep loss and sleep disorders, and assess the adequacy of the current resources and infrastructures for addressing the gaps;
- identify barriers to and opportunities for improving and stimulating multidisciplinary research, education and training in sleep medicine; and
- develop a comprehensive plan for enhancing sleep medicine and sleep research, as appropriate, for improving the public's health.

The committee's recommendations will be published and made available to the public.

Dr. Parker's ongoing program of research is dedicated to the study of sleep/wake cycle disturbances in patients with chronic illness and the development and testing of population-specific interventions. She is currently conducting an interventional clinical trial designed to improve the sleep of patients with renal failure on chronic hemodialysis. In addition, she is also exploring the effects of pain and its treatment with opioids on the sleep of patients with cancer.

Dr. Parker's research expertise covers a wide variety of methods appropriate for the study of sleep including sleep diaries, questionnaires, continuous activity and temperature monitors and polysomnography. She promotes an integrated, interdisciplinary approach with members of her team including nephrologists, neurologists, psychologists, basic scientists, rehabilitation medicine specialists and nurses.

Dr. Parker received her BSN from Columbia University, her MN from Emory University and her PhD in Nursing from Georgia State University. She has over 20 years of clinical practice experience and is certified by the American Nurses Credentialing Center as both an adult nurse practitioner and medical/surgical clinical nurse specialist. She is also one of five nurses in the country certified in Clinical Sleep Disorders by the American Board of Sleep Medicine and was recently elected as a Fellow of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing. Dr. Parker maintains an active clinical practice in the Emory Sleep Center and has a secondary appointment as Professor in the Department of Neurology in Emory's School of Medicine.

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About The Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing

Emory University's Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, which celebrates its centennial year in 2005, is a recognized leader in the preparation of nurses for beginning and advanced practice. Graduates of the programs are at the forefront in leadership, serving as role models for excellence in nursing practice throughout the world. The School of Nursing is especially committed to evolving nursing practice through its key values of scholarship, leadership and social responsibility. To learn more, visit www.nursing.emory.edu or call 404-727-6910.