

Welcome Address – Hallym International Nursing Conference 2019

Professor Dongsoo Shin, Dean of the School of Nursing, Hallym University
Mme. Jeongsook Seo, President of the Alumni Association of Hallym Nursing School,
Distinguished speakers and guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of Hallym University, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to all of you participating in this conference. I would also like to offer my sincere gratitude to the international speakers, who have travelled a great distance to share their insights with us today. At Hallym, the department of nursing was established in late 1994 and the first entering class with 80 enrolled students opened in March 1995. Now the enrollment quota of the department for the undergraduate students grew to 105 and the department runs both the general graduate school and the professional graduate school of clinical nursing science. The faculty members of the department of nursing have been very active in teaching and research and as a result the department has gained a high reputation as one of the leading nursing educational schools in the nation.

Today, we are gathered here to celebrate the birth of the school of nursing at Hallym University. I hope today is recorded as a moment when the nationally well-established nursing school to emerge as a globally renowned nursing school. I must confess to you that I am pleased to find that the faculty members of the school of nursing prepared an international conference under the title of “Nursing Today and Future; toward convergence” to commemorate the launching of the school. The title is very timely and proper as it addresses the new emerging research and education issues in nursing. I appreciate the efforts of the faculty members to hold an international conference very much and I pledge that we go hand in hand to make the nursing school of Hallym a genuine global leader in both education and research in the field of nursing. I would like to take this opportunity to explore the challenges that we face due to the advent of the fourth industrial revolution and ageing era by characterizing the implications of these new trends on nursing.

As you all know, we are at the beginning of the fourth industrial revolution era that is expected to bring sweeping changes to the way we live and work. The boundaries between physical and digital worlds are blurring, and artificial intelligence is forecast to replace human labor in almost every sector imaginable, including knowledge-based areas. Many futurists believe that about 50% of the jobs in the world will disappear within the next few decades, including lawyers, teachers, and doctors. Will nurses be exempt? Not if they fail to embrace technological change.

Wearables and health-monitoring apps have already taken over some of the responsibilities of the primary caregiver. There are nurse robots running simple

errands in many hospitals in the industrialized world. Robot-assisted surgery is becoming more commonplace. It may not be long before robots perform remote surgery entirely on their own.

While we try to keep up with the ever-evolving technology, we face another conundrum: the world's population is ageing. What makes the matter worse is that the speed of ageing very rapid. The United Nations confirms that, globally, population aged 60 or over is growing faster than all other age groups. Korea, in fact, is aging faster than any other country in the world. Moreover, the total fertility rate in 2018 turned out to be below one, the lowest among the OECD member countries. Such a historically low fertility rate will accelerate the ageing trend of the society. This means a greater demand for healthcare professionals and services, a big part of which will, undoubtedly, be delegated to smart technology.

For nursing to stay relevant in this future full of uncertainty, it too has to change. It has to pursue innovation and collaboration, while still focusing on the human aspect of care. Let robots take over tasks that are better-suited to automation, such as running tests or delivering drugs. Focus, instead, on what machines cannot do: add the human touch. With routine tasks taken care of by machines, nurses can devote more time to interacting with patients, getting to know about their conditions, and connecting with them on an emotional basis. This is where multidisciplinary education and inter-professional research can make a difference. Cultivate compassion and altruism by studying liberal arts. Improve patient care by delving into social sciences. Or learn computer programming and get involved in the process of making better healthcare apps and robots. Become a true giver of "care."

Repeating the past is no longer an option. It is time to look toward the future and explore new opportunities. As long as nurses are willing to redefine their roles and expand their horizons, they will prevail over technology. The practice of nursing will be with, and not by, robots.

I believe our speakers and discussants today will lead the way with their research and experience. Once again, I express my deepest appreciation to all the participants for sharing their expertise with us.

I wish everyone a very productive conference and discussion. I hope that particularly those who made long trips to Chuncheon, you will take some time to enjoy the beautiful Hallym University campus and numerous historical monuments surrounded by wonderful mountains and marvelous lakes nearby the campus. Thank you.

March 6, 2019
Choongsoo Kim
President, Hallym University