

The University of Michigan Department of Urology

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What's New February 24, 2017

Susanne Quallich, Ph.D.
Comments by Dr. Dana Ohl

Urology Department Faculty and Staff

1 Item, 20 Minutes

Today, our update comes from Dr. Dana Ohl, who walks us through the unparalleled career trajectory of one of the Department's finest representatives, Dr. Susanne Quallich. Dr. Quallich's path to this point in her career has been unique, but as Dr. Ohl details below, it is no surprise that she has reached this level of success and accomplishment.

Congratulations to Dr. Quallich on her recent thesis defense, as well as all her other success, and thank you to Dr. Ohl for providing such a thorough and well written edition of What's New. So, without further ado, here is Dr. Ohl.

-Eric Anderson

Dr. Dana Ohl

Our Division of Andrology and Urologic Health has had the distinct pleasure of working with Susanne Quallich for many years. Her accomplishments in the role of the Advanced Practice Provider in Urology have been exemplary her entire career. She recently completed her Ph.D. in the study of male genital pain, and I was privileged to serve as an opponent for her thesis defense. With this recent great accomplishment, I thought it fitting that our "What's New" topic should be Susanne Quallich's career in a "nutshell", culminating with this recent great honor—her doctorate from the University of Michigan School of Nursing.



Education

Susanne was part of a hybrid program between John Carroll University and the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. This structure allowed her to transfer into their combined BSN/MSN program as a John Carroll senior. She graduated with a BS in Biology in 1993, followed by a BSN in 1994, and ultimately with her Master of Science as an Adult Nurse Practitioner in 1/1996. This is a very unconventional approach, as most people who eventually become Nurse Practitioners work for a few years in a nursing role before going back to school for Advance Practice training. With this shortcut, she was the youngest NP that had ever graduated from the school at the time. Early on, it was obvious she was a planner, and when a goal is set, she accomplishes it.

The VA Days

After school, Susanne was employed at the Dingell Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Detroit. Her first role was in primary care. In 1998, she moved to the Ann Arbor VA Hospital, initially working with Orthopedics and Neurosurgery. In 1999, we were fortunate to have her join the Urology team, and she remained with VA urology through 2002. At the Ann Arbor VA, she became an integral part of Urology care delivery, working closely with the residents and staff from U of M Urology. The VA has a long history of efficient use of Advanced Practice Providers in meaningful roles. Susanne independently saw new and return visit patient in all areas of urology (with supervising physicians, of course), coordinated the surgery schedule, triaged referrals that needed care elsewhere, and really oversaw the entire operation for smooth and timely quality care for our veterans with urologic problems.

Her interest in Men's Health was sparked during the VA days. The VA had a long waiting list for penile implant surgeries and difficulty getting them done. Also, the infection rate had been rather high, necessitating changes in the protocol to obtain better results. I volunteered to go there once per month to do the surgeries and quickly realized that for such a program to succeed, consistency from start to finish in the process was a key factor. Susanne provided that consistency. She evaluated the patients for suitability, ran them through the preoperative processes, scheduled the procedures, and went over the cases with me the day prior to the procedures. She also did her best Gary Wedemeyer imitation, by scrubbing in on the cases and prepping the devices.

The other factor in the VA that led to her interest in Men's Health was the increased coverage for infertility services. Infertility treatment was historically not provided in the VA system, and this caused an influx of patients coming in for new problems that Susanne had not previously encountered. In keeping with her drive to provide excellent care for her patients, she sought to fill this gap in her fund of knowledge. She was working four ten

hour days per week, and took it upon herself to attend the Male Infertility Clinic at the University on her non-compensated "fifth work day" per week. She was initially an observer, but quickly developed a role similar to the residents rotating through the clinic. She would see the patients, do the history and physical exam, and report back to staff on the case. This "fellowship" in male infertility went on for 6 months, and she became quite an expert in the field.

Little did I suspect at the time, she was laying the groundwork for her next position. In effect, she was building her credentials to make her the ideal candidate for Andrology Nurse Practitioner at the University.

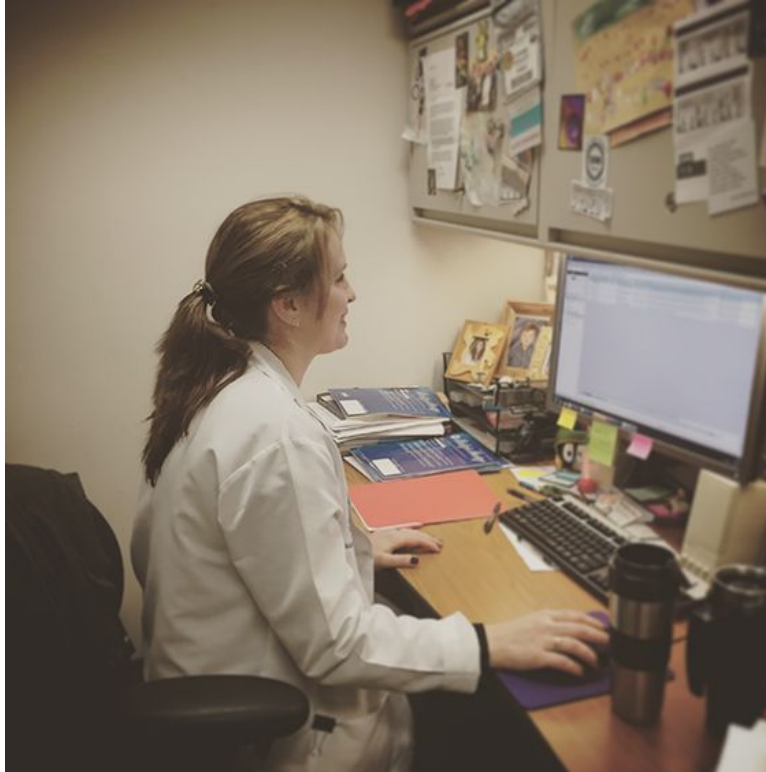
To the University of Michigan Urology Department

In 2002, Susanne was recruited to our Division, and has been a very active NP from the beginning. At that time, we had several NP's in the Department of Urology, but we in Andrology thought that they were not being utilized efficiently. NP's and PA's would typically attend clinics with the faculty and residents, and serve only as adjunctive helpers. When Susanne arrived, we felt that she had a lot more than that to offer. From the beginning, we modeled her role in a manner similar to the VA, with her independently evaluating patients, with a physician collaborator supervising. This increased patient volume, and increased the number of surgeries scheduled. The trust built up between myself, the other faculty and Susanne is key in a relationship like this—as even surgeries were scheduled by Susanne, with the faculty person meeting the patient in the holding room just prior to the procedure. This model of independence is now the norm for Advanced Practice Providers in Urology.

Because no one in the NP world practiced an exclusive men's health focus, Susanne very quickly became the go-to NP expert in this area, especially for hypogonadism. She also realized that nursing publications almost never contained articles about urology or men's health issues, and she set out to fill that gap, publishing in Nursing and NP journals reviews about hypogonadism and erectile dysfunction. In 2002, she was awarded the *Urologic Nursing* Literary Excellence Award for "Penile Prosthesis: Patient Teaching and Perioperative Care", the first article of its kind in a nursing journal. Susanne has been an invited lecturer in the areas of Men's Health for many nursing organizations. However, the very impressive thing is that she is also regularly invited to give lectures to PHYSICIAN groups in these topics.

She has also generated original research in her areas of expertise. Her project on practitioner perceptions of different penile prosthesis designs remains one of the most quoted penile prosthesis studies ever. She remains active in such projects, and others, including many multidisciplinary collaborative studies. Her work defining a phenotype for male genital pain is unique and will be discussed further in the last section here.

In 2002, her family moved to Rochester Hills. We might have feared that Susanne would leave to take a position elsewhere, but just as she engineered her position at the U, she was so deep into the position, there was not another position within driving distance of her new home that provided the infrastructure to allow her to achieve her goals, other than U of M Urology.



Educational and Leadership Initiatives

In 2002, Susanne relocated the Great Lakes Chapter of the Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates to Southeast Michigan and became chapter president. She focused on providing high-quality urologic education, offering networking opportunities to nursing professionals at all levels in the chapter area (encompassing Michigan and Ohio), and established a chapter website. As chapter president, she worked to build a network of dedicated urologic nurse practitioners and nurses, and culminated in the national chapter of the year award in 2007 at the end of her presidency.

In 2003, she became the youngest editorial board member to serve with *Urologic Nursing*, and this is a role she continues today, mentoring young authors to the high editorial standards needed in a peer-reviewed journal.

For the University of Michigan School of Nursing nurse practitioner program, Susanne provides 3-5 pro bono lectures per year on men's health for undergraduate and graduate students. Feedback from students and faculty has been universally positive. She also mentors NP students in the clinical setting many weeks out of the year.

Her focus continues to be pushing the boundary of the NP/APP role in urology forward, while intending to create the knowledge and research to support this move. She is also working to document, thru publications, the advanced nursing practice that is happening with urology nurses in Denmark- a very important move, as Denmark has no mid-level providers. One of her goals is to become more involved with pushing the boundaries of the NP role internationally. This was set in motion at the CopMich2015 meeting in Copenhagen, where an entire session on the role of advanced nursing practice was held, generating a great deal of interest in policy change for that country. As things progress, I am quite certain that Susanne will have a direct role in providing a system for the education of Danish nurses in this role.



Susanne with Danish nursing colleagues at CopMich2015

Honors and Awards

2000 Became one of the youngest **Certified Urology Nurse Practitioners** in the Country. Presently, there are only 191 NPs certified in the US.

2005 Awarded the Michigan Council of Nurse Practitioners **2005 Nurse Practitioner of the Year** award. This is a peer-reviewed award, achieved by nomination, and is very competitive and prestigious.

2008 Awarded the Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates **President's Trophy for Outstanding Contributions to Urologic Nursing**. This award acknowledged both her clinical expertise and dedication to the field of urologic nursing and represents significant recognition from peers, as this is a peer-reviewed award as well

2011 **President of the Certification Board for Urologic Nurses and Associates**, and was the youngest President elected. During her time on the Board, she reworked and established the certification test for NPs to be psychometrically sound and legally defensible as a way to protect NP specialty practice in urology.

2013 Appointed to the **AUA Consensus Statement on Advanced Practice Providers ad hoc taskforce**. She was the only NP on this group.

2013 Awarded the **Great Lakes SUNA Member of the Year Award**

2013 **Arthur T. Evans Lectureship, American Urological Association** ("Chronic Testicular Pain")

2013 **Regional Member of the Year, North Central Section, Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates**

2014 **Arthur T. Evans Lectureship, American Urological Association** ("Sorting out PSA")

2014 Inducted as a **Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners** [This is a great honor, as there are less than 800 members and nearly all had achieved a doctorate degree prior to induction. Susanne was still a couple years short of her PhD.]

PhD Program

In 2009, Susanne was really developing a need for expanding her research footprint. She applied to Michigan's PhD program, with the vision of a project that explored one of our most troubling condition, that of chronic testicular pain. She began the program in 2010, all the while continuing her clinical work on a halftime basis. She very conveniently drove her studies from the patient population seen in the urology clinic. During the 6 years of pre-dissertation work and classes, she had to juggle her clinic and family schedule in a way that I believe few could.

While she was a PhD student/candidate, she ran a national credentialing board, continued on an editorial board, solicited authors and edited a book, published articles and continued to present widely, including 3 times in Europe/UK. All while working and managing all her family responsibilities, including college applications with her older daughter.



In London airport with her kids

Part of her dissertation work was accepted for podium presentation at AUA 2017, and another part was accepted to the American Pain Society conference May 2017.

Most importantly, she successfully defended her thesis on December 1, 2016.



Susanne right after her PhD thesis defense

We are all very proud of **Dr. Susanne Quallich's** accomplishments and look for more great things in the future!