of contact with allergens and asthma severity were found to have a negative effect on quality of life, especially in younger children (4-7 years).

Conclusions: Asthma control and severity are in close relation but they express different clinical dimensions of asthma. Major determinant of asthmatic children's QoL is the level of asthma control and affects it independently of any other factor. Moreover, even the presence of mild asthmatic symptoms affects quality of life.

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EDUCATING THE CHILDREN'S NURSE: THE IRISH TRANSFORMATION

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Aim: The aim of this presentation is to discuss education of children's nurse in Ireland which in recent years received a transformation.

Background: This transformation emanated from key recommendations of the Commission on Nursing (1998) which proposed that children's nurse education in Ireland should remain as a Post Graduate programme but suggested it be shortened from 18 to 12 months duration. Additionally, a whole review of children's nurse education in Ireland was recommended. A working group was established with the aim of exploring the future of children's nurse education. The work of this group culminated in several recommendations one of which was to re-establish a paediatric undergraduate programme leading to nurse education. As a result a Bachelor of Science in Children's & General Integrated Nursing was developed and commenced in 2006 with the first cohort of this unique group due to finish later this year.

Conclusion: Mindful of the historical background a profile of the new education programme at both undergraduate and postgraduate level will be presented. It is intended that discourse will encompass the challenges for clinical practice and the education of 21st century children's nurses from both a national and international perspective.

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MOTHER' EXPERIENCES OF CARING FOR CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX NEEDS - CHALLENGES FACED IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD

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Background: Children with complex needs, however defined, are increasingly being cared for at home.

Aim: The aim of the study was to explore the experiences of mothers caring for children who had rare, congenital and genetic disorders at home in Ireland.

Heideggerian and Gadamerian approaches were used and data were collected from seventeen mothers. Multiple interviews and diary recordings were analysed using an adaptation of a number of models.

Results: Mothers provide care in three worlds; an inside world of the home, an outside world and a going-between world. Mothers were involved in care-giving in an unstable world where support was limited. Care-giving involves four aspects- normal mothering, technical care-giving, pre-emptive care-giving and individualised care-giving. Paperwork and administration, constant observation, instability and communication added significantly to the complexity of caring. Mothers were 'knowing' of their child's needs. Others' 'unknowingness' impacted significantly on the mothers throughout the child's illness trajectory in all worlds. Caring involved a 'no choice' situation. Providing care in the outside world away from the home raises specific challenges for mothers who are required to deliver care in the presence of others who do not fully understand their situation.

Conclusions and recommendations: Service providers need to understand the challenges faced by mothers when they deliver care to their children at home and understand that caring at home involves more than the provision of care within home.