

EMERGENCY CARE matters

Spring 2009

www.rcn.org.uk/emergencycare

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Further information

Send contributions for the next issue by 30 June 2009 to the Editor:

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Letter from the Editor: RABINA TINDALE

Big changes, and still pushing ahead

A warm welcome to you all. It certainly has been a very busy time for emergency care, with lots of media attention over the months and plenty of activity at the RCN.

My year as forum chair came to an end in January 2009. Jim Bethel has been elected chair for the next year, with Heather Jarman

replacing him as vice-chair for the year. Congratulations to them both! I thoroughly enjoyed the year as chair and feel the ECA has had a number of successes.

Our online survey of your views around

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Emergency nurses at forefront of Dignity campaign

June 2008 saw the launch of the RCN campaign, ‘Dignity: at the heart of everything we do’. This campaign champions patient dignity by giving nurses the practical tools to ensure compassionate care is given to each patient and to challenge poor practice where it exists.

An RCN survey found that almost two-thirds of nurses admitted that patients are not always treated with dignity. The survey further showed that eight out of ten nurses had left work feeling upset or distressed as, in their opinion, they had not been able to give patients the dignified care they wanted to.

A charter is born

As part of this campaign, the ECA worked in collaboration with the Patients Association to create a ten-point ‘dignity charter’ for emergency nurses, setting out principles about the standards that patients can expect when attending emergency departments throughout the UK. A copy of the charter has been distributed to the head nurse of each emergency department, to be displayed in waiting rooms or departments.

As a further part of the campaign, the ECA and the Patients Association were invited to give a joint presentation at the RCN's Dignity launch conference.

Want to know more?

For information on the Dignity campaign, the RCN has also produced an online resource that aims to enable nurses to reflect on their values and beliefs, allowing individuals to work at their own pace – visit www.rcn.org.uk/dignity. And if you would like a copy of the dignity charter, please order from RCN Direct on 0845 772 6100, quoting publication code 003 258 (English) or 003 259 (Welsh and English) or download from the publications page on the Dignity website (as above).

Have a story to tell?

We would love to hear from you. If you wish to highlight any aspect of emergency care you are promoting locally and share it with

the wider emergency care community via the newsletter, please contact the editor on email: rabina.tindale@midyorks.nhs.uk

Mid Staffordshire report – ECA responds

You will all no doubt be familiar with the recent report by the Healthcare Commission into the Mid Staffordshire Hospitals Trust. The particular focus of the investigation was on the emergency admissions process within the trust. As a response to this, NHS Chief Executive David Nicholson stated: "... where senior management and boards fail to

act to ensure the ongoing quality and safety of the care they provide, they must be held accountable". Sadly, this was a foundation trust and the ECA believes that the Government must take some responsibility for the pressure it bears that forces hospitals to make the financial cuts in order to comply and achieve foundation status.

Quality versus cost ...

Many NHS trusts in the last couple of years did cut staffing from front-line services such as emergency departments – this cannot be done without having some effect on the quality and safety of care received by patients. Whilst the ECA recognises that quality cannot be delivered at any cost,

New international exchange programme

The ECA has been busy fostering relationships internationally, looking at opportunities of working together on issues affecting emergency care. It now has firm links with the Emergency Nurse Association (ENA) of America and the Maltese Emergency Nurses Association.

Trading places ...

Taking this further, the ECA has been working with the ENA on developing an exchange programme, designed to allow emergency nurses the opportunity of visiting and working in a host emergency department for two weeks. The ECA will fund the airfare of successful applicants from the ECA membership and the ENA will fund the

airfare of successful applicants from their membership to visit an emergency department of their choice in America and the UK. The successful applicants will act as hosts, living and working with each other.

The successful ECA member will be expected to write about their experience on the ECA website as well as produce an article for *Emergency*

Nurse about the exchange and how it might benefit UK nurses. Hopefully, they will also encourage others to take up the opportunity to have a similar experience!

For further information, please contact the ECA's International Lead Claire Picton, on email: clairepicton.rcneca@yahoo.co.uk

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the four-hour operational standard proved to be a huge accomplishment, the results of which generated significant media attention and raised concerns around patient care versus achieving targets. The work is still ongoing – the ECA is committed to ensuring the views of its membership are heard by the Government – and we will continue to lobby for changes.

In fact, in light of the recent Health Care Commission report into Mid Staffordshire Hospitals Trust, it is vital that the Government listens to our concerns (see article above). Support goes out to Mid Staffordshire staff – we fully understand the difficulties faced.

On the web and on the campaign trail ...

The ECA was one of the first forums

to be involved in the RCN's online communities and, although our website is one of the best, it still has further potential. If you haven't had the opportunity to visit it, please do and give us your suggestions.

For the past year, the ECA has also been privileged to be involved in the RCN's Dignity campaign. This is such an important piece of work and such a key aspect of patient care that we were delighted to work with the Patients Association and produce a ten-point charter. Further details on this can be found on page one.

Key changes

The RCN has certainly been very busy making a number of changes within its internal structures and processes. One such area has been the Nursing Department and the rationalisation of forums. In order to spend its members'

money more efficiently, the RCN took the decision to reduce the number of forums from 75 to 45. Many forums have been merged into larger forums, but the Emergency Care Association is one of the few to have remained a stand-alone forum.

Another key change implemented by the RCN is the move away from the traditional yearly operational plan to regular smaller project bids. Traditionally, each forum at the beginning of the year had to submit an operational plan for the activity planned for the rest of the year, demonstrating the cost and benefit of the activities planned. This then had to be approved and appropriate funding allocated. The changes mean forums will submit project bids four times a year. The ECA views this move as hugely positive – it gives us the flexibility to identify and

there has to be a clear understanding that it cannot be delivered without appropriate investment.

Staff in emergency departments work tirelessly every day to deliver the best care they can in under-resourced environments and at the same time face pressures to meet poorly thought-through targets. The results of the survey conducted by the ECA around the four-hour standard should be raising alarm bells for everyone, the Government included.

Farewell...

As many of you will be aware Mike Hayward left his role as RCN Advisor for emergency care last year. In the four years Mike spent in this role he was instrumental in pushing the emergency care agenda forward and in ensuring the ECA forum was operating effectively, efficiently and responsibly to its membership. Mike was renowned for his professionalism, integrity and sense of fair play. He provided a huge amount of support and guidance to the committee and will be missed. Mike was never afraid to challenge the status quo! However, in his current role as operational manager of emergency care we are sure he will strive to ensure the voice of emergency nursing is not ignored and that quality care remains high on the agenda.

➔ work on new projects throughout the year, allowing us to engage with the membership, invite people to work on projects they are interested in, and keep an eye on the website for opportunities to be involved in projects as and when they are identified.

Committee vacancies

The ECA currently has two vacancies on its steering committee – calls for nomination will be circulated in the near future. It is looking for front-line nurses who have a passion for their specialty and have the drive to push the emergency care agenda forward. Please feel free to contact any of the existing committee members for further information.

ECA CONFERENCE 2008

Emergency care matters: making your voice heard in emergency care

Over 240 professionals representing all aspects of emergency care provision attended the ECA Annual Conference in Daresbury on 14 and 15 November 2008. For the first time, the conference brought together the ECA with the RCN Minor Injuries Group, RCN Paediatric Emergency Care Group and the British Paramedic Association, to offer an exciting and diverse programme. HEATHER JARMAN, ECA steering committee member and conference lead for 2008, reports.

Featuring keynote speakers Liberal Democrat MP Norman Lamb and motivational speaker Alf Dunbar, as well as Nursing Standard 'Nurse of the Year' award winner Cheryl Chainey, the Conference had several other invigorating discussions and talks, including those from Judith McLeod and Steve Brodie, who spoke about post-incident analysis in the Armed Forces, and Alex Water, who spoke on the changing role of the ambulance service. There were also a number of first-time presenters who braved their nerves to deliver informative and stimulating sessions, all offering excellent opportunities to take things back to other departments to improve patient care and nursing practice.

Delegates were offered a wide range of concurrent sessions presented in a number of 'streams' covering leadership, education, clinical practice, research and innovation, paediatrics and minor injuries. As part



of a new session, the steering committee, along with newly appointed RCN Acute Care Adviser Alan Dobson, took part in a Q&A session with delegates to discuss issues raised directly by those in attendance, which enabled some good dialogue. A similar Q&A is being planned for next year's conference.

The committee would like to continue to

Important news on the Forum Transition

RCN forums are groups of RCN members working in a similar nursing specialty or with like interests.

RCN forums:

- provide networking opportunities
- help members enhance their practice knowledge and skills
- provide an expert resource
- support RCN Council
- shape, drive and develop nursing practice
- identify and support nurse leaders in their field
- influence current and future health and social policy in the UK and beyond.

In 2008 RCN Council decided that RCN forums should be streamlined to create 41 stronger, more fit-for-purpose forums. They will have a revised governance structure and will be supported with new online systems to help them meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The Emergency Care Association remains the same during the transition, but there will be changes to how your forum works and how it communicates with you, the members. You can find more detail on the forums' website: www.rcn.org.uk/forums

Thousands of RCN members throughout the UK already work together in forums to

Conference 2009: date for your diary

The success of the conference and steadily increasing demand for places means the Daresbury venue, while excellent, no longer has sufficient capacity. With this in mind, the committee has made the decision to relocate to a larger venue in 2009, while still keeping the cost of the delegate fee down. This year the conference will be held in Harrogate at the Majestic Hotel. The date is slightly earlier: 16–17 October 2009.

Please see the flyer enclosed with this newsletter, calling for abstracts.

We look forward to see you all there.



hear your views on the conference and other issues, so please participate in the Emergency Care Discussion Zone available on the RCN website.

We look forward to welcoming you to the 2009 conference and hope you will celebrate and share your hard work by submitting an abstract (see flyer insert with this newsletter).

Best wishes for the forthcoming year.

Keynote speakers prove a hit

Once again, the ECA Conference was a resounding success. Themes of the two-day concurrent workshop/presentations included: urgent care, innovation in emergency care education, research, paediatrics, minor injuries, clinical practice and leadership. **RABINA TINDALE** reports on three main speeches.

Inspiring words

The first day began with a lively session from motivational speaker Alf Dunbar, creator and founder of the highly successful customer service coaching programme 'You are the difference'. The inspirational programme is currently used by a wide range of retail and non-retail organisations in the UK and in 25 countries around the world. Alf's coaching methods are based on the real world with real people; his unique and enthusiastic communication skills inspire people, which in turn enhance individual performance. Alf's goal is to raise people's self-belief and confidence – he even gave away a copy of his book to each delegate!

Digging deeper

Following on from this, MP and Liberal Democratic Shadow Secretary of State for Health Norman Lamb's discussion also proved worthwhile. He was keen to engage with emergency nurses and hear about the problems and pressures they faced. Later in the conference, Nursing Standard Nurse of the Year finalist Cheryl Chainey gave the Ethel Buckles lecture, speaking on her work around the trials, tribulations and pitfalls of moving forward paediatric care in a predominantly adult-focused emergency department.

With inspiring discussions such as these, we can only look forward to 2009!

project

develop and improve nursing care in a range of settings and they remain an essential part of RCN membership. By joining an RCN forum you will be kept up to date by email with the latest developments in your key field of interest. There are also online communities in different specialisms and interests – see www.rcn.org.uk/communities for further information.

Don't forget to update your details at www.rcn.org.uk/myrcn and give us your email address to ensure you continue to receive information and updates from your new forum.

Don't miss out! E-news

From October 2009, all RCN forum newsletters are going to be emailed to members rather than posted. The content of your newsletter from the world of emergency care will be just as good if not better, as we will be able to include additional information and link directly to useful resources.

A significant number of you have already opted into the electronic versions of the forum newsletters and we aim to continue to enhance our communications with you.

To receive your electronic newsletter, simply go to www.rcn.org.uk/myrcn and check we have a current email address for you.

Don't forget that you can also check out the latest information and updates by going to your online community at www.rcn.org.uk/emergencycare

Nurse struck off NMC register – just or harsh?

Opinion appears to be divided about the Nursing and Midwifery Council's (NMC's) decision to remove Margaret Haywood from the professional register, for breaking patient confidentiality. RABINA TINDALE reports.

Registered Nurse Margaret Haywood took part in secret filming for a BBC documentary exposing the appalling standards of care given to elderly patients at the trust where she was employed. Margaret argues that she was left with no alternative but to take the action she did, as previous concerns raised with senior management had gone unheard.

Under pressure

There are mixed views around the effectiveness of whistle blowing. Over the years we have seen many colleagues across the nursing profession raising their head above the parapet and exposing bad practice publicly – the majority have

paid the price, which ultimately deters others from following in their footsteps. The ECA has voiced the opinions of their membership professionally and has attempted to engage the Government to take these concerns seriously with very little success.

The survey conducted by the ECA on the four-hour operational standard showed that many of you had concerns around this target impacting on the quality of care. Some respondents reported that they had witnessed 'fudging of data' and many of you felt you were placed under great pressure to achieve the target regardless of what was in the best interest of the patient.

What do you think?

What are your opinions on the NMC's decision to remove Nurse Haywood from the register? What are your views on how concerns around quality and bad practice should be raised if the management teams locally do nothing to address the concerns raised with them? The RCN has launched an online petition to gauge the views of its members, which can be found at www.gopetition.com/online/27030.html

If you feel you have something to add, please send contributions on this topic to me at email: rabina.tindale@midyorks.nhs.uk, or alternatively post your comments on the RCN website.

Violence against women and girls strategy – an opportunity to contribute to the consultation document

The Home Secretary launched a consultation on 9 March 2009 to raise awareness and encourage discussion and debate on how to end violence against women and girls. This is an excellent opportunity for emergency care nurses to become involved in such a hugely important issue. A number of consultation events are planned to take place in the near future in different locations throughout England. The work will contribute to a cross-Governmental strategy that is due to be launched in the autumn. To view the consultation document, please visit:

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news/speaking-out-against-violence

The Home Office has spent a considerable amount of money into tackling issues around violence against women and in recent years new laws have been brought into force to both protect women and punish their attackers. The year 2003 saw the launch of the Poppy Project, which provides high-level specialist support for women trafficked into sexual exploitation. It has 35 bed spaces in houses throughout London. In 2008 the Government launched the Forced Marriages Unit. This unit has trained professionals who provide confidential advice and assistance to those in forced marriages who find themselves victims of violence – in addition, it also offers assistance to professionals working in health, social and educational sectors.

Link members – are you up for it?

The ECA is always looking at ways to involve its wider membership. Becoming a link worker is an excellent opportunity to become actively involved without committing to being a steering committee member. Link members help the ECA fulfil its objectives in representing the reality of emergency care regionally, nationally and internationally.

The ECA would like to make the committee as representative as possible of its membership by engaging link members in the emergency care agenda and giving local departmental staff an opportunity to voice their concerns and ideas. This helps the ECA to ensure national policies reflect the views of the wider emergency care community. To be involved, download an application form and information from: www.rcn.org.uk/development/communities/specialisms/emergency_care/link_members. Alternatively, for more information, contact any of the steering committee members.



Your chance to make a difference – **becoming an RCN representative**

Help your colleagues with: • employment issues • health and safety • learning and development

For more information visit www.rcn.org.uk/becomerep

Emergency Nurses' Week – worth a try?

Successfully established in the United States for several years to celebrate the emergency nursing profession, Emergency Nurses' Week also demonstrates the commitment and dedication of emergency nurses to other health care professionals and the public.

How it works

Various promotional events and presentations take place through the course of the week in different settings, from hospitals, schools and universities to businesses and shopping centres, all raising the profile of emergency nursing.

Positive benefits are derived for the public, as they are given the opportunity to become involved in initiatives such as safety and injury prevention, health promotion and emergency care. It also gives health professionals an opportunity to promote the benefits of a career in emergency care, thereby

helping to recruit people into the nursing profession and ultimately into emergency care. The media are encouraged to run articles and programmes on activities taking place locally to support emergency care.

Should it come to the UK?

If this week was launched in the UK, emergency nurses could encourage local public discussion and debate on a wide range of issues such as alcohol and drug misuse, passenger or cyclist safety, knife crime, issues affecting older people and standards of care.

Local emergency departments

could host short study days on these or other emergency care issues, providing an opportunity for local health professionals to network and collaborate.

The ECA wants to hear your views on this subject. Do you think Emergency Nurses' Week could work in the UK? If so, what would you do for it? Or are you participating in events similar to those mentioned above? Please send accounts of your experiences or your comments to the editor of the newsletter, Rabina Tindale, at email: rabina.tindale@midyorks.nhs.uk

New RCN adviser – Alan Dobson

The ECA offers a warm welcome to Alan Dobson, who left Winchester and Eastleigh Healthcare NHS Trust, Hampshire, where he was Divisional Senior Nurse in Emergency Care, to become the RCN's Nurse Adviser in Acute and Emergency Care in October 2008.

As the new Acute Care Adviser, Alan is part of the RCN's new 15-strong Nursing Department, which has been launched as part of its plans to 'influence, develop and support nursing practice'. The restructured department aims to provide a more comprehensive service to members and Alan has a wide remit that includes orthopaedic nursing as well other aspects of acute care such as, for example, emergency care, critical care, defence nursing, outpatients, perioperative care, ophthalmics, ENT, maxillofacial, gastroenterology, intravenous therapy, cancer, haemophilia, blood transfusion and in-flight nursing.

Background

Qualifying as a registered nurse in 1981, Mr Dobson served in the Royal Navy and Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service for 20 years in military and civilian hospitals, establishments and surface ships in the UK and overseas. Joining the NHS in 1996, he was a senior nurse in A&E followed by a position as a divisional nurse for medical

services (including acute medicine, critical care, cardiology, respiratory, oncology, haematology, neurology and regional renal services) at Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust. He has also been a senior nurse at Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust, Barts and The London NHS Trust and, more recently, at Winchester and Eastleigh Health Care Trust.

Alan was employed at the University of Southampton as module leader for Clinical Assessment and Diagnosis in Acute and Emergency Care. He has a particular interest in clinical leadership development and was a standing committee member for the development of the Leadership Programme for Matrons and Consultant Nurses in Emergency and Urgent Care. Alan replaces Mike Hayward, who left the RCN to pursue his career in emergency care within the NHS.

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For details of forthcoming
RCN EVENTS go to
www.rcn.org.uk/events