

The quarterly magazine for RCNSTUDENTS

the answer

Spring 2006

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Pakistan earthquake disaster relief – one nursing student's story

Soapbox – Scotland's Chief Nursing Officer, Paul Martin

Nursing the world – why you shouldn't miss RCN Congress 2006

ANS conference – students report back from their conference



Royal College
of Nursing

Nursing Standard Seminar Programme

Tuesday 25 April

- 10-10.45**
- **Get Active: Developing your skills as a political leader:**
Sue Antrobus – Director, RCN Political Leadership Programme, RCN Institute
Jean Bailey – Lead Adviser in Management, RCN
 - **Hepatitis B and C – The occupational health implications:**
Carol Bannister – PND Team Leader and RCN Adviser in Occupational Health
 - **Competence and you:**
Lyn Garbarino – Senior Fellow, Competence Development, RCN/Skills for Health
 - **Violence and aggression in the workplace:**
Lynne Jackson – RCN Counsellor, North of England
- 11-11.45**
- **RCN Publishing: Dream job – How to get the job you want:**
Jane Redfern Jones – Freelance Nursing Writer
 - **Consent and confidentiality: Young people, the law and you the nurse:**
Marcella de Sousa – Adolescent Nurse Specialist,
Theresa Nash – Senior Lecturer in Primary Care,
Kingston University, St Georges University of London,
Jackie Nelson – CNS/Clinical Nurse Manager, Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Social Services, Northern Ireland
 - **The diversity masterclass:**
Wendy Irwin – Diversity and Equalities Coordinator, RCN
 - **RCN Resources to help you develop your practice:**
Kim Manley, Head of Practice Development, RCN Institute
- 12-12.45**
- **Intermediate care – A game of snakes and ladders:**
Alison Bowden – High Peak and Dales Community, Rehabilitation Teams Assistant Manager
 - **The only limits in life are self imposed:**
Jennifer Percival – Nursing Standard Self Help Columnist
 - **Engaging nurses in practice based commissioning:**
Lindsey Hayes – Senior Fellow, Leadership Development Primary Care and Public Health, RCN Cancer and Public Health Adviser
 - **Health and safety risk assessment:**
Glyn Jones – Lecturer in Continuing Education and Training, RCN Institute
- 13-13.45**
- **Promoting continence and managing incontinence in older people:** (please note that this is a double session 13-14.45)
Joanne Mangnall – R&D Fellow, Quality Improvement Programme, RCN Institute,
Phyll Taylor – Independent Continence Adviser, Learning and Development Facilitator, Exeter PCT
 - **Sweet dreams – Find out about sleep mechanism:**
Dr John Schneerson – Consultant Physician, Papworth Hospital
 - **School nursing in 2006: Is school nursing a career for you?:**
Elsa Chadaway – Team Leader School Nursing, Coventry Primary Care Trust
 - **Mapping your knowledge and skills framework journey:** (please note that this is a double session 13-14.45)
Lorna Evans – Assistant Lecturer in Continuing Education and Training, RCN Institute
- 14-14.45**
- **Promoting continence and managing incontinence in older people:** (please note that this is a double session 13-14.45)
Joanne Mangnall – R&D Fellow, Quality Improvement Programme, RCN Institute,
Phyll Taylor – Independent Continence Adviser, Learning and Development Facilitator, Exeter PCT
- 15-15.45**
- **Transition from student nurse to staff nurse:**
Bethann Siviter – Nurse Consultant for Older People, Birmingham Primary Care Trust
 - **So you want to work with people who have Parkinson's Disease:**
Lesley Carter – Nurse Development Manager, Parkinson's Disease Society UK,
Jacqui Handley – Parkinson's Disease Nurse Specialist
 - **Mapping your knowledge and skills framework journey:** (please note that this is a double session 13-14.45)
Lorna Evans – Assistant Lecturer in Continuing Education and Training, RCN Institute
- 15-15.45**
- **Drug Administration: Are you safe to practice?:**
Sharon Arkell – Senior Lecturer, University of Wolverhampton,
Carol Greenway – Senior Lecturer, DeMontfort University
 - **Essence of care: Benchmarking for continence:**
Phyll Taylor – Independent Continence Adviser, Learning and Development Facilitator, Exeter PCT
 - **Challenges of teaching ethics to multicultural student groups: Ethical imperialism or professional universalism?:**
Professor Paul Wainwright, Dr Ann Gallagher – Faculty of Health and Social Sciences, Kingston University and St George's University of London
 - **Assertive skills for nurses:**
Lynne Jackson – RCN Counsellor, North of England
- 16-16.45**
- **Student debt and alternative sources of income:**
Stephanie Allen – Student Nurse and Student Representative, RCN South East Regional Board, East Surrey Hospital,
Claire Cannings – Welfare Adviser, Career and Welfare Service, RCN,
Ian Kightley – Student Nurse and RCN Student Steward, Napier University
 - **Working alongside people with dementia and their family carers:**
Dr Trevor Adams – Lecturer in Mental Health, University of Surrey
 - **The diversity masterclass:**
Wendy Irwin – Diversity and Equalities Coordinator, RCN
- 17-17.45**
- **Assertive skills for nurses:**
Lynne Jackson – RCN Counsellor, North of England
 - **True or False the big 'C':**
Jackie Green – Nurse Consultant Haematology & Oncology,
Shelley Dolan – Nurse Consultant Cancer and Critical Care

Sponsored Seminars

Located in the Bay View Suite

10.30-11.15, 12.30-13.15, 15.30-16.15

- **The British Pharmacological Society: Where do drugs come from?:**
Clive Page – Professor of Pharmacology, King's College, London

13.30-14.15

- **Innovations in home healthcare:**
Lorraine Newman – Lead Nurse, Mal Chambers – Lead Nurse and Kay Ferris – Deputy Director of Nursing, Clinovia Ltd

14.30-15.15

- **NHS Connecting for Health: – Our programme, our opportunity:**
Beki Ruban – Head of Nurse Development Programmes, NHS Connecting for Health

Editorial

Spring is in the air! We have just gathered for the RCN Annual student conference *Nursing: challenges and choice*, and it was good to see many of you there. The conference was brilliant as it addressed the issues faced by nursing students today and celebrated their contribution to the UK health care environment. Your participation in RCN conferences keeps you in the loop and makes your RCN students association a stronger political force.

It was my pleasure to meet so many of you at last year's RCN Congress, NMC focus groups, ANS annual conference and at many other RCN events around the UK. I have visited nursing students in the West Midlands, Worcestershire, Staffordshire and during the coming months I hope to meet with many more of you throughout the country.

The opportunity to meet, receive constructive criticism and identify common issues of interest to all nursing students and hear about interesting initiatives throughout the country has been a great experience. Thank you for taking the time to share them with me.


There have been a number of issues raised when speaking with you all. For example, many questions were raised about the recent NMC Fitness to Practice consultation on the courses you currently follow. It was wonderful to see nursing students helping each other answer questions as they try to understand the implications of the Consultation for the future of nurse education. This is a trend I am sure will highlight the important role we play for each other in our nurse education programmes.



This year's RCN Congress from 23-27 April is in Bournemouth.

It is a great opportunity to meet nurses from all over the UK, hear speakers on current topics, as well as contribute to debates and the future development of nursing. See the feature on why you should go to Congress on page 7 and don't forget to visit the RCN website www.rcn.org.uk/congress for the latest information.

RCN Congress brings together nurses from many geographical areas and presents a fantastic opportunity to inform Council on what members think.

On behalf of your ANS Executive, I look forward to seeing you at Congress. 

Grant Ciccone FRSA is the consultant editor of *the answer*.

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the answer

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Get the latest information about the RCN 2006 Congress >>
www.rcn.org.uk/congress

news

RCN appoints new Student Adviser



Congratulations to Susan Watt

Susan Watt has been successful in gaining a secondment for one year as RCN UK Student Adviser taking over from Gill Robertson while she is on secondment. Susan commenced her post in January and has a UK remit and is based at RCN Scotland in Edinburgh.

She has worked as RCN Education and Clinical Effectiveness Adviser for the past three and a half years. Susan will be responsible for supporting the RCN Association of Nursing Students (ANS) to pursue and develop policies for the continuing improvement of nurse education and the student experience.

She will facilitate the development of education agendas relating to students internally and externally and on an individual basis will mentor, develop and support students into leadership roles.

Susan is working towards the further development and practice of nurse education, providing leadership for the ANS, and developing key educational policy.

Susan is keen to hear stories of newly qualified students not getting jobs »
susan.watt@rcn.org.uk

Third year nursing student scoops top award

On 8 March, the *Nursing Standard* Nurse of the year awards were held at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in London. The student award was supported by the Open University and this year it went to Shamiso Simango, a diploma student at Buckingham Chiltern University.

While working in a busy London Hospital, Shamiso, a third year student, was looking after an elderly gentleman who had had an amputation of his lower limb. Through reflection and a relationship built on mutual trust, Shamiso identified the solution to his incontinence problem, which was due to poor positioning on the bedpan. Her intervention had many benefits for the patient, including prevention of pressure sores, increased confidence and dignity, earlier independence and discharge home, and



Shamiso with Health Secretary, Patricia Hewitt, and Shirley Reveley from the Open University.

more confidence in the nursing staff through behavioural change. The judges identified a 'leader in the making'.

The commended award went to Mike Jackson, a diploma student at the University of Central Lancashire. A placement at a nursing home forced Mike to reflect that living with a disability can have its advantages. Mike, who has Scoliosis, had his doubts and came across prejudices regarding his pre-registration programme. This placement led him to being asked to help carers, patients and relatives to take control of their disabilities and improve their care.

Problems with student bursaries continue



In January, the RCN had discussions on bursary delays, including incurred bank charges, at a meeting with the Student Grants

Unit. Recently, a second year student from the Faculty of Health and Social Care Sciences, Kingston University and St George's, University of London kindly forwarded a weekly email bulletin that goes out to all students at the university. This student was very interested to note that the BMA had requested details of medical students who had incurred bank charges as a result of the Unit's delays of Autumn 2005. The RCN has since contacted the Student Grants Unit and investigated this further for nursing students gaining reimbursement for bank charges incurred. The reply from the Students' Grant Unit was that if they received a complaint from an individual claiming to have incurred bank charges as a result of a late bursary payment, then they would investigate. They also pointed out that they had not received any such complaints so far that students had incurred such charges, though if details are sent to them they will respond to the individuals concerned.

The Student Grants Unit has requested details of students who have incurred bank charges/costs etc due to the late payment of their NHS bursary this year.

Please send your name, address, university and course, year of study, date of bursary application and date you received your bursary, as well as any costs incurred, in confidence to Susan Watt, RCN Student Adviser at susan.watt@rcn.org.uk. Your personal details will only be seen by the relevant staff at RCN and the SGU.

Contact Susan at »
susan.watt@rcn.org.uk

Violence against nurses

RCN survey released



Violent attacks against nurses are increasing and their psychological wellbeing is worsening according to the *Working well – at breaking point* survey published by the RCN. Nearly three thousand nurses from across the UK responded to the survey, providing details about their working lives and issues such as bullying and stress.

Four in ten nurses reported that they have been harassed or assaulted by patients or their relatives in the last 12 months (an increase of 6 per cent from 2000). The figure rose to 79 per cent of nurses working in accident and emergency.

Beverly Malone, General Secretary of the RCN said

‘Nursing is a hugely rewarding profession, but this survey demonstrates the tough issues that nurses are facing every day on top of a job that is physically and mentally demanding. If we are going to bring more people into the profession and stop others leaving, we have got to tackle these problems. We must make nurses ‘working lives better and safer so that they can focus on creating a safe healing environment and caring for their patients.’

The RCN will be using the data to lobby stakeholders at national level to facilitate positive changes, including increasing the number of cases of assaults against nurses going through the criminal justice system.

If you, or a fellow student, would like further advice on conflict management and handling potentially volatile situations on placements and in the workplace, don't forget you can contact your student steward or regional RCN office.

The survey results generated huge media interest in February/early March
The full survey can be found at >> www.rcn.org.uk/publications

COMING SOON the new RCN STUDENTS website

...including your chance
to win an iPod nano!

Over the last few months we have been busy working on a new student website to replace the current Student Zone. RCN STUDENTS will be a completely new online resource giving you access to everything you need as a RCN student member. Featuring the latest news and events it will be your gateway to the RCN, giving you easy access to everything the organisation has to offer.

It will also help you get the most out of your copy of *The answer*, giving you

exclusive content and links relating to feature articles.

To be one of the first to know when the new site is launched, and to be entered into a prize draw to win an iPod nano, send an email to >> students@rcn.org.uk

Remember to put ‘student zone’ as the subject and include your name and email address*.

*see www.rcn.org.uk/students for terms and conditions, by entering this competition you agree to the RCN contacting you by email about the launch of the new students' website.

News in brief

Information wanted

Have you had any training in sexual health skills and education during your nurse training? Would you know what to do if a patient asked you a question about sexual health? Whether you have or haven't, the RCN and Department of Health would like to hear from you. The aim is to ensure that ALL pre-registration nursing students have adequate access to sexual health training throughout their programmes.

Send your experiences to Grant >> g.ciccione@blueyonder.co.uk

NMC announces review of Code of Conduct

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) has announced a review of the Code of Professional Conduct – the regulatory ‘bible’ for all nurses, midwives and specialist community public health nurses (referred to as registrants). The Code of Professional Conduct contains standards for conduct, performance and ethics for the profession. It is the key tool to enable public protection by ensuring that all registrants are supported to provide expert and safe care to patients.

Hospital closure protests

Hundreds of placard waving residents took to the streets of a Shropshire town for a march over plans to axe a community hospital and make nurses redundant in January. The march was organised by campaigners furious that Whitchurch Hospital was under threat of closure as health chiefs try to balance their books. A rallying cry also went out to everyone across Bridgnorth District to people who joined a similar march against Bridgnorth Hospital's possible closure. NHS trust deficits throughout the UK have been making the headlines over the past few months as trusts try to balance their books by making staff and service cuts.

Disaster relief

Kashmir



Nursing student Sue Hussain writes about her experience helping the relief effort in the aftermath of the Pakistan earthquake.

On hearing the devastating news about the earthquake that hit Pakistan, I decided that I wanted to do something to help the victims. I didn't just want to send a donation. I wanted to help in person, although the only obstacle in my way was that I was in the middle of my nursing course. With a lot of effort I managed to overcome the obstacles and was able to help the victims.

It was definitely an experience I will never forget; not only has it given me valuable nursing experience, but it has also taught me to appreciate what we have. Talking to the victims out there, among people who were originally poor were also families who at one time had as much, if not more than us, and who are now left with nothing.

The area hit by the quake was once the most beautiful tourist attraction in Pakistan and even when I saw it covered in rubble, it still had a very strange beauty. The people were fantastic; even though many of the victims lost almost everything, they still made the most of what they had.

The first day I got there was utter chaos. It was the current aid group's last day and they were panicking that there was no one to carry on their work in the dressing clinic. Even though there were local health care staff, they had no previous training on the type of wounds resulting from the earthquake and hadn't used many of the dressings that had been taken over from England. I was scared as I had done some dressings, but nothing to this extent and I hardly slept that night, worried about how I would cope the next day.

My second day started at 8am. When I got to the dressing clinic, I already had 20 patients waiting for me, along with the original 42 I had on my list for the day. I didn't want to let any one down, so I found the two staff nurses and got on with it. Luckily I had a plastic surgeon consultant and registrar in the theatre next to me who offered help if I got stuck. I made the most of their kind offer and asked their advice a few times! After a hectic day, I finished my work with a great deal of satisfaction.

I worked in the dressing clinic for two weeks; it wasn't easy but it did get better. The most difficult time was when I was putting dressings on babies and children. I sometimes found myself crying in the middle of treatment because of the pain these people were suffering.

It was definitely an experience I will never forget; not only has it given me valuable nursing experience, but it has also taught me to appreciate what we have.

When another relief team arrived, I was asked if I would like to run an outreach clinic for the relief camps for people who had minor coughs and colds, injuries or post op problems. I was provided with a room and boxes of aid materials such as medicines and dressings and I set up my clinic. In particular, there was a 6 year old patient with a fractured femur who had not been to the doctors since the quake. I got her referred to the hospital, where she was operated on. I have a burning desire to return to the people I left behind and would like to see whether the work we set up has continued and developed... perhaps one day soon I'll revisit and see how the area is recovering. [ans](#)

FREE ENTRY

Nursing the
WORLD
RCN Congress 2006

RCN Congress & Exhibition 2006

Bournemouth International Centre

RCN Congress 23-27 April, Exhibition 24-26 April

Students

Attend the **UK's top nursing event** and you can:

- **Be part of RCN Congress debating sessions*** – for a chance to help shape the future of nursing and health care and to keep up-to-date with key nursing issues
- **Participate in the *Nursing Standard* seminars** covering a variety of student issues, including branch specific sessions and sessions covering personal and professional development
- **Visit the UK's largest nursing exhibition** to find out about the latest products and services
- **Network and socialise with nurses** from across the UK from all specialties and grades

Don't miss **Students' Day** – Tuesday 25 April

The Association of Nursing Students has organised a range of activities for RCN student members, including:

- **Student Assembly "Nursing: On the Brink of Disaster"**
13.00 – 14.00
- **Students' Reception and Dinner**
18.00 – 20.00
- **Students' Ball**
20.00 until late

For further information about the RCN Congress and Students' Day visit www.rcn.org.uk/congress or contact Tracey Savage, Student Administrator, tel: 020 7647 3758 or email: tracey.savage@rcn.org.uk

If you haven't already registered for RCN Congress and would like to attend, applications should be made in person in Bournemouth.

*** RCN Congress debates are only open to RCN members**

Non RCN students can register to attend the exhibition which includes free entry to *Nursing Standard* seminars

real lifes

Where are they now?



Lee Raynard

Lee's story

My involvement with the RCN and the Association of Nursing Students began in 1997 when I was elected onto the ANS Executive Committee, representing the North of England. The patch that I covered was quite extensive, stretching from Newcastle down to Birmingham.

It was all very daunting at the time, as a first year nursing student taking on the role of representing students at a national level over such a vast geographical patch. However, I soon found that there was no need for concern as I was well supported by RCN staff and activists across the board. I was also well supported by the students that I worked with, who after all, were in the same position as me.

As the role progressed I was given the opportunity to take a sabbatical from my studies and work full time as a student officer. This enabled me to focus my full attention on the role, working closely with other students across the patch and also taking on a greater role in representing students at the 'top table'. This involved linking in with the RCN as a whole and looking at how the wider issues in nursing would impact on students, ensuring that the best deal for students was achieved.

In the first of a new series of articles, past members of the ANS Executive Committee write about their time on the ANS and what they're up to now. Lee Raynard and Andy McGovern kick off the series.

Overall, my involvement with the ANS helped to lay firm foundations for my career as a nurse and as an activist within the RCN. Since qualifying I have worked in a number of different roles, taking on new challenges within nursing and developing new roles. I now work as a district nurse and I am also a workplace steward and chair the staff side committee. Alongside this, I am chair of my local RCN branch and have been elected to the RCN Agenda Committee.

Andy's story

Almost six years have passed since since I took up my role as Chair of the RCN Association of Nursing Students, but it still seems like yesterday to me. I recall the excitement and anticipation of taking up this unique opportunity to lead the nursing students' agenda as well as the nursing agenda in general, through my seat on Council.


During my time in office I was able to meet many influential and important people from both nursing and politics, for example I met Ian Duncan Smith whilst attending the Conservative Party conference and many influential nurses at the ICN quadrennial Congress in Copenhagen. Both these events helped



Andy McGovern

to develop my skills in networking and really helped develop my confidence and my knowledge of nursing and health politics.

I believe that the experiences and opportunities I had during my time in office have assisted me greatly in my career development since qualifying as a children's nurse in 2002. I started as a staff nurse on an 18 month rotational programme in East London and from there I moved quickly into a charge nurse post on a children's ambulatory care unit and from there to a charge nurse post in community children's nursing. I have also remained active within the RCN as a steward and member of a forum steering group, and last year I was elected to serve on the Congress Agenda Committee.

Looking back I have had a busy few years, both in terms of my career and my RCN activity, and I believe that the time I spent as Chair of the ANS has influenced both and afforded me many opportunities. If you are thinking about getting active in the ANS, go for it! You and your career will benefit, you'll have a great time and make some life long friends. 

practice placement

Prison placement

Steve Croucher, a third year mental health nursing student reports on his placement at HMP Channings Wood prison.

I decided to do the final placement of my RMN course in a prison setting. Being primary care it rounded off my training and allowed me to care more readily for the whole person, physically as well as mentally. You are dealing with a concentration of people with challenging behaviour, whether they are patients on your caseload or people waiting for medication. Either way you have to engage at one level or another. I would recommend a placement within a prison in either the second or third year of training

if you are looking for an area that will really prepare you for life after training and develop your ability to interact with people. Imagine the most difficult people you've had to deal with during your training and put them all in one placement, that's what it can feel like.

I had a small caseload as most third year students do, which comprised patients from either primary care or in reach, which allowed me to see a wide range of mental health issues that affect prisoners. It allowed me to practice some of the physical aspects of nursing such as physical observations, wound care and assisting in the treatment room. Equally, it could provide an adult nurse with an opportunity to get involved in mental health care.

There are two important points to remember if anyone should decide to take a placement in a prison:

- firmly but politely establish your professional boundaries early on
- don't get distracted by the patient's offence, except where it represents a risk to yourself.

I have seen real professionalism and dedication from the nurses I had the privilege to work with on my final placement and I wouldn't have missed it for the world. [ans](#)

RNPFN offers funding for overseas electives but hurry...

Did you know you can apply for an award from the RCN to help fund your elective? Liverpool Victoria has teamed up with the RCN to offer four RNPFN Student Nurse Travel Awards of up to £500 each towards overseas electives taking place between Spring 2006 and Spring 2007.

You may have read about Catherine Morris' trip to Tanzania in the last issue of the answer. Here's some other feedback from last year's winners. Jessica Little, a paediatric nursing student, spent four weeks in Zambia working on the paediatric admission ward at The University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka. Here she experienced caring for children with illnesses and diseases rarely seen in the UK, such as Malaria, Tuberculosis

and Pneumonia. Jessica sums up her elective by saying 'My experience on this ward illustrated to me how devastating the effects of HIV/AIDs really are in the developing world. It was both frustrating and emotionally challenging to nurse children who were dying from illnesses and diseases which can be commonly prevented and cured in the western world.'

Winner Lucy Platt got a placement through The Leprosy Mission with a hospital in Champa (a 25 hour train journey from Delhi) to work with leprosy patients, and general patients including maternity and paediatric patients. Lucy says 'This elective highlighted the importance of health promotion and teamwork and made me appreciate the

facilities and systems we have in England. This experience has really helped shape me both professionally and personally. I feel very lucky to have been given the opportunity to undertake this experience.' [ans](#)

The Leprosy Mission in Champa



Apply by 5 May 2006. Send a SAE to Moira Lambert, RNPFN Student Nurse Travel Awards, RCN, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN by 25 April to complete your application in time. Download application forms >> www.rcn.org.uk/students

Challenges and choice

Stuart Beddard reports back from the RCN's annual student conference

The 2006 RCN student conference, Nursing: challenges and choice was held at the RCN in London in March. Delegates gathered from all over the UK and enjoyed a packed agenda of keynote speakers and a host of concurrent fringe events.

Richard Cummins, Student member of Council and Chair of the RCN Association of Nursing Students (ANS) welcomed guests and students and hosted the plenary event. Richard introduced Jonathan Asbridge, President of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). Students were inspired by Mr Asbridge's address as he reiterated that nursing as a profession was constantly changing, and that the NMC is striving to support not punish nurses. Jonathan expressed the importance of change within our profession and that the NMC is working constantly to set and maintain standards in light of the many changes. This was highlighted when he explained the current reform in pre-registration education. Due to an increased number of complaints received by both employers and professional organisations relating to newly registered nurses, the NMC identified a need to review fitness to practice at point of registration.

Jonathan announced that the NMC proposals following consultation had been agreed by NMC Council and that action would be taken to implement such changes in the future.

Chris Cox, Assistant Director, RCN Legal Services presented an overview of the legal implications of nursing. In a rather interesting and eye opening discussion Chris highlighted the pitfalls of the law and how this can affect nursing practice.

Delegates were then invited to attend a range of concurrent fringe events, ranging from sessions offering an introduction to career choices and partnership learning to a very interesting session given by Grant Ciccone, consultant editor of the answer, highlighting the proposals made by the NMC for pre-registration education. Mike Hayward, RCN Professional Nurse Adviser led a session introducing students to the world of emergency planning and nursing in a disaster: all delegates left with one question in the forefront of their mind; could I cope?

The conference was rounded off by Andy Hart, Student member of RCN Council who hosted an open debating session. Panel members included



Jonathan Asbridge delivers his overview of the legal implications of nursing.

Susan Watt, RCN Student Adviser, Grant Ciccone and Andy Scott Donkin from the ANS Executive Committee. Many topical issues were raised from bursaries, supernumerary status and public protection. The session concluded with the debating panel reinforcing an important message: all students must become politically aware, and more importantly politically active, in order to encourage governments to foster and adopt change. [ans](#)

soap box

Paul Martin, Chief Nursing Officer for Scotland, gives us an insight into the challenges and opportunities for nursing in Scotland.

Scotland is developing new NHS services to meet new health needs. The policy for the NHS in Scotland, *Delivering for Health*, published in October 2005, sets out what these health needs will be. It describes a Scotland where:

- the proportion of older people in the population grows, creating the need for a fundamental shift in the way the NHS works, from being a hospital-based to a community based service
- the numbers of people living in the community with long-term conditions rises
- the NHS is focused on encouraging health improvement and 'wellness', rather than just treating illness
- people want to be treated faster and closer to home.

Identifying health needs

It's a Scotland in which all our nurses and midwives will have an enormously important role to play. Their ability to identify health needs in their communities, encourage people to adopt healthier lifestyles, support those who live with long-term conditions, and care for people who need admission to hospital for acute illness, will be vital.

It's a time of fantastic opportunity for nurses and midwives in Scotland. The new agenda is very much core nursing and midwifery business.

Building opportunities

We are building up exciting career opportunities for nurses and midwives, underpinned by a strong desire to promote leadership at all levels of the profession. It's a different approach to career development in that it is focusing on offering stimulating options for people who want to remain in clinical practice, but who also want to contribute to wider research, education and policy agendas. Add into the mix

the exciting opportunities for role extension and new roles, supported by our framework for role development in nursing published jointly with the RCN last July, and you can see why Scotland is such an attractive place to develop and practice your skills.

Combatting attrition

The quality of the nursing and midwifery contribution depends on many factors. Key among these is the quality of preparation offered to students. That's the base from which all future quality will arise.

Like the other countries in the UK, we are finding in Scotland that we have less of a problem attracting people into the pre-registration programmes, but more of a problem keeping them there, with student attrition rates a cause for concern. We need to do more to ensure that students get the right opportunities, support and experiences to convince them that when they choose to enter nursing and midwifery courses, they made the right choice.

We have to guarantee that students will be given the right preparation to take their places in the new health care world they will face as staff nurses and midwives. They are not going to stick with the intellectual, emotional and physical challenges of the pre-registration programme if they feel it is not equipping them with the skills, knowledge and attitudes they need to play their part in delivering the new health agenda.

Playing our part

All of us have a part to play in that process, from me as Chief Nursing Officer, through lecturers in our higher education institutions, to practitioners and support workers on the frontline.

Much is already being done. Reviews of nursing for people with mental health



This is an exciting time in Scotland, with a new kind of health service being created.

problems and nursing in the community currently underway in Scotland are setting out proposals for new national frameworks to guide the development of pre-registration courses. We already have such a framework in learning disabilities nursing. And we are currently undertaking a major national review of how nursing and midwifery can articulate with the new health policy and deliver on its aims.

In tandem with our *Flying start* programme, under which newly qualified nurses and midwives can access support during their first year in NHS employment, these initiatives are driving forward the objective of ensuring that at the end of their courses, all our students are fit for purpose, properly equipped and supported, and filled with enthusiasm for the task ahead.

This is an exciting time in Scotland, with a new kind of health service being created. That service will depend on creating new kinds of nurses and midwives, professionals who can work across a range of environments, meet a variety of patient needs, promote health and encourage self care, and take on key roles within multi-disciplinary, multi-agency teams. It's a challenge we relish. [ans](#)

council and regional roundups

Council roundup

Many of the issues discussed at RCN Council are ongoing and it would be easy to think that they are of less importance to students. It may seem a long way off for students to be considering how Agenda for Change affects us (maybe not so for third years!) but I urge you all to start familiarising yourselves with the main points. When you start applying for jobs it's going to be very useful to know more about the professional development in Agenda for Change and the Knowledge and Skills Framework for a band 5 nurse. Try not to get bogged down in the details and don't try and read the whole document!!!

There are a number of items on the Congress agenda that are directly relevant to students and there are going to be some exciting and challenging debates especially around bursaries and jobs! I appreciate we are all busy with assignments and placements but Congress opens your eyes to some of the wider issues within nursing and it's great fun – so try and get to Students' Day – see page 7.

Pensions may seem a long way off to be considering as a student but as a mature student, trust me, it becomes



Andrew Hart
RCN Council

andrew.hart@rcn.org.uk



Richard Cummins
RCN Council

richard.cummins@rcn.org.uk

Regional roundups

Eastern region:

The Eastern region, like many other areas of the UK, is experiencing huge change in the form of job crisis, funding issues and the reform of pre-registration education. The Executive is working hard to ensure the student voice continues to be heard in key areas of nursing and nurse education. I urge all Eastern students to participate in these debates by sending me articles or comment and attending Students' Day at Congress. For those keen to attend, let me know as I may be able to assist with travel. We also continue to see the integration of Homerton School of Health Studies (Cambridge) with Anglia Ruskin University. I would love to hear from my Chelmsford colleagues. I look forward to meeting many of you at Congress.



Andrew Scott Donkin
Eastern

scottndonkin@mac.com

East Midlands region

Elections currently taking place – more information next time

London region:

Sorry, we don't have an update for this issue. Please contact Ayodele Tijani directly.



Ayodele Tijani
London

joytij83@yahoo.co.uk

Northern region:

As the ANS representative for the Northern region, I cover the University of Teesside, University of Northumbria and Carlisle. Since my appointment, I have been contacted by students from London, Scotland and Lancaster (which are obviously areas I do not represent). I would welcome feedback on developments in the region from any other student representatives as information is rather scant. I would particularly welcome comments from students

studying at Teesside, Northumbria and Carlisle with respect to any current practice issues.

Unfortunately the last cohort of students to qualify from Teesside found employment very difficult to come by. A large majority of them were employed on the local trust nurse bank/nursing resources and, although some jobs were available at the last minute, there are still a large number looking for permanent posts in the acute trusts in the child and adult pathways. This was not an issue for graduates in the mental health and learning disabilities pathways, the majority of whom have secured employment.



Colin Slater
Northern

Colin-slater@ntlworld.com

Northern Ireland:

Hi everyone! DJ and I would firstly like to wish you a belated Happy New Year. Secondly, can we both say

congratulations to the March 2003 intake at Queen's University, who have recently qualified – we wish you every success in your future career.

This year, RCN Congress will be held in Bournemouth with the theme of *Nursing the world* and promises to be an exciting event. See page 7 for why you should be there.

The NI student conference will be held on 2 May and promises to be an interesting event – notices with further information will go up round both university campuses, so keep a look out!

If you're interested in getting involved, or have any issues feel free to contact either DJ or myself. >>



Victoria Clarke
Northern Ireland

C1916003@qub.ac.uk



Oladimeji Sa'ad (DJ)
Northern Ireland

saadoladimeji@hotmail.com

regional roundups

North West region:

Hello to all my North West nursing student colleagues. I'm Benn Mott, currently your representative on the ANS Executive. I'm a second year diploma student, mental health branch at the University of Central Lancashire. Before my immersion into the cut and thrust of nursing I spent 20 years in advocacy, alongside people with learning disabilities, having the privilege of working for the People First groups of Manchester and Liverpool.

The North West has been chosen as a beacon area for the RCN's equality and diversity strategy, and is in the process of developing high profile events to focus people's attention and energy on inclusion.

See you at Congress, any students needing support, advice or information about Congress contact me. >>

 **Benn Mott**
North West
gedben@aol.com

Scotland:

The students in Scotland are continually working towards a better voice on issues and concerns surrounding the education of nurses. Successful training of our new reps has just taken place and given us a better structure within the country to offer a wider range of representation. We had a good turn out at the members' conference with good debates on bursaries and other issues involving students.

We are looking forward to hearing from you about issues and concerns from

around the country, so that they can be taken forward on your behalf. We would also like to hear from students who are interested in becoming a rep, or would like us to come and visit the university. >>



Iain Kightley
Scotland

ikightley@btinternet.com



Claire Alexander
Scotland

c.d.alexander@dundee.ac.uk

South East region

Elections currently taking place – more information next time.

South West region:

Congress is fast approaching and as ever it looks as if it will be an amazing event. This year it is being held in Bournemouth, so it's a lot easier for South West students to attend. If you are looking to arrange for a group of students to attend and are thinking of hiring a minibus or coach there may be help available. I have a limited regional ANS budget, so if you would like a contribution for transport please let me know. Hope to see you at Congress.



Mark Rickman
South West

mark@markrickman.wanado.co.uk

Wales:

A student forum meeting was held in January 2006 at Swansea University. The possibility of a conference in Cardiff for the recruitment of activists with a theme of Agenda for Change was discussed, along with break times, supernumerary

status, injuries at work, assessments, rotation of placements and community placements.

We hope that those students who attended the ANS conference in March enjoyed themselves and would encourage their friends and colleagues to come along next year.

The countdown has also started for RCN Congress in Bournemouth in a few weeks time. We hope to see as many Welsh students as possible making the epic voyage to the South coast. The plans are going well and Students' Day on Tuesday sounds fantastic. The theme for the week is *Nursing the world* and it looks to be a vibrant and colourful event.



Pam Bennie
Wales

hsuo82@bangor.ac.uk



Chris Cooper
Wales

hsufoe@bangor.ac.uk

West Midlands region:

The last few months have seen much activity and political lobbying on your behalf to safe guard jobs and health care service provision within the region.

I have had meetings with various Members of Parliament, their policy advisors and researchers and put forward your concerns about the lack of employment opportunities for newly qualified nurses.

The West Midlands regional student forum is there for you. It is your opportunity to tell me your concerns, not just with your nurse

education programme, but also with any issue about nurses and the nursing profession. The regional forum meets monthly, with a two day meeting in the summer vacation at the West Midlands regional office – you are most welcome to come and join us. Please email me for details of the next meeting.



Grant Ciccone
West Midlands

g.ciccone@blueyonder.co.uk

Yorkshire / Humber region:

Hello everyone, my name is Sarah Foulger and I am your newly elected member of the ANS for the Yorkshire and Humber region. I am currently studying at the University of York and am coming to the end of my first year of a Dip HE in Nursing – adult branch. I am a mature student who juggles my studies alongside a very hectic family life. I am mum to four children and have been married to my husband for 15 years. Nursing is my dream, and I feel very honoured to be representing you, in my role as an ANS Executive member. If you would like to contact me on any issues regarding the ANS, nursing, or being a student please do so, I would love to hear from you.



Sarah Foulger
Yorkshire / Humber

sarahfoulger1@hotmail.com

health matters

Letters

Dear Editor,

I am a third year student and I have been suspended from my course because I had administered a flush to a patient with a venflon. I know I should not have given the flush but the patient's IV drip had stopped flowing. I am not sure what I should do; the university has advised me to seek union representation. I am scared as I don't want to be kicked off my course. I have always wanted to be a nurse and I know I have made a mistake.

Please can you advise me?
Worried from Warrington

Ed says:

Dear Worried from Warrington,

Please contact the RCN North West Region, Bolton Office, at Chesham Square, St Georges Square, Bolton BL1 2HB. Telephone 0845 456 7845. They will arrange representation for you.

Health care assistants and health care support workers, join us at RCN Congress 2006

Monday 24 April 2006 from 13:15

Welcome reception

come and meet RCN staff, network with other HCAs and support workers, and see what the RCN can offer you

Educational seminars

taking place throughout the afternoon - from on-line learning and portfolios, to showcases of good practice and what the RCN is currently working on for health care support workers

Visit the UK's biggest nursing exhibition

come and find out about the latest nursing products and services

Listen to the debates

in the Congress Hall - hear nursing leaders put forward their views, take part in debates and have your say (RCN members only)

Round off the day at our evening event

hear the results of the latest research into the working conditions of HCAs and health care support workers and tell us what you need from the RCN.

...then get your glad rags on for the Congress party!

For more information, visit our website at www.rcn.org.uk/congress

We're all individual, so we've widened our membership.



Health matters:

A call for compassion

Second year adult nursing student, Stuart Beddard reports on caring for older people and ways of improving the care they receive.


It's a fact! The Commission for Social Care Inspection has reportedly found that 5,000 of the 11,500 care homes for adults aged 65 and over fail to meet minimum required standards (Commission for Social Care Inspection, 2006). With the UK population getting older, the needs of the older adult are becoming paramount within the world of nursing.

The RCN in partnership with Age Concern, and other stakeholders and service users met in November to discuss the care of older adults across all care settings. Service users, service and education providers and students all presented their views on the education and practice nursing students require to care for older adults.

Ward areas tend to be highly regimented with a routine which does not reflect the 'homely' environment that older adults deserve and are indeed accustomed to. These areas are often, in my experience subject to huge budgetary constraints with lack of staffing and supplies which directly impacts the quality and deliverance of patient care.

In order for improvements to be made nursing culture needs to develop, and this has to start with education reform. I speak to many nursing students who express preparatory needs and often mention the development of an organisation which is dedicated to the education and preparation of nurses for older adult nursing. This is a positive concept; however every school of health, college and university should adopt the same standard of education to prepare nurses.

An increased standard of education would enable a greater understanding of older people's mental health needs. By effectively educating students, we can better develop a compassionate understanding of the conditions which have a huge impact on the older adult, their families and their carers.

Cultural awareness is an essential factor in enabling care to develop and should be fully incorporated in care packages provided for older adults. During 2006 the RCN, in conjunction with Age Concern, will continue to work on policy development in this area to ensure that the ageing population's care needs are provided for and that nursing students are educationally and practically prepared. 

Request information or send your view on this issue >>
Stuart Beddard, theanswer@rcn.org.uk

a day in the life of...

Life

a day in the
of a student activist



It must be 5.50am. I know that because my little girl wants to play. She wants to play every morning at about 5.50. When my alarm sounds 50 minutes later, it (yet again) has a sarcastic tone to it. With the average age of nursing students now in their late 20s, the morning ritual of getting children to whoever has the pleasure must be a familiar one. Yet today is less hurried, as I have agreed to talk to a cohort of students at the University of Glamorgan this morning. So, with my placement suitably adjusted (I'm on a late!), I revel in the extra time I suddenly have and, until the butterflies attack my stomach, I am almost starting to enjoy the morning.


The students don't know it yet, but their lecture has been cancelled, as the ANS Welsh Student Forum has arranged to steal the slot. I know what you are all thinking, and the nursing student in me was also cross. The duality of the skiving student and the activist with an agenda does not sit easily with me, I assure you. The students were gracious enough to listen to me explaining the

need for nurse activists. Most universities, I explained, have some sort of student council, and if there was a problem with the registers (and isn't there always) take it to your school council. But, so many people in that lecture theatre are living in poverty because they aspire to become nurses. Could they take that to the school council and expect any action? We all have compassion for our patients, but who has compassion for nurses?

Of course, I was only the warm-up act. I have been privileged to watch Jill Evans (Diversity Manager, Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust) twice. Jill kindly agreed to finish the session with a lecture on getting and staying motivated. If any of you get the chance to watch Jill presenting, take it – she is stunningly funny and always leaves the audience wanting more. Predictably she was a great success. I knew this because the students were not upset that we hijacked their 'free' session, and we even managed to sign up a few new student stewards!

Then back to the care face! All the commitment to the RCN in the world

means nothing if I don't qualify. As a second-year mental-health student I am currently based in a slow-stream rehab unit in Cardiff. Which is surprising because module 6 was all about child and adolescent mental health. My first week was spent combing the literature to discover exactly what rehab was. By week four, I not only have a completely new outlook on rehab and the whole therapeutic milieu, but I am on the most mentally exhausting placement I have ever been on. I have never nursed patients like these. The communication needs alone are profound. Then there is the daily dilemma of respect for autonomy, or 'pushing' of patients to meet their ADLs. I had come here with little expectation and am leaving here as a more capable nurse.

I arrive home and as I kiss my baby goodnight, I consider waking her up to play, just to see how she likes it. The evil grin disappears from my face and I get on with the rest of my evening. Early shift tomorrow, and I am tired as hell. 

Warren Lodge, ANS Executive Committee member

Discuss: [Air your views on the Student Zone forum](http://www.rcn.org.uk/studentzone/discuss)
www.rcn.org.uk/studentzone/discuss