CONFERENCE REVIEW

Article 990284

Future Directions, Future Challenges ...Beyond Tomorrow

6th International Conference for Emergency Nurses

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

11-13 October 2007

Jamie Ranse RN MRCNA, BNurs; GCertClinEd; MCritCarNurs
Research Coordinator, Intensive Care Unit,
The Canberra Hospital, Australia

The College of Emergency Nursing Australasia (CENA) Victoria Branch hosted the 6th International Conference for Emergency Nurses at the Telstra Dome in Melbourne, Victoria. Approximately 500 delegates attended the international conference, which focused on issues, such as workforce and nursing roles, effective communication, graduate nurse transition, paediatrics, triage, acute illness management, research, education, trauma, and process improvement. This report will provide an overview of the pre-conference workshop, keynote speakers, concurrent oral presentations, poster presentations and the launch of the Emergency Triage Education Kit.

Pre-conference workshop

Prior to the conference, delegates had an opportunity to participate in a 'writing for publication workshop'. This workshop proved to be popular with approximately twenty delegates taken though the requirements and expectations of the publication process. The workshop facilitated novice writers to be mentored with participants who have experience in the publication process.

Keynote speakers

Plenary sessions of the conference focused on the future of trauma care, patient outcomes, patient safety, workforce needs and issues. Keynote speakers related their area of expertise to the emergency department context. Keynote speakers included: Professor Sean Clark, Mr Karim Brohi, Dr Frances Hughes, Professor Christine Duffield, Professor Megan-Jane Johnstone and Ms Beth Wilson. Of particular note, Dr Sean Clark presented on nurse-sensitive outcomes, and ways of measuring and linking nursing performance and environment to patient outcomes.

Concurrent oral presentations

For the majority of the conference, three concurrent sessions were held. This provided an opportunity for delegates to attend the presentations that most interested their individual or workplace needs. The concurrent presentations showcased current trends in emergency and primary health care nursing. Of interest were sessions regarding graduate nurse transition to specialty areas and sessions on emergency management. Such presentations highlighted current trends and issues in the emergency nursing and primary health care environment, such as the increasing frequency of junior staff in emergency departments and the need for

increased disaster preparedness. Exemplary of the need for increased disaster preparedness was a presentation on the lessons learnt from a district hospital in response to a multi-agency response to the Trawalla rail accident. This presentation highlighted the insufficiencies and requirements of an all agencies approach to disaster response and management.

Poster presentations

Thirty-four posters were presented during the conference. The posters ranged in topic and design to include scientific research orientated posters, and information / experience sharing. Authors were available at specified times to answer questions relating to their posters.

Launch of the Emergency Triage Education Kit

The Emergency Triage Education Kit was launched during the conference and has been developed following the evaluation of the now previous 'Triage Education Resource Book'. The kit includes education material on in-hospital triage, in a variety of formats, such as CD-ROM and quick reference flip charts. Of particular note are sections relating to triaging specific populations, such as mental health, paediatric and obstetric emergencies. In addition, the quick reference material provides easy access to various tools, such as the assessment of pain for patients who cannot verbally communicate.

Conclusion

Overall this conference provided an overview of current trends in emergency and primary health care nursing. It was not only well suited for nurses, but other health care practitioners interested in or working closely with emergency nurses. One of the major benefits of the conference was the ability to network with members of the emergency nursing community. This is typified by the theme of next years National Emergency Nursing Conference 'Networking... Crossing Borders', which will be held in Perth, 28-30 August 2008.

Conference abstracts from the poster and oral presentations will be available in a supplement issue of the Australasian Emergency Nursing Journal.

Acknowledgement: The author of this report would like to thank the Research Centre for Nursing and Midwifery Practice and the Intensive Care Unit of the Canberra Hospital for providing support to attend this conference.

Conflict of Interest: The author of this report is a member of the Editorial Board for the Australasian Emergency Nursing Journal, the association journal of the College of Emergency Nursing Australasia.