

Claire Ward Calvary Bruce Private Hospital

Coming of Age: 2018 International ACORN & ASIORNA Conference

Adelaide 23-26 May Adelaide Convention Centre

I was fortunate to be able to attend this year's ACORN conference with funding assistance from the NSW OTA. The theme 'Coming of Age' reflected the journey that ACORN has come since 1977. What a journey it has been and I have travelled half of that!!

Wednesday started off with a number of workshops that were reported to have been excellent. Flight commitments (i.e. the cheap ones) meant I did not arrive in Adelaide till they were finished.

Due to the word limit on the conference report I will select the presentations I found most interesting.

The Judith Cornell Oration and Opening Ceremony was moving and thought provoking.

The first session I attended was on *Working with the leadership team on change management styles. Mrs Tammy Burns, Wollongong Hospital*. The key points from this were;

- 'grow your own', staff members do not come ready made
- don't forget how to be a nurse on the floor
- stay consistent
- recruit right person to right job in the first place

The next interesting presentation I attended was; *Some days are diamonds: The importance of resilience in teamwork when the going gets tough, Mrs Joy Jensen – Redcliffe Hospital*. Having in the last eight months been a member of a team who has opened a brand new hospital and also experienced some very low times as a team and highs of getting through them as a team this was very relevant;

- be conscious of individual ability to adapt to stress and adversity
- Grit – the raw endurance, perseverance and passion that keeps you going despite obstacles
- Pineapple Moments – uncomfortable, prickly part of pineapple
- Resilience bucket, if someone is low help fill there bucket
- have celebrations in the OT

One of the big topics that came up at the conference in more than one presentation was patient hypothermia and the presentation of it.

The implementation and cost effectiveness of warming technologies to prevent hypothermia (Professor J. Gow, USQ, & Assoc. Prof. Jed Duff, University Newcastle; highlighted the multiple issues that can arise if a patient's body temperature falls below 36c.

Surgical site infection can quadruple, can double the risk of morbid cardiac events, increases risk of surgical bleeding by one third, decreases thermal comfort, a prolonged recovery time, longer hospital stay and increased hospital costs. The recommendation is to take the patient's temperature; in the hour before surgery, prior to induction, every 30 minutes intra-op, on arrival in PACU & every 15mins in PACU until discharge.

Inadvertent Perioperative hypothermia is always an issue of missed care.

The new ACORN standard presentation; *Coming in from the cold: A new ACORN standard for the management of perioperative hypothermia, Dr Judy Lundy & Mrs Alana Delaforce, QUT & Mater Health Services Brisbane*, on the management of perioperative hypothermia highlighted the need for this standard. The standard covered the need to use active warming strategies such as fluid warming and forced air warming. It also highlighted the need to prevent hypothermia and manage it appropriately. It needs a local policy, risk assessment is key, temperature monitoring at a high quality standard, implementing perioperative warming strategies and using a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach.

Key to all activities is.....clear communication between all members of the perioperative team and our patients.

The next interesting topic covered was a 'think tank' on the Professional Standards, Ms Rebecca East ACORN President. An open discussion was held in regards to where to from here in the future of the competency standards. "They were first developed in 1999 in response to the nursing and midwifery competency standards, to ensure safe and competent care. They were last reviewed in 2007."

-use NMBA as a framework

-competent vs capable

-need to be evidenced based

-needs to be done ASAP

-competency standards can be utilised for; competency resource packages, orientation for new staff, professional development review, post graduate programs, preparation for practice programs.

At the conclusion of the think tank I expressed an interest in part of the review team for the competency standards and have consequently been invited to be on the committee or part of the review team.

The trade display was excellent with over 90 companies exhibiting their products. It was an excellent opportunity to touch base with companies that our hospital is already doing business with and create new contacts also.

The dinner on the Friday night with the theme "*The Great Gatsby*" was absolutely the best fun. My feet by the end of the evening were more painful than a long day at work though I'm not sure bright yellow Birkenstocks with flowers would have matched my red Gatsby dress!! Much dancing was undertaken by most who were in attendance and many great photos were also taken.

Saturday saw the conclusion of the conference with a number of excellent presentations including a mock trial. Due to the restricted number of flights available on a Saturday to get back to Canberra I missed out on these. The feedback I got on the Saturday was excellent though.

Overall the conference was excellent. The next ACORN conference in 2020 is Sydney so this will make it more feasible to attend for NSW delegates.