

International ACORN & ASIORNA Conference Coming of Age, Adelaide 2018

Having registered for this conference twelve months prior, it was exciting to finally attend. I had coordinated with colleagues; organized time off work, booked airfares and accommodation, and made sure the family would survive my absence! And Adelaide surely did deliver. The conference was a great experience, and the city and its surrounds had a lot to offer. Below I will discuss some of the standout sessions I attended. There was far too many to address them all...

I attended the Wednesday afternoon workshops, outlining the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHS) second edition changes. These commence in January 2019 and must be adhered to in order to achieve accreditation. The second edition had eight standards, down from ten, is more detailed, and covers a wider scope of practice.

Thursday morning was the welcome and opening ceremony, with the Judith Cornell Oration. Sally Sutherland-Fraser spoke of her long and rewarding career in perioperative nursing. She discussed her childhood experiences, and how the premature death of her mother would eventually influence her career path into nursing. She excelled as a clinician, an educator, and travelled to the South Pacific Islands to assist with the development of specialized nursing skills. I was thoroughly captivated by every word she spoke, for close to an hour, as she conveyed stories of her experiences over the years.

Thursday afternoon was the commencement of the consecutively run sessions, where delegates attend what interests them. As an anaesthetic / recovery and acute pain team nurse, I would steer towards any presentations directed at my specialty.

First stop was "ECG for every patient in PACU. -You say why? I say why not?" This was of particular interest to me as I was a cardiac nurse for twelve years prior to moving into the perioperative environment. ECG monitoring and interpretation had been a routine part of my practice for many years. I was somewhat confused by the idea that my PACU did not routinely monitor ECG. And I challenged this! Dr Paula Foran cited evidence in her presentation, stating that 84% of perioperative myocardial injuries were asymptomatic. ECG in PACU buys time; early identification of arrhythmias and early defibrillation saves lives. ECG monitoring is not mandated, but a lot of PACU's have implemented it.

Next was 'The Recovery Pain protocol- An Adelaide success story". Presented by Lyell Brougham, the units Recovery NUM, Lyell details the flowchart in place in his unit. IV opioids are administered by nursing staff, 'per pain protocol' therefore the nurse decides dose, frequency and max dose. Results have shown that 97% of patients report their pain as 'satisfactory' or 'comfortable'. In contrast, my workplace also uses a modified version of this pain protocol, whereby the anaesthetist decides opioid dose, frequency and max. dose. We also are now using electronic medications (e-meds), so I would be interested to know if the current model used by Adelaide hospital could be accommodated with e-meds? I also wonder how many enrolled nurses there are in Adelaide PCAU?, as there is quite a few in my unit and opioid administration is often problematic.

I then attended Dr Seow-Choen presentation "Beyond the Operating Theatre and Work- Why there should be a life outside!" He discussed the importance of work life balance, having interests and hobbies, and making time for friends and family. Without this balance there may be implications on our physical and emotional health. Dr Seow-Choen spoke of

surgeons being powerful because of their job, they have power to save lives and cure cancer. But when they stop work they may feel useless. A colleague of mine recently used the term 'a rooster at work and a feather duster at home' whereby at work he was highly regarded and respected, but at home he was made to feel useless at home by his wife. So his final message was to live every day to the maximum, don't wait for holidays or retirement to start doing the things you enjoy. We do not know what is around the corner. Live a full life with no regrets and be the best version of yourself that you can be.

'Simulation in the perioperative environment' presented by Ms Erin Wakefield was next on my agenda. Simulation based education (SBE) is a relatively new concept to me, but I am lucky enough to belong to an area health with a large Simulation Centre. I have also been involved in delivering SBE and have observed the benefits. Erin reflected on the well-known Elaine Bromley case and discussed the fundamentals of guidance, observation, development of ideas discussion and feedback/reflection. It promotes a safe learning environment, is not a test, and the importance of maintaining confidentiality outside the SBE. This was definitely a worthwhile session.

Next was " Are you still breathing in the theatre? Breathe easier, help is on the way" presented by Ms Elissa O'Keefe. I'll be honestfor me this session was a time filler, but it opened my eyes up to the importance of plume management and the hazards created by plume. These include carbon, aerosoled blood, bacteria- viral particles (HPV, Hepatitis B & HIV) viral DNA and 41+ gasses/ Carcinogens. Elissa discussed the symptoms of surgical plume exposure, touched on some case studies, and the new standards around removal of airborne particles, which are now mandatory.

Mrs Vibeke Skou presented “Emotional intelligence in perioperative nursing- developing skills in resilience, assertiveness and leadership”. This presentation discussed the importance of recognising, understanding and managing our own emotions. Vibeke reflected on the position description of a perioperative nurse which outlined particular attributes such as highly developed communication skills, ability to function within a team, and promoting a friendly, respectful and supportive environment. Nurses must develop an awareness of emotions, how they respond in certain situations, and how this impacts their behavior, and affects those around us, particularly in the face of conflict.

Ms Jenny Sutton from Calvary Mater Newcastle presented "Why are they so afraid ". One of her opening statements was the phrase "fear cuts deeper than swords", Jenny discussed the impact of anxiety, stress and fear on patients both physically, emotionally and psychologically. This presentation discussed what nurses could do to better understand and manage patient fears, through compassion and discussion, by promoting an empathic environment and holistic approach to care for our patients physical, emotional and psychological needs. This will ultimately lead to better patient outcomes.

The final presentation I will reflect upon, which was indeed a highlight for me, was Turia Pitt's inspirational talk on overcoming adversity. After full thickness burns to 64% of her body, this young ex-model fitness junkie survived against overwhelming odds, and has gone on to complete Ironman competitions, has written three books, and has an online motivational program. She has endured many obstacles and countless surgeries. Turia has married her long-term boyfriend Michael, and together they now have baby Hakavai. Her motto is to "never give up", that we should not be limited by our circumstances. She is truly inspirational..... Though she hates

being told that! An amazing mindset! Michael and Hakavai were in the audience and popped onto the stage to say hi, much to the delight of the 800+ nurses in the audience.

Thank you to NSW OTA for the scholarship, which was of great assistance financially. I look forward to attending more conferences in the future.

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