

Report for 2018 ACORN and ASIORNA Conference Adelaide

The combined 18th ACORN and 6th ASIORNA conference in Adelaide South Australia was a major international Perioperative Nursing conference. There was a veritable smorgasboard of sessions and subjects to attend. Too many for the size of this report. The following is a report on a selection of session and a general overview of the conference. There is also some reflection points and my own views thrown in.

Wednesday the 23rd of May had the initial registration and greetings in the Adelaide convention centre. It was obvious from the start that the organisers of the conference had undertaken a huge job and were able to on the surface at least show that it was smooth sailing with very few hiccoughs. After lunch the conference started in earnest. Concurrent sessions relating to the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) standards. I attended several of these sessions, but it was obviously impossible to attend all. Standard 9 the deteriorating patient presented by Lyall Brougham was a good start to the conference. Mr Brougham gave us an update on the standard and what we as nursing staff need to understand and do, in order to meet the standard and prepare for the accreditation process when our turn comes. Having been through many accreditations in the past it was interesting to hear about the way I will need to approach the next one.

The next session I attended was about Standard 3 Infection control, beating the bugs. Presented by Mrs Fiona Winckens. This was a session using the experience of Austin Health with their accreditation details. Again, this and the other sessions on the NSQHS standards further enhanced my understanding of the new standards and the way the standards work and how to implement them. For example, the session on Standard 3 Medication Safety, presented by Mrs Jo Perry, showed to me, that our own operating theatre unit is very well placed to meet the standard. Labelling medications on the sterile field is something I believe our unit has done very well, however when looking closer there is some subtle differences between the new standard and the old standard that we need to look at. Other Standard related sessions further boosted this view.

In the evening the conference was more about the official side of ACORN and was attended by the board and invitees.

Day two started with the official pomp and occasion of the opening ceremony and welcoming address.

This was a time to realise how big the conference was with excess of 1250 delegates from 25 countries attending.

The Judith Cornell Oration was by Ms sally Sutherland Fraser I had met Judith Cornell on a couple of occasions in my early perioperative nursing days and it was obvious then to a new RN that she was a force, in nursing with a huge passion for theatre nursing. Sally Sutherland Fraser's oration was extremely well received by the huge audience.

The up to half a dozen concurrent sessions at any one time provided information to different levels and specialities within perioperative nursing. For example, management, clinical, research and education were well covered. The Asian nurses attending their conference, were also well catered for in the mix of sessions. I was able to attend some sessions presented by Korean and Japanese nurses.

The education session about the use of ECG for every patient in the post Anaesthetic care Unit presented by Dr Paula Foran, was interesting and made convincing points for the need to have ECG for every patient something I feel will be taken back to most units including our own.

Mr Lyall Brougham presented a session on the recovery pain protocol used in his hospital and the trials and tribulations incurred over a long period for the protocol to be accepted. This protocol is now used in many hospitals in Australia and around the world. Very interesting presentation well received by those attending.

During the conference there were several masterclasses presented by the main sponsors of the conference. The majority of these masterclasses were related to scrub/ scout topics.

The trade hall was a focal point for the lunch and morning tea, afternoon tea breaks. There were a large number of companies presenting their wares and providing information. There was a relaxed atmosphere in the hall. There was plenty of time to get around all of the stands and gather information to take back to your home units to present to your boss to try and make life easier for you and your patients. (it only takes a bit more money).

After lunch a presentation by Singaporean Colorectal Surgeon Dr Seow-Choen on why there should be life outside the operating theatre for staff hit a note for many. Work life balance is very important and can slip out of balance very easily if allowed to.

Sessions on professionalism in the operating theatre and Simulation in the perioperative environment I also found interesting and relevant. As mentioned earlier it was impossible to attend every session. But those I did attend were all good.

The evening on this day was devoted to ACORN general meeting and a welcome reception in which delegates wore their national costume.

Friday started with a bang. An incredible presentation by Turia Pitt. This lady has an inspiring story to tell and left the audience in awe of her resilience and determination. She called a spade a spade and was down to earth.

More sessions continued throughout the day. By now I was able to negotiate my way around the Adelaide convention centre.

Friday night was the reason many went to the conference. To let their hair down at the Gatsby dinner. Enough said.

Saturday saw a mock trail which had many thinking twice about the way they document their work.

A presentation by South Australian Icon Professor David David about the trials and tribulations of setting up the Craniofacial unit was very interesting.

So much to do and so much to take in during the conference but well worth the trip. I thank the NSW Operating Theatre Association for the grant to attend this amazing conference that will help me with my perioperative practice.

Thank you.

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