



Perioperative Nurses Association of Queensland Inc

ADVANCING PERIOPERATIVE NURSING

How stressed are you???

.....by Sonya Vargas

How do you feel at the start of a working week? Joyful in anticipation of the challenges ahead in the wonderful world of Perioperative nursing or tired and dreading setting foot in your workplace even before you get out of bed?

Over my career in Perioperative nursing (which is a fairly long time now, I'm not telling how long!), I have seen many fantastic nurses who are closer to the latter "near burnout" category rather than the first. Why is that?

As nurses, we are very good at looking after others. In general however, and I include myself here, we are really slack at looking after ourselves. Su Klann¹ in the March 2001 edition of OR Manager Journal, states how for one of her colleagues, it wasn't until she had a stroke that she stopped and took stock of her life and really examined the role stress was playing in her life? Does it have to come to that before we sit up and take notice?

So what are the stressors the modern Perioperative nurse is up against? Being "on call"², difficult surgeons³, rapidly changing technology², new junior and international staff⁴, static work postures⁴, staff shortages⁵, limited resources, the need to work faster with less to cut costs^{1,3} and scrubbing for long hours with no nourishment (which in a 2008 ACORN journal article⁴ was likened to having a blood alcohol reading of 0.05%) - these are just a few of the challenges the modern Perioperative nurse faces.

So what are we going to do

about these stressors? Ignore them and the impact they have on us at our peril? End up sick, cynical, face each change that confronts us in a negative light? Or just get totally burnt out where we come to work to get the pay and view each day with dread?

When I examined the literature for strategies to deal with stress, I came across many and varied suggestions to manage workplace stress. Getting adequate rest and relaxing whether it be through meditation/yoga/prayer or a relaxing hobby e.g. quilting or reading⁶. Getting enough exercise is also vital. All strategies you must implement for yourself. In doing a literature review I came across what I thought was a fantastic suggestion on how to implement this into your life. In a critical care journal,⁷ a nurse from Tennessee has suggested that as nurses we each should develop a care plan for ourselves. We do it for our patients, why not us? I don't know about you, but my life is a series of schedules and appointments, and somewhere in there I seem to get missed. So here is a challenge for you. Develop your own personal care plan and schedule **you** in to your life. Every Day. Your care plan could include stretching at regular intervals, making sure you get enough food and water in a work day, putting those tired legs up at breaks, journaling any frustrations you had in the day and a strategy to deal with it for tomorrow. It must include some time for relaxing. Now if you are a "whale" music fan

and that "does it" for you, great! But one man's relaxation, is another man's torture, so I will leave the "how" you relax up to you, but I suggest finding at least half an hour of "me" time at least in a day to "chill out". On a personal level, I read. It shuts out all the other dramas of the day and takes me to another world where surgery is NOT a feature.

Now that is a suggestion for each of us personally, but managers you are not off the hook!

Several other suggestions were in the literature that I found very interesting.

Firstly, are you aware of the early signs of burnout both in yourself and your staff^{3,5}? Get some education about this for both you and your staff so we can be aware when we are on the slippery slope to burnout and introduce early interventions. Staff empowerment is a major stress reducer⁸. Do your staff have input into rostering, "On Call" practices and decision making in the workplace? Think about strategies, about how you can make your staff more involved in these processes. Have you ever thought about organising a venting meeting^{3,6} instead of a staff meeting (where it seems to happen anyway and take up half the meeting)? Amazing how cathartic for staff having a whinge in a safe place can be. For staff outside the Perioperative arena, it is easy for them to go to other areas of the hospital to get a break from their workplace. For Perioperative staff we are stuck

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2009 PNAQ Awards nominations now open

Awards Categories

PERIOPERATIVE TEAM-WORK

EXCELLENCE IN PERIOPERATIVE NURSING

'NOVICE' AWARD

For details and to submit your nomination visit our website at www.pnaq.net.au

Nominations for 2009 will close 5pm August 28, 2009.

Jenny's Letter

.....by PNAQ President Jennifer

Welcome to the April edition of the PNAQ newsletter. This month we focus on the Sunshine Coast Branch. Last month they held a highly successful conference and from all reports a wonderful education opportunity for all who attended. Kim Carr, who has been doing a great job on our PNAQ website, has done a report on the conference and she has included lots of great photos of the event. Visit the website by going to www.pnaq.net.au

Sonya Vargas, Perioperative Educator, The Wesley Hospital has written an article on stress and burn out for the perioperative nurses. What a relevant topic in many of our departments where demands on staff are so great. Sonya's article outlines there is plenty of research about stress levels in nursing and she provides thoughtful commentary and shares personal reflection to help us all. Thank you, Sonya.

The end of May 2009 will see us gathering at Red-

cliffe Hospital for our second General Meeting for 2009 and Education Session – this time with a focus on Anaesthetics. We will also be conducting our Strategic Weekend in conjunction with Branch Representatives from throughout the State at this time and we would welcome your attendance. Could Branch Members please notify their attendance to Ailsa Gillett, Country Liaison Officer re numbers for venue and catering by 20 May 2009?

Any State Branch Members wondering if they too should attend please contact me on telephone 3636 4186 during working hours or email pnaq@pnaq.net.au prior to 20 May 2009.

Did you manage to introduce a new member during our membership drive? Congratulations to those of you who are in the draw for a full conference registration – we will notify the successful member in the next newsletter. Welcome to new members.

Thank you to existing mem-

bers for renewing. Your decision to reinvest in PNAQ is not one that the Executive Committee takes for granted. You are the backbone of our organisation and it is for you that we continue to advocate, advance and represent.

In reference to our Conference, please schedule to attend by planning and applying for leave. The dates are **Thursday 8 to Saturday 10 October 2009**. Did you receive the amazing flyer by snail mail? If not, check the website 2009pnaq@tayloredimages.com.au to see the work being undertaken by Horatio & Gill in association with Taylored Images, Events Management. Please take the opportunity to nominate a team or person for the Awards and to submit an Abstract. We need to hear from you and will gladly help if you require assistance with submissions.

With so many opportunities to have a voice...It is a great time to be a perioperative nurse.

Cheers from the Sunny Coast

.....by Kim Carr

The PNAQ Sunshine Coast branch held their 7th biennial perioperative seminar on Saturday, 28th March 2009. It was held at The University of the Sunshine Coast (USC), which is set amongst a nature reserve in beautiful Sippy Downs. The event and catering team from the USC were fantastic to work with throughout the entire planning process. They really out-did themselves on the day with a magnificent seminar menu. This was our most successful seminar to date with 32 companies present in the trade display and 131 delegates in attendance.

This year we tried to encourage nursing students to attend by offering a reduced registration fee and as a result, we had 19 first time seminar attendees from the local university. We also used a new online registration process which resulted in the attendance of 64 members and 48 non-members from throughout the state. Delegates attended from Cairns, Kingaroy, Gladstone, the Gold Coast, Toowoomba, South Burnett, Bundaberg, Gympie, Brisbane and, of course, the Sunshine Coast. Thank you to all those who travelled far and wide to support us – we loved having you in our little part of paradise.

The theme for our first session of the day was “Anaesthetic – Recovery Spectacular”. Dr Nick Hughes from the Sunshine Coast Anaesthetic Group spoke on “Unexpected Haemorrhage in the OR”. Mrs Karen Hicks, from Selangor Private Hospital, presented a case study, from her time in Gove, on post partum haemorrhage.

Our middle session gave us some “Insights into Infertility” with IVF scientist Mr Peter Jackson, OBGYN Dr Paul Stokes and patient Mrs Melissa Bellerio, all from Coastal IVF, enlightening us on this wonderful topic. Peter presented the scientific perspective, Paul the medical and Melissa gave a very heartfelt patient viewpoint.

Our final session titled “Beyond the Perioperative Environment” had Dr Ian Young, a maxillofacial surgeon from the Sunshine Coast, talk about the work he does on his frequent

How stressed are you???

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in the “cloisters”, which means our tea room becomes the place to vent. Not always appropriate when there are visitors, students and others there as well.

However, venting may help staff to relax, which helps them to function effectively at work. Praise staff as often as you can, as genuine praise and human warmth is a powerful motivator and stress reducer ^{2,3}. Staff remember to praise and encourage your fellow managers. They can also do with the positive feedback and encouragement.

There are many more strategies for dealing with stress both personally and professionally. Over the next few months I am going to examine this in more depth and if it is interesting, I will share with you what I find, but in the short term, don't disregard the stressors in your life. Deal with them early. We need every Perioperative nurse we can get in good physical and psychological health to lead our great specialty into a bright future!

Sonya Vargas is a nurse educator in the perioperative department at The Wesley Hospital in Brisbane. For references to this article please contact the Editor of the PNAQ newsletter.

Cheers from the Sunny Coast cont.

.....by Kim Carr

trips to China to perform volunteer cleft lip and palate surgery. The director of HUGs, Mrs Sharon Markula (who is also a recovery room RN at Kawana Private Hospital) then presented a very powerful and moving session on the plight of the "Invisible Children" from the Acholi Tribe in Northern Uganda and also informed us of the fantastic work that HUGs is doing to help the people from this region which has been decimated by HIV and 20 years of civil war.

Our closing speaker, Dr Margaret Barnes, head of the Nursing faculty at the USC, rounded off the day by informing us of the universities role in helping to shape the perioperative nurses of the future.

A number of competitions and raffles were held during the day and it was lovely to see the smiles on the faces as the results were read out. Marie Heumiller, from The Sunshine Coast Private Hospital won our trade question competition - the prize being full registration to this year's PNAQ State conference. Marilyn Noble, from the Sunshine Coast Day Surgery won our 1st lucky door prize which was a \$100.00 book voucher from the university book store. Jo Marshall from Nambour General Hospital won our 2nd lucky door prize which was a full registration to our 2011 seminar. Anne Oswald, from Cairns Base Hospital walked away with a bottle of red wine as the feedback winner. Almost every other delegate present went home with a raffle prize from our mega multi-draw raffle courtesy of our wonderful trade partners.

Our Easter egg raffle, won by Jenny Holmes from Nambour General Hospital, raised a considerable amount of money which we have donated to the Hope Uganda Group - HUGs (see May & November '08 Newsletters).

The feeling amongst the delegates and trade reps throughout was electric and not even the rain could dampen the spirit of the day. Someone even approached me and asked if I had a "rain" button on the computer console which turned the rain on and off, as each time the delegates had to walk from the lecture theatre to the function hall for their meals and trade display, the rain miraculously stopped! How lucky was that!

Fifty-four delegates, partners and trade reps attended the seminar dinner on the Saturday evening at Cala Luna restaurant in Maroochydore.

The menu was superb, the wine flowed and the company was great. What a fantastic way to round up an incredible day, which was a culmination of nearly five months hard work.

The 13 seminar committee members did a fantastic job in pulling everything together on the day and I'd like to express my sincerest thanks to Judith Hewett, Anne Vigar, Lynette Stonehouse, Catherine Biggs, O Singhatongkue, Lana Takken, Christine Wells, Nicky Johnson, Kate Rodgers, Karen Hicks, Jo Ladewig, Ruth Melville and Ailsa Gillett – they were a great team to work with!

Thank you!

Kim Carr
2009 Seminar
Convenor

p.s. More photos from the day can be found on our branch page of the PNAQ website.



The presenters on "insights into infertility".

The moderator was Anne Vigar (in red) and the speakers were (L to R) Melissa Bellero, Paul Stokes & Peter Jackson

Catherine Biggs & Ruth Melville at the PNAQ table



Some of the delegates from Nambour General Hospital



The fantastic trade partners included these reps from Covidien, Stryker, ArthroCare and Hereaus



Tony Melville, Jo Ladewig (Nambour General) & Annette Massie (Olympus Rep) attended the seminar dinner at Cala Luna Restaurant, Maroochydore



Statewide perioperative and post anaesthetic recovery forms

..... Lyndell Redpath

As many perioperative nurses in Queensland are aware there has been work going on for some time to develop statewide perioperative and post anaesthetic recovery forms. The Queensland Health Statewide Anaesthetic and Perioperative Network (SWAPNET) through the Clinical Practice Improvement Centre is now sponsoring the further development of these forms. Both projects aim to achieve standardised evidence based documentation for their respective areas of perioperative care.

Working parties have been convened with representation from all districts within Queensland Health that perform surgery, and include perioperative educators and the PNAQ.

It is intended that the documents will be available for trial in as many districts as possible to allow clinicians to evaluate and provide feedback on their effectiveness.

For information about the projects or to find out who your Queensland Health district representative is please contact Lyndell Redpath, Principal Project Officer, at the Clinical Practice Improvement Centre on 36369776 or by email at Lyndell.Redpath@health.qld.gov.au

2009 State Conference Update

Date:
Thursday 8 — Saturday 10 October

Venue:
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre



Clinical Scene Investigation
Information regarding awards, abstract submission and general conference information is now up on the web site

Visit www.pnaq.net.au
Visit now and keep visiting for the latest details!!!

Fact...
Abstracts due 29 May 2009

Horatio & Gil
(Vicki & Anne Maree)

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