



Australian College of Neonatal Nurses Inc.

PO Box 32 Camperdown NSW 1450

www.acnn.org.au ABN 62 075 234 048

Newsletter

September 2018

About the newsletter

This newsletter is the official communication of the Australian College of Neonatal Nurses to its members, produced quarterly in March, June, September and December. It presents information on a range of professional issues and clinical topics of interest to neonatal nurses. Any member of ACNN may contribute.

Articles should be submitted by email as Word documents. Any images should be in jpg format. Referencing style should follow the Vancouver style. All content will be edited to newsletter standard.

Editor: Shelley Reid. Proofreader: Jan Polverino.

Please send correspondence to the newsletter team at newsletter@acnn.org.au

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Next deadline: 1 November 2018

ACNN National Executive Committee 2018 – 2019

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President's Report

It's a pleasure to write this report, in which I can highlight our amazing conference in Launceston. We had such great speakers, delegates, trade support and parents. Our national, branch and special interest group committees all worked together on an interesting and educational program and the networking was fun. One of the highlights for me was working with parents from the Miracle Babies Foundation in the breakfast session. ACNN is very happy to partner with all our parent organisations.

We now have new committee members and I look forward to working with every one of them as we head for an exciting year. I would also like to welcome all our new members to ACNN, the more members we have, the stronger we grow, and the more support in grants and scholarships we can give out. Our branches and special interest groups all have great plans for events – so keep an eye on the website and the email updates. More information on the visiting scholar Dr Nancy Feeley will be available soon on the website.

I visited China recently and met with the delightful Director of Nursing in Hunan Children's Hospital in Changsha. I leave for Rwanda soon with COINN, to speak at two meetings and also co-host a meeting including delegates from organisations such as WHO, USAID and Save the Children. It's an exciting time for neonatal nurses as we are increasingly being recognised as essential in decreasing mortality and morbidity. I will speak on "Saving lives and preventing disability – the importance of neonatal nurses, education and capacity building". So important, and our LRC does exactly this in PNG, which I will most definitely mention.

A short message, from me this time, as the newsletter is lengthy. One key area that ACNN will focus on and which is so important, is supporting mental health for our members. We plan to run resilience workshops next year. In the meantime, look after each other and look after yourselves.

I'm interested in any suggestions that members may have regarding support ACNN can provide for you. COINN is coming up and we will have travel grants, but please let me know of any other ideas. We continually need to grow and evolve.

Stay well and safe. Kind regards,

Karen Walker
ACNN President

SA Branch

On 5 July, the SA Branch held their first event for the year, *The Cardiac Neonate Twilight Seminar*. It was a fantastic night of education, networking and coming together to support our professional body. There were attendees from many hospitals and we welcomed some new members. This is what the branch is enthusiastically hoping to achieve this year, increasing members and involvement across SA.

The night commenced with a talk from Lee Hussey, the recipient a scholarship funded by the SA Branch to attend the 8th International Combined Clinical Meeting, Bali in May this year. Lee gave us an insight of her experience in the Balinese hospital and the challenges that they face such as the very limited resources. Lee, with Miriam Long, educated the nursing staff on nutrition in the preterm infant and neonatal skin care. Lee also spent time with the staff implementing practices such as management and storage of breastmilk and following up



practices taught on previous trips, such as management of peripheral IV cannulas and peripheral central lines. It was great to hear about Lee's experience.

The first guest speaker was Siti Yusoff, a cardiology registrar at the Women's and Children's Hospital, Adelaide, who has recently worked in the WCH nurseries. She spoke about the foetal circulation and the anatomy and physiology of cyanotic and acyanotic heart diseases. Following Siti's informative talk, a family from Heart Kids who are embarking on their own heart journey spoke to us about their experiences with their little boy who has a complex cardiac condition. It was amazing to hear a parent's perspective and I think everyone in the audience appreciated the honesty of the positives and negatives of their journey. While the mum was speaking, Zac and his twin brother kept everyone entertained with their cheeky and fun personalities. The final speaker of the night was Amy Mann, a Registered Nurse who works in the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit at the WCH. Amy spoke about the nursing care required for the cardiac neonate, including family centred care, safety of the patient, and the critical aspects of assessment under the headings of *Airway*, *Breathing* and *Circulation*. Amy has a wealth of knowledge from her nursing experience and I can speak on behalf of everyone that we all took a lot away from her presentation. Everyone enjoyed a wine or tea with some nibbles throughout the night and it was a great meeting for everyone.

On behalf of the ACNN SA Branch we would like to say a very big thank you to the brilliant speakers and all the attendees for making it a successful night, we have had nothing but positive feedback. We are looking forward to planning the next SA Branch Event, details to be advised.

Neurodevelopmental Care SIG Report

The NDC SIG recently met in Launceston, where we enjoyed a fantastic national ACNN conference. The interest in the NDC SIG was extraordinary. Thank you to all who were at the meeting and all who became members of the NDC SIG. I would also like to thank the ACNN National Executive Committee for providing a national platform for our group.

Some roles in the NDC SIG committee have changed for the year 2018-2019 so I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the new and remaining committee members. The role of Secretary has been filled by Cindi Escardo (Royal Hobart Hospital), Carol Hua (Westmead Hospital) remains Treasurer; the Chair position has been appointed to me, Ursula Haack (Royal North Shore Hospital). Nadine Griffith, Kimbra Thomas, Victoria Hill, Melody Emerson, Kristin Hughs, Kate Pinkard and Shauna Lyons are listed as ordinary members of the NDC SIG.

I would like to thank Nadine, Melissa and Meg for the incredible work they did in setting up the NDC SIG in 2017, and for doing an amazing job over the last 12 months. Thank you.

We will keep you posted about the NDC SIG activities in the coming weeks and months.

Ursula Haack

NDC SIG Chairperson

Research SIG Report

Neonatal nursing workforce – time for review?

Kaye Spence AM and Margaret Broom

The ACNN Research Interest Group held a workshop in June with the purpose of identifying components of the neonatal nursing workforce that could be part of a national research outcomes study. This topic was chosen because when neonatal nurses were asked to identify research priorities for topics pertaining to neonatal care, workforce issues tended to dominate the discussion and priorities. This led to a discussion between the Research SIG members who felt that the issue needed to be explored for feasibility and to address the member concerns.

The workshop: It was agreed to invite two high profile nurses who could challenge the neonatal nurses on their purpose and aims of future research of the workforce. The two speakers invited were: A/ Professor Jacqui Cross, the current Chief Nurse of NSW, and Professor Christine Duffield from the University of Technology, Sydney and Edith Cowan University who has undertaken and published widely on the nursing workforce. It was agreed to offer the forum to the national membership of ACNN by having a ZOOM meeting at the same time where members could register and use the free video conference facility to participate. We anticipated a national reach as well as participation of the ACNN executive. The workshop was a collaboration between the Research SIG and the NSW Branch of the ACNN.



Kaye Spence, Jacqui Cross and Christine Duffield

Outcomes of the workshop: An overview was presented on the experience and outcomes of some focus groups that were held in 2015 in NSW as part of a study on neonatal nurses by the NSW Clinical Nurse Consultants Group. Key points were highlighted for agreement regarding currency of the issues. These included:

- Workplace culture, staff morale and perceived adequate staffing in units
- Resources, staffing ratios and patient outcomes
- Workplace culture and its impact on staff in terms of burnout and high turnover rates
- Teamwork between nurses, doctors, the team and parents

Key issues raised by Professor Christine Duffield were:

- Neonatal nursing is a very small speciality in the big

picture of nursing and the majority of speciality groups have Colleges – she asked us to consider what is the role of these Colleges? Do they have a voice? She compared these small Colleges with the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, representing over 100,000 members.

- She suggested that we need to define our workplace boundaries for the speciality of neonatal nursing.
- She was provocative in identifying that what you do in your role (e.g. clinical nurse specialist, Nurse Practitioner, manager, educator etc) defines you, not the clinical speciality.
- We were asked to consider what we do as neonatal nurses that makes a difference to patient care and outcomes. She asked if we have identified nurse-sensitive indicators for our speciality area of nursing.
- She suggested we consider the National Standards and the identified outcome measures as all are applicable to neonatal nursing practice.
- We were also asked to consider the impact of what we do on the families, community, economics and social considerations.

Key issues raised by Associate Professor Jacqui Cross were:

- We need to look at what is uniquely nursing and what nurses bring to the multidisciplinary team.
- Consider how we provide a continuum of care in terms of handover and care planning for consistency and outcomes.
- Consider ways of supporting the workforce and newly graduated nurses entering the workforce – these nurses are our future.
- Consider the role of the ACNN in driving the future and promoting what neonatal nurses do.

A/Prof Cross also challenged us as a speciality group with a speciality college (ACNN).

These challenges included:

- What is our discrete body of knowledge?
- Have we diluted our roles?
- How do we work in a therapeutic relationship / model of care?
- Examine how the services are set up and determine what are the unique contributions of nursing.
- Consider if we are working in silos in terms of our specialisation. Have we identified our partners and stakeholders?

Cont. on page 4

Research SIG report (cont.)

Workshop discussion: These provocative and interesting presentations then led into an open discussion. Some key points from the discussion were:

- Nursing still has a top-down approach in terms of recruitment and education. The new generation of nurses often has different priorities.
- We should consider what we need for the neonatal nursing workforce in the next 5-10 years. This could be by examining what we think this should look like. What is the workforce future? We can design the future neonatal nurse to meet the changes occurring.
- Discussion was lively around nurse-sensitive outcomes and what we can actually measure to know we make a difference. Our invited speakers both challenged us with suggestions that we collaborate with parents in identifying what are the important aspects for them.
- There was a discussion around advanced practice nurses versus Nurse Practitioners. This involved nurses working to the full capacity of their roles (e.g. CNCs, CNS, NP) and ensuring the individual contributions are measured and acknowledged.
- It was suggested that Nurse Practitioners work in roles where they can make a difference, e.g. primary health care and transition services rather than work as registrar replacements.
- To assist in retaining staff, allowing nurses to work to their full potential may involve changing the scope of practice from task orientated skills to more relationship and support roles.
- It was also identified that we need to invest in the existing staff in terms of support and recognition so they stay and the turnover from burn-out is kept to a minimum.



Members joined the Workshop conversation through Zoom

Recommendations: It was agreed that a summary of the workshop is circulated to the membership through the newsletter and on the webpage. This would enable an ongoing discussion and ideas from the national membership. It was also suggested that this topic be sent to the ACNN Executive for their strategic planning. The ACNN Professional Officer needs to be part of this important topic for a broader perspective than research.

However, the initial focus of the workshop was to identify how research could inform neonatal nursing practice by measuring what we do. Below are a few suggestions based on the workshop ideas and we would like to hear from the membership what you consider important, which are the priorities, any new ideas that we could consider and most important if you would like to participate in any of the research. We consider these topics could be used for higher degrees with both Masters and PhD candidates.

1. Interview parents in terms of what they would like to see as measures of outcomes of neonatal nurses' practice.
2. Review the National Standards to identify potential nurse-sensitive indicators for neonatal nursing.
3. Review the scope of practice of neonatal nursing roles in terms of advanced practice ensuring nurses work to the full capacity and ways of measuring this.
4. Develop a benchmarking process (once indicators identified) with the purpose of raising the process of team support, nurses' roles and turnover.

Conclusion: This workshop was an important event for the ACNN and neonatal nursing in Australia. We believe that the issues confronting neonatal nursing in terms of workforce will remain to some extent. It is through ACNN that we can strive to examine the issues and, where required, provide an evidence focus through research. This workshop raised issues for the ACNN Executive to consider as we move forward to ensure we remain a viable speciality within nursing as well as a viable College by championing the issues important for clinical nurses, advanced practice nurses, nurse educators, academics and researchers. Yes! it is time for review and to make sure the voice of neonatal nurses is represented through the voice of ACNN within the wider health care communities, to ensure the workforce issues are heard.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to the members of the ACNN Research Interest Group who attended the workshop, our invited presenters for their generosity of time and wisdom and all who participated and will continue to participate.



International Neonatal Nurses Day, 15 August 2018



Caboolture, QLD



Toowoomba, QLD

NETS, NSW



Conference report

Jessie Everson-Checkley Education Grant Report

Justine Parsons

Nurse Educator, NICU, John Hunter Children’s Hospital, NSW

In August this year I was one of the lucky recipients of a Jessie Everson-Checkley Education Grant, which I used to attend the 26th Annual ACNN Conference in Launceston, Tasmania. I also had a paper accepted for presentation titled *X-Rays in the NICU: what’s really going on?*

The welcome reception, held in the ballroom of the Hotel Grand Chancellor, was well attended. The addition of local stallholders showcasing handicrafts and local produce was fantastic. It was a great opportunity to meet old friends, discover new ones and network.

Having surveyed the program, I was particularly interested in hearing the presentation by Janine Mohamed on leadership for health equity. Janine spoke on the health disparities suffered by Indigenous Australians, the importance of cultural safety within health systems, and strategies to empower disadvantaged communities to advocate for their own health. She was both inspiring and challenging to listen to, and I took a great deal of information away with me to incorporate into education and practice.

I was also touched by the “Hello, my name is...” program, presented by Diane Webb, health literacy officer with Tasmanian Public Health. When staff take a step back, remember what it might be like to be on the patient side of a conversation or experience, we adjust the way we approach situations. I think we can all learn from this program.

Having concurrent sessions divided into streams helped you

decide which theme you wanted to focus on. I attended the education stream sessions, and also joined the Education Special Interest Group annual meeting. The direction of this group over the next 12 months will be pivotal in developing the profile of neonatal education at a national level.

There was a renewed vigour for nursing-led neonatal research on show this year too. Lots of quality projects and research projects were discussed, and enthusiasm was high which was inspiring.

I’d like to extend my thanks to the ACNN Committee for the provision of the education grant. It was very much appreciated and valued.



Low Resource Special Interest Group

As members of the LRC SIG we are often asked about how much teaching we complete whilst at Goroka. Below is a comprehensive table of numbers for each trip we have completed since 2014. These numbers include midwives/nurses at community centres, village birth attendants and nursing students.

Teaching numbers	
date	#
October 2014	139
May 2015	92
October 2015	122
May 2016	119
September 2016	89
May 2017	140
September 2017	141
GRAND TOTAL	842

Neonatal Nurse Practitioner SIG Update

The NNP SIG held its inaugural education session on 24 May earlier this year. The event attracted local ACNN members as well as interstate visitors. We were able to gather more NNPs on a national level than ever before, including some candidate NNPs who were also in attendance. In accordance with our SIG’s terms of reference, we hoped the day would provide an education opportunity directed at a senior nursing level, establish improved communication and links for NNPs working around Australia and support those interested in the role.

The day was held in conjunction with the dates set aside for the inaugural NeoRESQ Stabilisation and Retrieval Seminar and the 22nd RBWH Grantley Stable Neonatal Unit (GSNU) Seminar and at the same Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital (RBWH) campus. We also shared the day with the ACNN Leadership SIG hosting their Leadership workshop.

The first part of the sessions had a neonatal haematology theme as it was identified as an area in which people thought they may have deficits in knowledge. Our first speaker was the Clinical Lead of the Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) unit at the RBWH, Renuka Sekar. She discussed the MFM service and fetal and neonatal haematological conditions, their considerations and management. Bronwyn Williams, a haematologist working at Pathology Queensland, discussed the difference between fetal and newborn blood in comparison to adult’s. She challenged us with case studies covering topics such as anaemias, various types of haemolytic disease of the newborn and neonatal thrombocytopenia. Also from Pathology Queensland, Sue Williams, a supervising scientist, covered all things about Blood Bank and transfusions.

A change of pace saw Natalie Cothill, Senior Clinical Specialist at Mallinckrodt, provide us with a presentation on persistent pulmonary hypertension of the newborn, which led us into practising point of care cardiac ultrasounds on her fancy mannequin. She was also kind enough to sponsor our delicious lunch!

Karen Whitfield, the neonatal pharmacist based in the GSNU, provided us with an awesome update on sedatives, acid suppressive medications, antimicrobials, anticoagulants, anticonvulsants and how to manage neonatal abstinence using a tricky quiz.

Prior to our NNP SIG meeting, we joined the Leadership SIG meeting to hear Leanne DeSouza, a self-improvement coach, share her inspirational and motivational story of her career journey in the music industry.

We were grateful for such distinguished speakers in their fields to sacrifice their time and share their expertise with our group. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive regarding the content and calibre of the presentations. I think everyone learnt, at the very least, one thing new throughout the day on subjects we may have thought we were *au fait* with.

The ACNN President, Karen Walker and the then Treasurer, Karen New, were present on the day by way of supporting our SIG, promoting the ACNN and to encourage further education and networking opportunities. The day was completed with more collaboration with the Leadership SIG via a hard-earned beverage at the Victoria Park Golf Club.

“A COIN FOR COINN”



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It's a wrap!

Launceston 2018

