



Caring Across the River

Nursing in the Albury Wodonga Regional GP Network

Volume 16 , March/April , 2008

In this edition

We have a fantastic contribution from Kerry Morton at Holbrook. Please send Jacki a story about what you do in your practices – your work stories are all interesting, all relevant and we are all able to learn from each other.....jeckert@bordergp.org.au

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1. Evidence Based Practice for Nurses

Dr Jane Mills from Monash University is commending a study on Evidence Based Practice for nurses working in general practice. I encourage everyone to participate in the survey. In return for participation (besides the raffle prize) we will be able to access Jane and the resources at Monash for local education this year..... (For free!!!). A copy of the below letter and a flyer will be sent by email and post to practices, followed by the survey when it arrives.

Australian Practice Nurses' Constructions and Utilisation of Evidence

This study aims to find out more about what Australian Practice Nurses consider to be evidence for their practice and how they use this information in their work. The Monash University Research Team, Jane Mills, Ysanne Chapman and Mollie Burley are all experienced primary health care nurses who are keen to promote evidence-based practice. Together they plan to survey Victorian Practice Nurses using a questionnaire that was trialed and tested in the United Kingdom.

The questionnaire has three sections that ask questions about

- Sources of knowledge used in practice,
- Confidence in addressing already identified barriers to evidence utilisation and
- Self-assessed skills in finding, reviewing and using different sources of evidence.

There are also some questions about participant's age, years of experience and importantly their postcode, which will identify those who work in a rural area.

The research has been recognised as important for several reasons. So far there has been little research into the experience of Australian rural practice nurses. As well, the data from the survey will be able to be compared to that from the original UK study to give an international comparison of practice nurses and evidence based practice.

The questionnaire should take 15 minutes to complete. Once you have finished place it in the pre-paid, self-addressed envelope and in the mail. It's as easy as that - and you will make a difference by joining in. The larger the number of responses there are, the more credible the findings will be.

As an added incentive for Victorian Practice Nurses to get involved, completing the questionnaire will put you in the draw for a \$300 Coles/Myer voucher. The winning number will be advertised in The Australian, The Herald Sun and The Age on July 5th 2008. You have to be in it to win it, so fill in the questionnaire and post it back by the 30th June 2008.

2. Wider Reading / Websites

Water for Wound Cleansing

Fernandez R, Griffiths R. Water for wound cleansing. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2008, Issue 1. Art. No.: CD003861. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD003861.pub2.

<http://www.mrw.interscience.wiley.com/cochrane/dsysrev/articles/CD003861/frame.html>

Understanding the MBS items in General Practice

This on-line course has been developed to provide health professionals and nurses working in general practice with the knowledge and the skill to access, understand and efficiently utilise MBS items in claiming for their services and in maximising the practices claims and benefits.

What does the course cover?

The MBS items course includes:

- The broad underpinnings of general practice financing in Australia including the Medicare system and the Practice Incentive Payment Program
- Knowledge on how nurses can contribute to general practice income through both the Medicare and PIP systems
- Comprehensive support information including: guidance material, related resources, and fee schedules that assist nurses claiming timely and adequately.

How to enrol? [Click here to enrol now](#) or contact APNA for more details (www.apna.asn.au).

How much does the course cost? This one-off course can be purchased at the cost of \$110 or \$80 for APNA members

Report on the current state of diabetes in Australia – Diabetes Australian Facts 2008

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2008. Diabetes: Australian facts 2008. Diabetes series no. 8. Cat. no. CVD 40. Canberra: AIHW.

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/cvd/daf08/daf08.pdf>

3. Scope of Practice / Professional Practice...Kerry Morton

Kerry Morton is a practice nurse at Holbrook Medical Centre. She has set up and is running very effective chronic disease and preventative health clinics....

"I have been conducting health checks on the 45- 49 year old age group this year.

Patients were identified by printing a list, accessed through medical director, of patients of our practice who would qualify, and we sent them letters in the mail. Patients were asked to phone the surgery for an appointment. Take up was good initially, but then slowed so we got on the phone and worked our way through the list, phoning patients and offering them an appointment. This worked very well, it gave them the nudge they needed. Human nature dictates that when we open the mail, we put it aside to attend to later.

I conduct clinics in the rooms every Wednesday. On these are the days, I can also see our diabetics for care plans and reviews, as well as pop out to do some over 75's assessments. With all the chronic disease management initiatives, we now have employed a second Nurse who does the bulk of the over 75"s.

Some of our candidates for assessment work office hours so I sometimes run a Clinic on a Friday afternoon for those who can manage a P.O.E.T.S day.

We have had tremendous success with our clinics. People in this age group are very busy and really only see the doctor if they are ill. Most people fall into the "Risk Category" for developing disease, either by their own lifestyle or their family history. This gives us the opportunity to really check them out. Depending on their presenting needs, I am able to recommend to our GP that testing may need to be done, whether it is bloods, mammograms, and endoscopy.

Most people have been getting blood tests done, and come back to see the doctor for the results. This is when he has time to view their assessment, discuss with them any of their concerns, and refer them for further tests. This is also when we bill them for item 717.

Blood tests have identified hypercholesterolaemia, iron deficiency and hyperglycaemia. Many of the fellows have had their PSA test. And we are reminding women to go and get those Mammograms and having Pap smears.

I have found that patients in this age group are mostly concerned about their weight, cholesterol levels, and stopping smoking. Some are also interested to know what the safe levels of alcohol consumption are. I have found that using LIFESCRIPTS has been a valuable tool and giving non judgmental advice regarding diet and exercise, alcohol intake and lifestyle, allows them to ask questions, and feel comfortable about making changes and becoming proactive about their health.

Some patients come into my room and burst into tears, many of them big tough blokes, farmers, mothers with teenagers, and upstanding community members. I am able to refer them to our doctor for assessment for depression.

I have a few patients who are morbidly obese on a very low income, some with mental health issues. We have done a GPMP for them and we have arranged for them to pop in to see me every fortnight or so where they can weigh in and I can encourage them and give advice if needed. They really appreciate the chat and the fact that someone is taking an interest in them.

It really does accentuate the relationship between GP and Patient.

As word catches on along the bush telegraph, we are having more people booking in for their health checks. Many women are sending their husbands along, and we are really seeing some good lifestyle changes."

4. Five minutes with.....Kathy Cherry

1. Which practice employs you, and where is it? Mate St Medical Centre, Mate St North Albury
2. How long have you worked in general practice? About 2 years
3. What are your main roles in your practice? Immunisation, wound care, assist with minor procedures, ear irrigation, sterilising, stocks etc.
4. If you were not working in GP, what would you be doing? Probably more work at Yackandandah.
5. Where did you grow up? Wodonga.
6. Could you tell us a little about your family? I have 2 sons, 17 and 14. The older loves woodworking and the younger basketball and wants to be tall enough to slam dunk.
7. If you were going to be stuck on a desert island, what would be the three things you would take? A good book, a good friend and good food.
8. If you were stuck on a desert island, what would be the three things you are glad you no longer have to worry about? The bills, the housework and the neighbourhood dogs and cats (esp. the cats!).
9. Who would you MOST like to have to dinner? My Danish pen pal of 35 years, Else Maie
10. What book are you reading at the moment? "Finding the Time for Serenity" by Barbara Crafton.
11. What music are you listening to at the moment? Whatever noise comes out of my 14 yo's bedroom because I can't hear anything else!

QUICK QUIZ

Tea or coffee? Coffee

Sweet or savoury? Savoury

Sleeping or football? Sleeping

Reading or TV? Reading

Walking or running? Walking

Snow or sand? Definitely sand!

5. NiGP Updates

Immunisation

Nicola Roxon - Media Release - Handbook to assist with best immunisation practice

8 April 2008 NR08/43

Handbook to assist with best immunisation practice

I am pleased to announce the release of the ninth edition of the Australian Immunisation Handbook. This book helps doctors and parents ensure that children are properly immunised, at the right time - keeping kids healthy. The book indicates timelines and advice including on immunising against polio, meningococcal, chickenpox, pneumococcal and rotavirus. Immunisation is an essential element of the preventative health framework, which is a priority for the Rudd Government. The handbook provides important information to health professionals on immunisation practice, new vaccines and vaccine preventable diseases in Australia. It is based on up-to-date scientific research and is endorsed by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia. Best-practice clinical guidelines are included for those vaccines provided free under the National Immunisation Program: those funded under the Pharmaceuticals Benefits Scheme; and other privately funded vaccines. Immunisation plays an important role in protecting us against harmful infections and health complications by using the body's natural defence mechanism to build resistance to specific infections. The ninth edition also includes new chapters on rotavirus and the human papillomavirus (HPV). Immunisation programs against both of these viruses are part of the National Immunisation Program which is delivered jointly by the Commonwealth Government and the states and territories. The vaccine against rotavirus protects children against severe diarrhoea, which is responsible for 10,000 hospitalisations, 22,000 emergency department visits and 115,000 GP visits every year for children under five years of age. The HPV vaccine protects women against certain strains of the virus, known to cause seven out of 10 cases of cervical cancer.

I think this handbook will be of great value to all Australian health professionals and thank the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation for its work in developing"

Cervical Screening

"Latest data from the Victorian Cervical Cytology Registry* show the number of Pap tests taken by nurses has doubled over the last ten years, highlighting the integral role nurse Pap test providers play in cervical cancer prevention, and the increasing demand for credentialed nurses.**

18,651 Pap tests were taken by 344 credentialed nurses in 2007, representing 3.2 per cent of total Pap tests taken in the state, up 0.4 per cent from the previous year. 'More than 33 per cent of women screened by nurses were six months to two years overdue for their Pap test or had not had one at all, which is very pleasing considering nearly 90% of women who develop cervical cancer either never had a Pap test or did not have them regularly,' said Sandy Anderson, a consultant nurse for PapScreen Victoria. '89 per cent of Pap tests taken by nurses were from rural DHS regions, this is a testament to the accessibility of nurses through a variety of health settings such as general practice, community health services, women's health services, hospitals and sexual health services. Nurses also provide a much needed alternative in areas where there may be a GP shortage, or lack of female GPs and often nurses are able to offer longer consultation times,' added Ms Anderson.

Nurse Pap test quality remains very high, with 79.9 per cent of tests including an endocervical component, compared to 76.4 per cent of tests taken by other practitioner types (GPs or gynaecologists).

'It is extremely important for Pap tests to contain an endocervical component, as this is the area where abnormalities that may lead to cancer are most likely to develop. The high quality of Pap tests taken by nurses is due to the training provided through the credentialing program supported by PapScreen Victoria and provided through the Royal College of Nursing, Australia,' added Ms Anderson.

Thanks to APNA

Pap Screen Victoria is offering scholarships to assist Victorian nurses in becoming a credentialed Pap test provider. See email from the network or log onto health professionals section of PapScreen Victoria's website – www.papscreen.org.au

Note that the scholarship offer closes on 6th June and that there are criteria which must be met.

6. Upcoming Education Events				
Date	Event	Venue	Presented by	Cost
June 13 (TBC)	Spirometry workshop	TBC	National Asthma Council	Nil
June 19 th	PN Network meeting	TBC	AWRGPN	Nil
CHECK UPCOMING AUSMED CONFERENCES – LINK ON WEBSITE AT www.bordergp.org.au				
Continuing Professional Education Scheme for Rural and Remote Nurses REMINDER				
The Nurse Scholarship Program: Continuing Professional Education Scheme for Rural and Remote Nurses is an Australian Government initiative and is available for both Registered/Division 1 Nurses and Midwives and Enrolled/Division 2 Nurses to undertake postgraduate Continuing Professional Education (CPE) programs/courses and for attendance at conferences held within Australia (as presenters or delegates). Recently re-entered nurses are encouraged to apply under this scheme to further skill themselves for their specific work place. Scholarships are worth up to \$10,000 each for up to two years of study. Applicants must be Australian citizens or permanent residents and they must be able to demonstrate that they are practicing in a rural or remote area of Australia and also hold a current practising certificate. For clarification of your eligibility under this scheme please contact us by email: scholarships@rcna.org.au or on free call number 1800 11 72 62. Applications will be considered from applicants who meet the following criteria: • Australian citizen or permanent resident; • Registered/Division 1 Nurse or Midwife or Enrolled/Division 2 Nurse with a current practicing certificate; • Living and/or working in an Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) ranked rural or remote area; and • Commencing program/conference on or after 1 March 2008. Applicants who have commenced study prior to the opening of the current round will be considered however, successful applicants will only receive funding for costs incurred after the opening date of the current round. This scheme is now open. Applications close on Friday 25 April 2008. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by July 2008				

7. Practice Nurse Network

Welcome to Selina Clark who is training to become an Aboriginal Health Worker at Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service and Anne Keogh who has started work at Holbrook.

Network meeting was held on April 10th at the division and was well attended by 13 nurses. The following issues were discussed:

- Upcoming Monash University study on evidence based practice nursing
- Research project on Practice Nurse intervention in prolonging breastfeeding
- Upcoming workshops – spirometry, immunisation, sterilisation and ? legal issues
- Upcoming education weekend in October in Melbourne, nurses asked for input and expressions of interest.
- Funding for Nursing in General practice program and education
- Data collection in general practice
- Lack of diabetes educators in the region and implications for patients.

Georgia Roberts CNS and Alcohol and Other Drugs program manager gave an interesting, relevant, useful and very informative presentation on “difficult patients” presenting to general practice, acute alcohol withdrawal, alcohol and smoking assessment, and smoking cessation education.

Following on from this we will look at running some formal education in smoking cessation interventions in general practice. If you would be interested in attending a formal workshop on this topic, please let Jacki know.

Any one with any ideas or contributions they may wish to make – please contact Jacki as below. Please send a response and let us know what you think of the concept and of the content.

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter please contact Jacki at the GP Network on jeckert@bordergp.org.au or (02) 6049 1906

The contents of this newsletter are derived from various sources and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Albury Wodonga Regional GP Network.