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Editorial

Critical care nursing: expanding beyond critical care

In this edition of the journal we have continued with a recent innovation whereby keynote nursing speakers from the previous annual scientific meeting provide a guest editorial on a key area of interest from their area of practice. Anne Wojner from Texas discusses a major research project on stroke which demonstrates the versatility of critical care nurses in a community role. These guest editorials are organised through Leanne Aitken, who has recently successfully re-nominated as an associate editor to ACC.

Continuing the theme of critical care nurses working beyond critical care, Julie Barbetti and Kim Choate report from the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne on their experiences with an intensive care liaison nurse service. This follows on from other recent reports and editorials in this journal^{1,4} around a subject gaining increasing interest in Australian critical care areas. The interaction of this type of service with Medical Emergency Teams and the increasing interest in the plight of patients post ICU discharge by ICU clinical staff promises to ensure this issue maintains strong focus until a clear benefit from these roles can be demonstrated.

At the other end of the scale Phillip Way from the Hunter Region in NSW considers the benefits of pre-operative clinics as opposed to on admission preparation for heart surgery patients destined for a post operative ICU stay. The drive to reduce time in hospital is propelled by many factors, including economic imperatives, greater bed utilisation options and reduced exposure to the unique hospital environment and its particular risks. Unfortunately this later issue has been only too well demonstrated by the spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) amongst both patients and hospital workers overseas in recent weeks.

On the theme of diversifying critical care nurses roles, in this edition of ACC Patricia Davidson reports on the implications of diuretic therapy in managing heart failure patients. The expanding role of heart failure services has developed another niche for critical care nurses to specialise in beyond the ICU or CCU. With growing success in managing acute cardiac syndromes, the implications of chronic morbidity presents clinicians and the health care system with new challenges in offering the best possible outcome. It is interesting to note the role for the critical care nurse specialist again taking a central place, albeit in managing a 'chronic' health issue.

Whilst the value of graduated compression stockings as part of a rationale approach to venous thrombosis prophylaxis is now well established, the article by Anthony Limpus and Wendy Chaboyer highlights how this approach is open to interpretation at the practice level. The information presented gives further guidance to the application and management of this key preventative therapy, and raises significant questions about how this could be improved.

As mentioned in the opening paragraph of this editorial, Dr Leanne Aitken has been re-appointed to the editorial committee as an associate editor of *Australian Critical Care*. Nominations were sought for these positions as is stipulated in the ACC terms of reference set down by the Board of the Australian College of Critical Care Nurses.

Professor Doug Elliott chose not to re-nominate to the editorial committee; I would personally like to acknowledge Doug's outstanding contribution to the journal over the last four years of his term and thank him for his support, particularly in working to establish the ACCCN webpage and move the journal towards electronic publishing.

In Doug's place I would like to welcome Andrea Marshall to the editorial committee as an associate editor. Andrea is from New South Wales and is an active member of the college in that State. She has a strong academic background and is an enthusiastic critical care nurse. Andrea Driscoll and Dr Linda Worrall-Carter continue their tenure with the editorial committee. There are now two vacancies on the editorial board which nominations have been called for in this edition of ACC.

Dr Gavin D Leslie
Editor – ACC

REFERENCES

1. Chiarella M. Nurse practitioner roles – an exercise in professionalism, safety and quality (Guest Editorial). *Australian Critical Care* 2003; 16(1):4-5.
2. Leslie G. Advancing nursing practice – opportunities and directions (Editorial). *Australian Critical Care* 2002; 15(4):131.
3. Harris D & Chaboyer W. The expanded role of the critical care nurse: a review of the current position. *Australian Critical Care* 2002; 15(4):133-137.
4. Jamieson L, Williams LM & Dwyer T. The need for a new advanced nursing practice role for Australian adult critical care settings. *Australian Critical Care* 2002; 15(4):139-145. ▲

ERRATUM

In the paper *Registered nurses' self-perceived level of competence following completion of a specialist graduate certificate* by Nancy Santiano & Katharine Daffurn on pages 16-23 in the February 2003 issue of *Australian Critical Care* two of the references were incorrectly cited. The correct references are as below.

22. Pelletier D, Donoghue J, Duffield C & Adams A. The impact of graduate education on the career paths of nurses. *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing* 1998; 15(3):23-30.
23. Pelletier D, Duffield C, Gallagher R, Soars L, Donoghue J & Adams A. The effects of graduate education on clinical practice and career paths: a pilot study. *Nurse Education Today* 1994; 14(4):314-321.