

Co-ordinated Learning and Development
Network for General Practice Nursing

Newsletter | Autumn 2012

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Life as a nurse in General Practice can be full of challenges and occasional controversy yet we have a tradition of adapting and responding positively. Over the last 18 months I have heard from many nurses who deliver high quality professional care. Quality care is described in 6 dimensions: person-centred, safe, effective, efficient, equitable and timely. In the last newsletter we described one way in which practices can be supported to deliver quality care, the Productive General Practice programme. This was developed by NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, is supported by Scottish Government, and being delivered by the RCGP to practices choosing to utilize the modules and resources. It was welcome news to hear that in November a general practice nurse will be added to the RCGP team.

However I know of practice nurses who find it difficult to access the learning support they need to develop. The NES GPN Co-ordinated Network aims to improve this situation, a particular need in areas without a general practice nursing Health Board lead. In the **GPN update** section you will find an update on recent activity.

This issue also highlights education in clinical areas. **Immunisation** is always top of the agenda in the autumn however this year there is the added dimension of pertussis. Ruth Robertson describes the learning resources available to you. Having the skills to provide the right type of care and personal encouragement to people living with **Dementia** is so important. Ambi Wildman's article describes free learning resources. Finally an interim national update on **Cervical Cytology** training is provided.

There is our feature on **nursing abroad**. Gill Dennes describes her time on the Amazon and encourage others to venture out into the world of nursing.

Do you have an ATHENS account? Do you know how the **Knowledge Network** and **CLEAR** can support learning? There is an article describing learning that is available for the practice team.

Finally have you heard about **Practice Based Small Group Learning**? At least a quarter of all GPs now belong to this way of learning. Jaqui Walker describes what it is all about and how practice nurses can get involved.

Without good professional support networks it can be hard in general practice. Help is out there from your colleagues, the practice nurse near by, the Health Board leads, and NES advisors. Also organisations (SPNA, RCN and others) are there to support you. See the range of **conferences** being arranged in Scotland for next year.

Look out for our next newsletter in the Spring for articles on safety tools in general practice.

Please contact me about learning issues by email: medicalpracticenurse@nes.scot.nhs.uk or tel: 0141 223 1479

Susan Kennedy
NHS Education for Scotland

What's New in General Practice Nursing?

Career & Development Framework for General Practice Nursing

How can the Career & Development Framework be used?

The Framework is part of a suite of documents for registered nurses working in primary health care. You will be able to use it to see how your role can be supported by appropriate continuing professional development. It is also used to assist general practice employers, senior general practice nurses and national organizations in identifying the practice and skills required to provide a high quality of care in line with the Quality Strategy and allow for the benchmarking of existing roles.

What about Treatment Room Nurses?

Having a range of different registered nurse titles can be confusing, not only for patients but for us! The title, treatment room nurse, evolved when nurses were employed by Health Boards to work in NHS treatment rooms, often as part of health centres. However the title is now used by GP employers too. The Framework encourages the use of general practice nurse for all levels of nurses employed in general practice. The box below lists the associated titles against level of GPN practice.

General Practice Nursing	
Practice Level 5	Practitioner
Practice Level 6	Senior Practitioner
Practice Level 7	Advanced Practitioner
Practice Level 8	Consultant Practitioner

Where can I find the NES Career & Development Framework for General Practice Nursing?

The Career & Development Framework can be downloaded from the Modernising Nursing in the Community Website:

<http://www.mnic.nes.scot.nhs.uk/>

First click on any of the three areas of practice (Children, Young People, and Families; Work and Well Being; or Adults and Older People). Then click on the hexagonal tile called Work and Well Being, finally click on Resources and Tools where you will find listed the Career & Development Framework for General Practice Nursing.

Alternatively the quick way is to use the following hyperlink, http://www.mnic.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/52579/gp_nursing_framework_final.pdf



Update on NES GPN Learning and Development Network

NES General Practice Nursing Education Advisors

Over the summer two experienced general practice nurses have joined the team of NES GPN Education Advisors. These are Gail Campbell (NHS Forth Valley) and Sheena Edwards (NHS Highland - south). In addition Jaqui Walker is temporarily undertaking sessions for NES for Borders and Western Isles. It is still hoped that nurses based in these Boards will apply to join the team any time in the future. Jaqui will also be editing this NES GPN network newsletter and helping with the NES GPN website. If you want to know who your NES Education Advisor is please contact elizabeth.cook@nes.sc.ot.nhs.uk for details.

Last year education events were held in most Health Board areas and this is being repeated this year. The type of delivery varies from PLT events organised by the NES advisor either across Health Boards or in CHP areas. Others are stand alone events for targeted groups of nurses or in particular local areas of need. Topics are wide including CHD, cervical cytology, diabetes, wound care, menopause and travel.

The advisors have undertaken learning needs analysis, attended meetings on behalf of practice nursing both locally and nationally. There is representation from the GPN network on national committees for immunisation, cervical cytology, prescribing, modernizing nursing in the community.

The NES GPN Education Advisors are finding that they are being increasingly contacted for advice on learning issues and are pleased to be able to pass information around the country. This sharing is very encouraging.



NES GPN Pilot Programme

What is the NES GPN Pilot Programme?

This pilot is a one year NES funded and delivered work based programme of learning. 12 nurses, new to general practice nursing, were selected following interview. They are being taught the knowledge and skills to Practice Level 5 and with time to consolidate their learning to Practice Level 6. The curriculum is wide in order to cover the modern practice nursing role. In order to complete the programme in one year topics are taught by building up key generic skills in consultation and lifestyle change alongside specific clinical subjects. Participants monitor their progress using the regular feedback from their NES GPN Education Supervisor and Practice Preceptor. Regular NES tutorials reinforce the learning from the 11 face to face days of teaching and self study. The participants also have access to NES ePortfolio, eLearning packages, and a shared internet resource area.

What recognition will the pilot participants receive for their learning?

On successful completion of all assessed elements NES will award a Certificate of Completion. Assessment includes four referenced essays, a significant event analysis, and an ePortfolio of evidence such as cervical cytology audit, direct observation of clinical skills, observation of long term condition consultations. Participants are encouraged to seek recognition of prior learning (RPL) from a Higher Education Institution of their choice. If successful this will provide the nurses with academic credit which they can use in other programmes. This aspect is being evaluated as the programme consultation highlighted that views on accreditation varied.



Will there be a course again next year?

It is planned to run the programme yearly. There may be changes as a result of this year's pilot however applications will be sought by advertising in May for entry in September 2013. In the meantime nurses who are new to practice nursing should undertake the learning required to safely undertake their role, even if they are thinking of applying for a place next year. The programme is student centred with some flexibility so that recent previous learning can be recognised in their ePortfolio.

Susan Kennedy
Programme Leader
NHS Education for Scotland

Clinical Issues

New Immunisation educational resources: Pertussis (Whooping Cough) and seasonal flu vaccinations for pregnant women

Colleagues may be interested to learn of new immunisation educational resources that have been developed by NHS Education for Scotland in partnership with Health Protection Scotland. These resources relate to pertussis and seasonal flu vaccination for pregnant women.

Information relating to **a)** the background to these vaccination programmes and **b)** the rationale of resources are detailed on the following pages.



Vaccination against pertussis for pregnant women

a) Background

As you will be aware, there has been a considerable increase in pertussis activity in the UK starting in mid-2011. The current national outbreak is the largest seen in the UK for over a decade. The highest morbidity and mortality occurs in infants too young to be protected through routine vaccination. There have been nine deaths so far this year in infants below three months, in England and Wales. There have been no reported deaths across Scotland to date.

In response to this, Scottish Government and the Department of Health have introduced a temporary programme to vaccinate pregnant women against pertussis to protect their infants. The programme will begin on 15th October, however opportunistic immunisation should begin as soon as possible. In Scotland, it is expected that vaccination will, in most cases, be provided through General Practice. Vaccination against pertussis should be provided for all pregnant women from 28 weeks onwards.

The programme will be reviewed at the end of this six-month period and Scottish Government will provide advice on whether it should be continued beyond that point

In order to support this programme NHS Education for Scotland and Health Protection Scotland have produced a number of educational resources.

b) Rationale of resources

These resources are designed to support health care professionals involved in raising the issue of vaccination against pertussis with all women in the antenatal period and providing women with evidence based information about vaccination against pertussis.

This resource does not cover the actual administration techniques involved in vaccination against pertussis.

It is recommended that nurses who deliver vaccines should complete the NES online education programme Promoting Effective Immunisation Practice certificate <http://www.documents.hps.scot.nhs.uk/immunisation/education-resource/promoting-effective-immunisation-practice.pdf>

If you or any colleagues are not trained in the storage and administration of vaccines then it is important to inform your line manager or local practice nurse advisor to seek advice and training.

Resources available at:

[http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-theme-initiative/public-health/health-protection/immunisation/pertussis-\(whooping-cough\).aspx](http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-theme-initiative/public-health/health-protection/immunisation/pertussis-(whooping-cough).aspx)

Titles:

'Vaccination against pertussis (whooping cough) - the use of Repevax' - An update for Healthcare Professionals

Training slides and notes for Healthcare Professionals

'Vaccination of pregnant women against Pertussis - Questions and Answers'

Seasonal Flu vaccination for pregnant women

a) Background

In the Chief Medical Officer's seasonal flu vaccination programme 2012/13 communication [http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO\(2012\)06](http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO(2012)06). PDF, vaccination uptake rates for pregnant woman during the 2011-12 flu programme were detailed as having reached 39.6% for those without other risk factors and 60% for those with other risk factors. Whilst these figures are lower than last year, they are based on increased accuracy of recording of pregnancy denominator data. It has been recognised that pregnant women may have particular concerns about the vaccine and that will inform decision making about whether or not to be vaccinated.

Healthcare professionals are considered key in communicating the benefits of seasonal flu vaccination and helping to ensure that as many pregnant woman as possible are immunised.

b) Rational of Resource

This resource is designed to support midwives involved in raising the issue of flu vaccination with all woman in the antenatal period and providing woman with evidence based information about flu vaccination. However, the resources will be of interest to any healthcare professionals involved in promoting flu vaccination for pregnant women

This resource does not cover the actual administration techniques involved in flu vaccination.

It is recommended that nurses who deliver vaccines should complete the NES online education programme, Promoting Effective Immunisation Practice certificate <http://www.documents.hps.scot.nhs.uk/immunisation/education-resource/promoting-effective-immunisation-practice.pdf>

If you or any colleagues are not trained in the storage and administration of vaccines then it is important to inform your line manager or local practice nurse advisor to seek advice and training.

Resources can be found at:

<http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-theme-initiative/public-health/health-protection/seasonal-flu.aspx>

Influenza vaccination in Pregnant woman-
Background information

Flu Vaccination in Pregnancy - Training Slides -
August 2012

Flu Vaccination in Pregnancy -Handouts - August
2012

Contact details:

If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact:

Ruth Robertson
*Health Protection Education
Programme Manager/Director*
NHS Education for Scotland/
Health Protection Scotland
Email Ruth.Robertson2@nhs.net

Cervical Cytology Update

Cervical screening can identify pre-cancerous cell changes in women who otherwise have no symptoms; at this stage, any changes can be easily treated, and treatment is usually very effective.

Scottish Cervical Screening Programme was introduced in Scotland in 1988 with the aim of reducing the incidence of invasive cancer of the cervix. Overall, the incidence rate of invasive cancer of the cervix has decreased by approximately 46% between 1986 and 2010. The percentage of screening test results indicating high grade cell changes, which require a further examination, has remained low at around 1.3 -1.5% since 2000-01. More details can be found on the ISD website: <http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Cancer/Publications/>

In 2007, following a review of local call recall arrangements, a new national IT system, the Scottish Cervical Call Recall System (SCCRS), was introduced across NHS Scotland. In addition, National Services Division of NHS National Services Scotland centrally commission the laboratory elements of the programme, including QA and training. NHS Boards are therefore responsible for all other practice/clinical elements and clinical governance in their own areas.

Almost all cervical cytology samples are taken in Primary Care by General Practice Nurses. The quality of the sampling procedure is vital to the success of the screening service. Failure to adequately sample the cervix may result in a false-negative report or a report of dyskaryosis which may under-estimate the degree of abnormality present.



The smear taker must:

- see all of the cervix
- adequately sample the whole circumference of the cervical os, including the transformation zone
- transfer the sample collected to the vial
- correctly complete and place the patient label on the vial then forward to the cytology laboratory
- maintain a tracking system to ensure that all results are received

Since the introduction of Liquid Based Cytology, adequate cell samples count cell numbers only and not cell type. Thus it is not possible to use reporting of satisfactory smears as a method to determine if the sample is taken from the correct area.

Adequate cell count samples are audited for each GP practice. Of all tests processed in 2011 to 2012, ISD reported that over 97% were of satisfactory quality. Of satisfactory results, 90.9% had a negative result, 7.8% had a low grade cell change and the remaining 1.3% had high grade cell changes for more information see:

<http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Cancer/Cervical-Screening/>

The Scottish Cervical Screening Programme's smear taker guidance (v2.1) (May 2012) confirmed that smear takers should ensure they have been adequately trained to take smears and to request samples in SCCRS - see <http://www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/cervical/publications/nhscsp20.html>

Smear takers should adhere to local standards and protocols for smear taking and never take a smear if the cervix cannot be fully visualized. These women should be referred according to local protocol.

For information on SCCRS see <http://www.sccrs.scot.nhs.uk/smtakers.html> and click on your role to access relevant parts of the training manual.

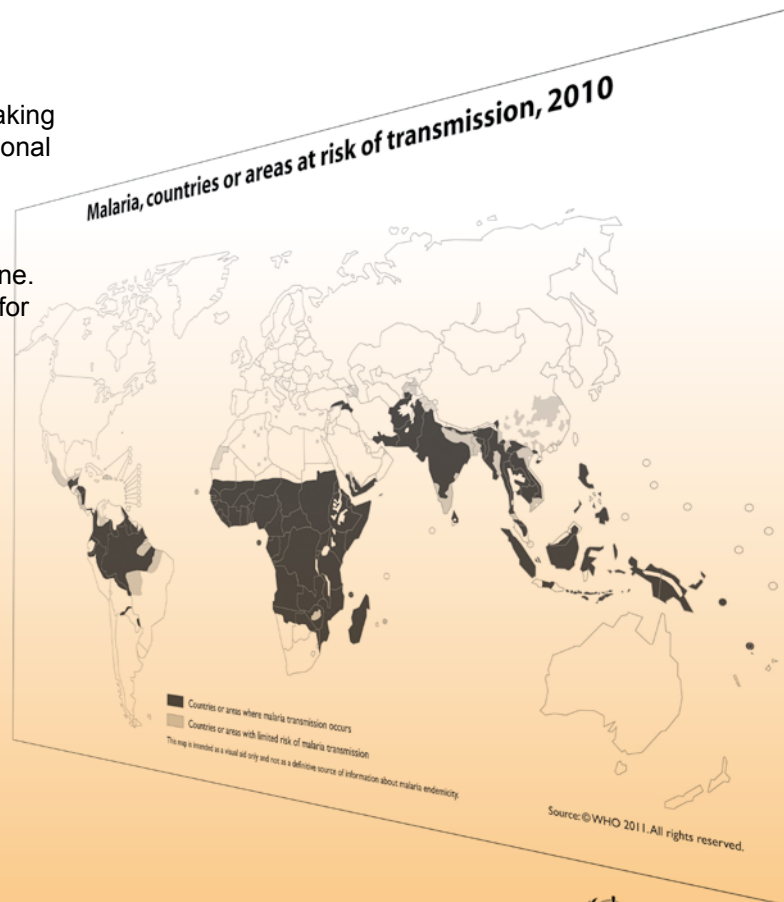
In early July Dr Harry Burns (Chief Medical Officer) sent letters to practices on the Scottish Cervical Screening Programme. It described ongoing work by a short life working group led by Scottish Government. There is general practice nursing representation on this group. NHS Education for Scotland is developing Education Standards for Cervical Cytology training providers for consultation. The next meeting, in late October, will discuss provision of quality assured training courses for sample takers in Scotland. In order that there is provision across Scotland, including the more remote and rural areas, eLearning approaches are being considered. Currently both initial and update training days are available in some areas either from local Health Boards or Higher Education Institutions (contact your local NHS Health Board practice nurse advisor lead or your NES Education Advisor for more information).

Susan Kennedy
NHS Education for Scotland

Health Protection Scotland (HPS) Malaria Advisory Group: Help Required!

HPS recently brought together a group of Health Professionals to discuss the malaria information provided on the TRAVAX and Fit for Travel websites. Margaret Umeed, from Govan, has been asked to represent Practice Nurses on this group. Topics being debated include the changing pattern of malaria in certain countries, like India, and how this is best provided on TRAVAX. If you have any comments (good or bad) about the malaria information on TRAVAX or Fit for Travel, please email Margaret at margaret.umeed@nhs.net Suggestions for future improvements include making the capitals of countries clearer, and adding regional information to the malaria maps (e.g. in India).

Margaret has also recently been invited to sit on the editorial board of the Practice Nurse magazine. November's planning meeting is an opportunity for you to suggest ideas & topics for future articles. See above for Margaret's email address.



Promoting Excellence in Dementia Care

There are currently around 84,000 people in Scotland living with dementia. This figure is expected to double in a generation and this means that in future we are all likely to know someone who has dementia or who cares for someone with dementia.¹ In June 2010, the Scottish Government launched Scotland's National Dementia Strategy which made a commitment to deliver 'world-class dementia services in Scotland.'

NHS Education Scotland in partnership with SSSC and Alzheimer Scotland is taking forward a work programme on behalf of the Scottish Government to support implementation of the Strategy. The first phase of this work involved the production of Promoting Excellence: A framework for health and social care staff working with people with dementia and their carers, in June 2011.²

At the heart of this framework is a drive to improve the lives of people with dementia and this is reflected in a number of Quality of Life Outcome Indicators which are mapped against the Standards of Care for Dementia in Scotland which were launched at the same time.³

When working in general practice, nurses frequently care for people with a diagnosis of dementia. Nurses are also in an ideal position to recognise signs of dementia during their consultations. We can all make a real difference to the experience of people with dementia and their families and carers, as one person living with dementia indicated:

What I would say to the professionals is that - you can pull me back, give me my life back and pull me into the light. And by the same token, ignorance, arrogance, couldn't care less, you can shove me down into the darkness and just cast me away. I can't do it. I need your help to do it.

Through our eyes, a life with dementia

There are now a number of resources available to support staff to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Dementia Skilled – Improving Practice

A new learning resource *Dementia Skilled – Improving Practice*, has been published which might be useful for General Practice Nurses wishing to update their knowledge and skills. The resource has been designed in a way that enables a range of uses by organisations, teams and individuals. Learning activities throughout each of the 5 modules play a key part in helping learners further develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are central to their role (see figure below). The focus is on practical applications of learning to bring about change and reflective practice. The resource can be used for individual learning, learning as a group or team, in a facilitated learning event or in a mixture of all of these approaches.

Available from:

<http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/home/portals-and-topics/dementia-promoting-excellence.aspx>

Module 1:	Understanding Dementia
Module 2:	Promoting Person and Family-centred Care and Community Connections
Module 3:	Promoting Health and Well-being for People with Dementia
Module 4:	Meeting the Needs of the Person with Dementia who is Distressed
Module 5:	Supporting and Protecting People's Rights

Figure: Modules in *Dementia Skilled – Improving Practice*

¹ <http://dementiascotland.org/news/statistics-number-of-people-with-dementia-in-scotland-2012/?page=statistics.htm>

² www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/05/31085332/0

³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/05/31085414/0>

Dementia Managed Knowledge Network

The Dementia MKN is a web portal that provides a platform for sharing best practice, promoting educational opportunities, hosting resources and facilitating communities of practice across health and social care. Anyone with an interest in the health and social care of people with dementia may join this network:

<http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/dementia.aspx>

There are also a range of other useful resources on the NES website:

www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-theme-initiative/mental-health-and-learning-disabilities/publications-and-resources.aspx

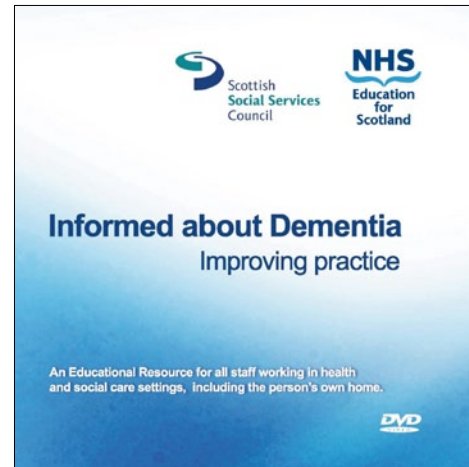
Informed about Dementia-Improving Practice

The *Informed about Dementia-Improving Practice* DVD will help staff to:

- recognise and develop the skills and values they need to support people with dementia and their families and carers
- understand more about dementia
- think differently about people with dementia

This DVD has been fully endorsed by Alzheimer Scotland and the Scottish Dementia Working Group, the national campaigning group run for and by people with dementia. It would be useful for all staff but may be particularly helpful for reception staff.

Ambi Wildman
NHS Education for Scotland/
Queen Margaret University



Features

Practice Based Small Group Learning (PBSGL)

Practice Based Small Group Learning enables health care professionals to form groups that meet regularly to update their knowledge using specially written modules. The modules cover different areas of health care provision and are directly relevant to day to day practice. Participants find this a sociable, relaxed way of ensuring they stay up to date with knowledge that will immediately make a difference to their clinical practice. Everyone in the group gets a copy of the module to read before the meeting and they are encouraged to bring their own case studies along for discussion. The modules cover current best practice guidelines and contain case studies to show how this evidence can be applied in practice. The meetings usually last 1½ hours and can be multi disciplinary or consist of groups of GPNs or GPs from different practices. The optimum number for members is 5-9 people. Some groups meet by phone or via webcam computer links. The group decides which module to cover and when and where to meet. At least one group member is a trained PBSGL facilitator and helps lead the group through the module whilst enabling everyone to take part in the discussion.

Globally there are now over 5000 PBSGL members who find this way of learning an enjoyable and effective way to help maintain their CPD and make 'best practice' current practice. PBSGL originated in Canada in 1986 at the Foundation for Medical Practice Education (FMPE), a non-profit organisation that is dedicated to developing, producing and evaluating education programmes for Health Care Professionals. The PBSGL method is continuously evaluated and researched and the evidence shows it to be an effective way for practitioners to update their skills and apply their learning. In 2006 NES supported the delivery of PBSGL across Scotland and has a team of people who either 'tartanise' currently

available modules or write specific UK or Scottish modules. As well as covering the management of a wide range of common conditions, the modules explore areas such as workplace stress and consultation skills. Recent modules include Chronic Kidney disease and a Cervical Screening module is currently in development. The NES GPN Education Advisors have recently been trained as facilitators and spent time discussing a module on 'Urinary Tract Infection in Adults' and another on 'Patient Safety'. The sessions were lively and interactive and all members fed back around how their knowledge had improved and what they would apply to their current practice. The chance to discuss case studies and share ideas, whilst having clear guidance regarding current best practice, was considered very useful.

NES run regular training programmes for Health Professionals to train as facilitators. This involves a day's training and a facilitation guide book. For those facilitating groups in their local area membership is free.

A yearly membership including access to the library of modules cost £120 however the first two meetings are free so why not give it a try?

If you are interested in joining a group please either contact:

- your local NES GPN Education Advisor for more information about nurse groups, or
- the administrator at the PBSGL office for multi disciplinary groups (see website <http://www.gpcpd.nes.scot.nhs.uk/pbsgl.aspx>)

Do you already belong to a PBSGL group? If so we would like to hear about your experience, please send an email to Jaqui Walker, NES GPN Education Advisor, jaqui.walker@nhs.net

General Practice Training Sessions on the Knowledge Network

The Knowledge Network <http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk> provides knowledge support for the health and social care sector. It provides access to 12 million information and learning resources brought together from one access point. The content is quality assured to support your professional information needs.

5 things you should know about The Knowledge Network:

1. All resources are FREE for staff of NHS Scotland & partner organisations.
2. You can access it from any computer, anywhere.
3. Register on the site for an Athens password to get the full benefit of the service.
4. 1000s of full text journals, 100s of ebooks, 100+ databases
5. Get quick targeted information for use at point of care or do a more in-depth search for research or CPD.

Use The Knowledge Network for:

- access to full-text journals and books
- keeping up-to-date services, including table of content alerts and newsfeeds
- access to learning and CPD resources, including e-Learning resources, creation tools and guidance
- collaborate with colleagues using Communities of Practice
- mobile knowledge – access to health and social care apps and mobile websites
- online training at your desk

Online training delivered by NHS Education for Scotland, Knowledge Services Group

NHS Education for Scotland, Knowledge Services Group offer free online training sessions on services provided through The Knowledge Network. All you need to take part is access to a computer and a phone.

We have developed a session aimed at GP staff. The aim of the session is to introduce the various **Point of Care** resources available from The Knowledge Network for staff of NHS Scotland. By 'point of care' we mean resources which are useful at or close to the interaction point with the clinician and the patient to provide quick, concise, validated information to support delivery of best quality patient care. These resources generally provide summarised evidence and guidance. Bite sized chunks of information, taking the hard work out of collating and assessing current available evidence.

An overview of what is covered in this training session is outlined below:

- accessing the Point of care page on The Knowledge Network (<http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/home/point-of-care.aspx>)
- some of the basics of searching the clinical reference tool DynaMed
- the Evidence and Guidance search
- the Clinical Decision Support Search
- mobile Knowledge
- CLEAR: clinical enquiry and response service
- additional help and training

Additional training sessions

As well as the above training, NHS Education for Scotland, Knowledge Services Group also offer training on the following:

Introducing The Knowledge Network

For both those new to The Knowledge Network and those who feel a 'refresher' would be helpful.

Accessing Journals

For more experienced users, tips on finding full-text journals and articles.

Keeping up to Date

Using The Knowledge Network and other tools to keep up to date.

Website Administration

For administrators and potential administrators of Community websites.

Point of Care Resources

For health care professionals who need access to reliable information at the point of care.

SSKS

For social care staff who have experience of using the Social Services Knowledge Scotland (SSKS) website.

We would also be happy to provide face-to-face training on request and your local NHS Librarian can also offer assistance and training.

Further training information is available at:

<http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/helpandtraining/help-and-training/learning-and-training/training-sessions.aspx>

Book your place on a session by emailing:

knowledge@nes.scot.nhs.uk

Several of our subscription providers also run free online training sessions. Please visit:

<http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/helpandtraining/help-and-training/learning-and-training/publisher-training-sessions.aspx>

Derek Boyle

Senior Knowledge Manager (Acting)

Knowledge Service Group

NHS Education for Scotland

Making it CLEAR: Clinical Enquiry and Response service

CLEAR <http://www.clear.scot.nhs.uk> is an online clinical enquiry service providing NHS Scotland health care professionals with summarised evidence in response to aetiology, diagnosis, prognosis and treatment queries about patient care.

Using high quality evidence based information resources CLEAR formulates a specific response to a question by summarising knowledge and recommendations on the topic. Responses are categorised into clinical areas, published online and are accessible to the enquirer and a wider audience.

The service is delivered by Healthcare Improvement Scotland in partnership with NES and NHS Greater Glasgow subject specialists. Questions which require a specialist response are forwarded to partner services (Medicines Information Services, NHS24 or the Health Management Library) and dealt with under their processes.

To pose a question you simply need an Athens username and password which will allow you to log in to the site and complete the online question form. If you don't already have an Athens account you can register for one at:

<http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/login.aspx>

Why should you use CLEAR?

- save time by receiving a summary of clinical evidence on a topic
- get quick and easy access to evidence based recommendations which you can use to inform your clinical practice
- learn from previous answers by searching an online database of clinical enquiries and answers



What do users think of CLEAR?

- *“although a huge amount of information is available to clinicians it is very difficult to assemble it... CLEAR is a great help in that”*
- *“...I was particularly pleased to receive such a comprehensive response...”*
- *“The CLEAR response gave invaluable information that would have taken me far too long to do myself.”*
- *“Very impressed for remote use this is excellent.”*
- *“I chose CLEAR because it did all the hard work of searching databases... I lack the skills to search them effectively.”*

If you have a clinical question, ask for a CLEAR response or browse earlier answers - visit:

www.clear.scot.nhs.uk

International Nursing: Working on Board the Amazon Hope II

What had we let ourselves in for?! Two weeks working as voluntary nurses in the Amazonian jungle, Northern Peru, living and working on board the Amazon Hope II. This expedition was agreed over a glass of wine whilst contemplating our 50th birthdays (Anna and I trained together *a long time ago* and we're both practice nurses now), but as the time of departure became closer we wondered what we had taken on in that moment of enthusiasm (nothing to do with the wine of course).

But we survived and had a fantastic time, and returned mid- September with some wonderful memories. The Vine Trust is a Scottish based organisation with international affiliations, and it runs the medical project which enables health care professionals to do 2 weeks' voluntary work in the Amazon. We travelled out with a GP and dentist, but groups vary in numbers and the range of professionals involved; a group leaves every 2 weeks throughout the year. The volunteers offer their services and pay a contribution to the charity which helps support its work. Much of the healthcare in the Amazon is provided by the Vine Trust in conjunction with the Peruvian government and without this service, many more people would have to leave their villages and live in the shanty town to access healthcare.

Each day on board started with the boat mooring at a village along the river, and huge numbers of villagers filing on deck to be seen. No appointments there, but everyone waited patiently! As practice nurses our roles were fairly limited to basic health checks as we had no interpreter during the 'clinics'. Nurse practitioners might well have an interpreter and some consulting space as did the GPs but we worked up on deck processing the numerous patients, and also 'trained up' as dental nurses and helped out with fillings and extractions. Patients mostly presented with minor illnesses; often infections, diarrhoea, but also bad backs, headaches and dizziness seemed



common. People living in the jungle appeared well nourished, nobody smoked and all the babies were breast fed, so general health was good. Teenage pregnancies were common and the cultural norm. Everyone was very friendly and welcomed us into their villages and homes (and beat us at volleyball in the evenings after work!) We felt very much a part of the team and the crew and Peruvian doctors and nurses were hugely welcoming. We were really well looked after and when it came to leaving we all felt rather sad as we'd had got used to the way of life on the Amazon Hope.

What did we gain from the experience? To be fully immersed in a different culture was a real privilege, as well as feeling we had used our nursing skills to be of some help to the Amazonian people. We made many friends and saw a largely hidden part of the world, and some incredible scenery and birdlife too (we also went trekking across the Andes to Machu Picchu afterwards). And it was great to escape computers, QoF and the frustrations of day to day work in Scottish practice nursing, just for a while. If you have a spare two weeks, I urge you to join the medical project. You won't regret it! Check out the information at www.vinetrust.org

Gill Dennes
Practice Nurse, Oakley, Fife

Learning Opportunities

Conferences

Date & Location	Conference	Information
6 & 7 November 2012 Crieff Hydro Hotel, Perthshire	SCIMP Conference 2012: <i>Unlocking It – Making sense of EHEALH In Practice</i>	Email mhart@nhs.net or tel 0131 275 7746
13 & 14 March 2013 John McIntyre Conference Centre, Edinburgh	The Queens Nursing Institute Scotland (QNIS) and Nursing Studies at the University of Edinburgh hosts the International Conferences on Community Health Nursing Research Conference <i>Transforming Community Health: The Nursing Impact</i>	http://www.crfr.ac.uk/events/icchnr/index.html
22 & 23 March 2013 Glasgow	The first EuroHeartCare Conference will be held in collaboration with the British Association for Nursing in Cardiovascular Care (BANCC). Different types of sessions are proposed on a wide variety of topics . The Programme Committee has developed an exciting programme that provides up-to-date information on contemporary nursing practices, offers opportunities to develop practical skills, debate important issues, network with colleagues from across the world and learn from leading experts. The programme will feature many very relevant topics for general practice nursing.	http://www.esccardio.org/communities/councils/CCNAP/Pages/welcome.aspx
Planned for 15 May 2013 Murrayfield Stadium, Edinburgh	Scottish Practice Nurses Association Annual Conference This usually has a varied clinical and professional programme and well worth attending.	

Travel Courses

Date & Venue	Course	Information
Multiple dates	TREC courses: 2-day travel, 1-day travel and 1-day immunisation training includes CPR and anaphylaxis.	www.trectravelhealth.co.uk
12 & 13 November 2012 Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons	Foundation in Travel Medicine commencing in November, places still available. Information on website or from the course co-ordinator: lesley.haldane@rcpsg.ac.uk <i>Please note funding opportunities detailed on the website.</i>	www.rcpsg.ac.uk
12 November 2012 Health Protection Agency, London	Migrant Health in the primary care setting. <i>Free places available.</i>	www.hpa-events.org.uk/MH12



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