

What a disaster! What a disaster! ...continued

Despite the fact that all those involved in these types of exercises know that it is not real, most participants find that there is a level of anxiety and pressure similar to that which is felt in a real situation. Being able to think and act effectively under these stresses can make the difference between life and death for a patient.

At the scene

The scene was made as realistic as possible with the use of wrecked motor vehicles and victims heavily made up and acting out their designated roles, some with Oscar winning performances! Screams from distressed victims (some of them played by our emergency nursing students) pierced the air as the first ambulance crew arrived. Bodies lay everywhere. Dazed victims walked and collapsed metres from the accident. An amputated arm lay motionless on the road. Four victims were trapped in a car with the driver slumped unconscious over the steering wheel. Two of the motor vehicle occupants had been thrown from the vehicle as it rolled. Student paramedics were faced with the daunting task of triaging the scene, stabilising, and managing the victims. Working alongside the paramedic students, and impressing all with their first-line emergency skills, were Navy medics. Navy firefighters displayed their expertise as they used the "jaws-of-life" to free the trapped victims from the vehicle, cutting away doors and peeling back the roof like the lid from a sardine tin.

In the ED

As events unfolded at the scene emergency nursing students and Navy medics readied themselves in the base hospital's Emergency Department after receiving a call on the "batphone" (direct line to the ambulance communication centre), advising of incoming multiple casualties from an MVA. Over the next hour they dealt with the presentation of patients suffering everything from multi-trauma to minor cuts and bruises.

Among those feeling the pressure most were the emergency nursing students that were designated as the "triage nurse" and the "department manager". The triage nurse was responsible for the swift assessment of patients as they arrived in the department and appropriate allocation of their priority of management. The manager had to ensure that all areas in the department flowed effectively, that staff were allocated appropriately, and that patients received timely care according to their priority.

Nursing students and medics worked side-by-side in teams to assess and manage patients. Critically injured patients required intensive monitoring and rapid management in order to stabilise their condition. To cope with these situations students were able to draw on their own practice experience and the knowledge and skills gained through the course.

Debriefing

An important component of each exercise was the debrief that was conducted afterwards. This gave all participants the opportunity to examine their performance, to discuss what they did well, and areas in which their management could have been improved. Many students commented on how valuable it had been to experience the "victim" role in a scenario. Playing a victim meant for some that they were trapped in a vehicle for lengthy periods, cold and frightened, with the sounds of equipment cutting away at the metal around them. This gave these students a new appreciation for what patients may have gone through before they arrive at the ED and made them reflect on how they would respond to these patients in the future. Some students commented on the feelings of helplessness they experienced as they were lifted onto stretchers and transported by ambulance to hospital and gained a renewed appreciation for the importance of good communication with patients in these situations.

Conclusion

We can never predict disasters, but we can prepare for them. Through simulated emergencies, such as the one at HMAS Cerberus, emergency nursing students can test themselves without endangering patients. Through their participation within different roles, students increase their awareness of related



problems and issues, and develop their management skills and confidence. As an adjunct to the classroom, laboratory, and clinical setting these disaster exercises provide a valuable teaching/learning situation.

The School of Nursing would like to acknowledge and thank HMAS Cerberus, in particular Warrant Officer George Bonner for organising the exercise and Leanne Sheen from MUCAPS for her cooperation in facilitating this joint exercise.

POST GRADUATE COURSE INFORMATION

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To register, please complete the form and return to:

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Cost of registration includes

Conference: Full-day conference with access to a variety of workshops, notes attendance certificate, morning, afternoon tea and lunch.

Summer School: Five-day intensive course with workshops, lectures and group work, extensive resource package, attendance certificate, morning and afternoon tea and lunch each day and evening meal on day four of the summer school. Cost also entitles you to attend the conference or receive a reading package related to the conference. The conference/reading package helps prepare you for the summer school.

Cancellations made after 24th January will be liable for full payment. Any cancellations received prior to this date will be subject to an administration charge of \$200. Substitutions can be made at any time without incurring penalty.

Registration details

Name: _____
Address: _____
Postcode: _____
Phone (Day): _____ AMI _____
Mobile: _____ Fax: _____
Email: _____
Employer: _____
Department: _____
Special dietary requirements:
 vegetarian Other please state: _____
Accommodation
Conference/Summer School Hotel Single/Double/Other
Medina Grand, Queen Street, Melbourne \$150 per night
To view complete information regarding accommodation? Yes No

A list of other hotels and internet booking agencies can be obtained from the conference secretary: Meredith Milligan, email: meredith.milligan@med.monash.edu.au or phone 9902 6936.

Please register me for the following (please tick)

Conference only: Before 16/12/02 Cost \$150
After 16/12/02 Cost \$200
Full-time student: Cost \$150
(Certificate required)

Summer school: Cost \$900

Please indicate whether you wish to:

Attend the conference or
 Receive the reading package

Payment details

Check (Please make all cheques payable to Monash University)

Credit card (please tick): Visa Mastercard Bankcard

Card number: _____

Expiry: /

Cardholder's name (please print): _____

Cardholder's signature: _____

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Alumni

ALUMNI WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

We would like to dedicate some space in future editions of Nursing News to profile our expanding Alumni. So, if you have news you would like to share with us, please send us a short note or story and if possible, a photograph of yourself.

As we move into the new century, many of our graduates of Nursing are becoming established in their busy careers and practice specialties. Nursing may also have taken you to every corner of the globe, and not always just for the adventure! So where are you now? We would love to hear from you.

Send your information to:

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For further information on Nursing News Issue 4 email: joan.yalden@nursing.monash.edu.au

ALUMNI

Speakers: Professor Mary FitzGerald,
University of Newcastle

Garret Martin, Consultant Nurse,
Northern Ireland

Professor Brendan McCormack,
University of Ulster

Dr Kim Manley, CBE,
RCN Institute UK

2003
Conference and Summer School

UNIVERSITY OF
ULSTER

RCN
Institute

MONASH
UNIVERSITY

Monash University in collaboration with
University of Ulster and The Royal College of Nursing (UK)

3rd International Practice Development Conference

Lights, Camera, Action, Take 3:

Moving Clinical Practice Forward

Saturday 15th February, 2003

and

Practice Development Summer School

Monday 17th – Friday 21st February, 2003

Venue:  The Medina Grand, Queen Street, Melbourne

www.nursing.monash.edu.au/conference

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST Conference in Europe

The School of Nursing in partnership with the Florence Nightingale School of Nursing & Midwifery King's College, London are planning to hold a nursing research conference in 2004. We would be pleased to receive expressions of interest from Alumni who may wish to participate in this conference. We are thinking about having the conference at an interesting venue in Europe. One option would be to hold it in Italy. Monash University have a Centre at Prato, at the stately 18th Century Palazzo Vaj. It is situated in the beautiful region of Tuscany, Florence and is a perfect setting for intellectual activity and networking. We look forward to hearing from you.

Please register your interest with a simple email or telephone call to:
Meredith.milligan@med.monash.edu.au
Tel: (03)9902 6936.

Contributions

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Tony Barnett.

NURSING NEWS

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School of Nursing

FACULTY OF MEDICINE, NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCES

MONASH
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FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

This issue of Nursing News is the second in what has been an extremely hectic year for both the school and the profession.

The National Review...

The recent release of the National Review of Nursing Education 2002 ("Our duty of care") report signals a level of crisis across the profession. As reflected in the report's recommendations, we are witnessing a critical shortage of professional nurses and therefore need to implement strategies aimed at "building a sustainable nursing workforce". Included within these strategies is the idea of partnerships, flexible learning, increasing the profession's capacity to engage in research, and (re) building its clinical education systems. Whilst the report appears to focus on workforce issues, it does re-affirm the place of nurse education within the university sector and recommends an increase in the total number of undergraduate places allocated to nursing and midwifery. It is therefore seen as a positive initiative and one which should focus government attention on nursing and the important contribution we make to health in this country.

How do we rate?

Whilst external scrutiny can often be a burden, it sometimes produces good news. This year's "Good Universities Guide" (2002, Hobsons Publishing) reports graduate ratings of our Bachelor of Nursing course at both Gippsland and Peninsula, as one of the best around. The quality of teaching, overall satisfaction and the development of "generic skills" have all been rated highly by our graduates. This is great feedback for staff (including those in our many clinical venues) and will no doubt spur us on to greater effort in the future. Monash clearly stands out as one of the best places in which to study nursing.

New building at Gippsland

The new clinical lab and offices at the Gippsland campus has finally been completed - so a degree of chaos reigns as people move and settle in to new accommodation. The official opening of the building is scheduled for 6th December at 11.00am. If you are interested in coming along to this event (or just want a "nosey" at anytime), just let Lyn Daddo know. Lyn is more than happy to give anyone a "tour-de-luxe" of the new set up or even a "quick and nasty" of the new building if you happen to be pushed for time. It would be great to see you.

Student
support

WORLDWIDE

High Level of Support for Students at
Monash University, Malaysia

The nursing program at Monash University Malaysia continues to enjoy widespread popularity across the country. As a distributed learning program, the Bachelor of Nursing (Post Registration) course enables nurses in the most remote regions of Malaysia to undertake studies at tertiary level.

In order to ensure a continued high level of support for students, Ms Maggie Yap, Administrative Officer for nursing at Monash University, Kuala Lumpur, visited the School of Nursing at Gippsland and Peninsula Campuses. Maggie is also involved with the Centre of Learning and Teaching Support in the establishment of an assignment tracking system to ensure secure, streamlined procedures for the handling of work submitted by students to the Malaysia campus.

Maggie is a valued support for nursing students in Malaysia, having been for coordinating events at the campus, such as the recent conferences in Law and Ethics in nursing. As the popularity of nursing courses continues to grow in Malaysia, Maggie's role will expand. Her background in business and her current degree studies in business administration will further augment her ability to meet the challenges that this brings.



Maggie Yap, visiting staff member from Malaysia Campus

Malaysia