

ESTABLISHING A WIRELESS HOSPITAL WARD

M-ward PROJECT LAUNCH

At the Launch of an innovative mWard research project at Monash Medical Centre on Friday 30th May 2003, Monash University's Centre for Health Services Operations Management (CHSOM) in conjunction with partners NEC and Southern Health, signed an agreement to undertake an information communications technology (ICT) project called "mWard". Dr Liza Heslop, Director of CHSOM, explains, "The mWard project will explore how wireless technologies, such as a cordless phone or personal digital assistant (PDA), could be utilised in a hospital ward setting to improve clinical decision making systems."

from many experts such as physicians, health information managers, and clinical support staff including nurses, case managers, resident doctors, other care givers and diagnostic and treatment departments such as X-ray and pathology.

Estimates suggest that nurses and doctors spend more than one third of their time doing support work in the form of recording and synthesising information. This time consuming gathering of information contributes to delays in patient care processes and in turn, delays contribute to higher hospital costs due to additional bed days.

Dr Liza Heslop, Director of CHSOM, explains, "Clinical health workers spend a significant amount of time and effort seeking information from medical charts and other sources to make the next key decision in a patient's treatment regime," she said.



The benefits of a wireless ward include immediate, point-to-point communication of patient information between health

professionals, a more mobile workforce and less competition for fixed workstations.

NEC's National Manager, Community & Health, Dr Andrew Howard said "The mWard project will look at the best means of enabling immediate transmission of urgent data to clinical staff and the feasibility of applications in a ward setting.

The introduction of electronic information systems will increase the speed and accuracy of clinical information flow and deliver detectable improvements in health outcomes."

Mr Keith Kranz, Manager I2T2 Implementation, Department of Human Services, said "The new technology would provide significant benefits for Victoria's hospital patients," he said. "Not only will this new technology benefit patients but it will also help hospital staff, with the differing needs of doctors and nurses also being met with increased efficiency in making important decisions relating to patient care".

Professor Michael Berndt, Associate Dean Research, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences and Professor Phillip Steele, Academic Director Peninsula Campus and Associate Dean of Development, Faculty of Information Technology formally

launched the project. They agreed that it provided a model for collaboration between industry and Monash.

Funding from NEC, Southern Health, the Victorian government ICT program and Monash will enable two graduates to undertake a Monash doctoral degree and further research, and research training links are presently being developed between the respective partners. Juanita Fernando, a PhD student is featured with the Director of the CHOSM, Dr. Liza Heslop. Juanita will be a member of the project team.



Dr. Liza Heslop, Director of CHOSM, Juanita Fernando, PhD student

Enquiries about the project:

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THE VIVIAN BULLWINKEL MEMORIAL FUND

The aim of the Memorial fund is to financially assist the professor of Palliative Care Nursing in matters associated with the encouragement and promotion of excellence in research, learning, and teaching within Monash University Faculty of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences, Peninsula Hospice Service (PHS), Peninsula Health (PH) and the Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS).

PROPOSED RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The following represents some general research projects, intended to initiate the research process for partner bodies, funding bodies and individual staff. These priorities are in keeping with the research directions of Palliative Care Australia Scoping Study (1999) and with work undertaken by staff of the partner bodies in 2002.

Service Delivery And Policy

- Demonstrating the "triangle of care"
- Palliative care and aged care connections
- Describing palliative care nurse consultant roles
- What happens in the dark
- A retrospective analysis of the development of palliative care policy in Australia over the last 30 years

Clinical Issues

- Accident and emergency admissions of people receiving palliative care at home
- Measuring life expectancy for people with Motor Neurone Disease (MND)
- Silent support - women's caring roles
- Studies of palliative care nursing management – clinical, ethical and professional issues
- Oral history of Vivian Bullwinkel
- A historical study of the development of palliative care services in Australia



"Vivian Bullwinkel exemplified what nurses do best - care for others. It is fitting that this remarkable woman, one of Australia's war heroines, should be honoured with the establishment of a palliative care nursing chair in her name to further the work of a profession she loved. It will help raise the standard of palliative care and allow other dedicated men and women to walk in Vivian's footsteps while furthering her philosophy of caring for the human body as well as the human spirit."

Patron: Ita Buttrose AO, OBE

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Please contact Janine Barrett on +61 3 9905 5971 if you have any queries or email: janine.barrett@med.monash.edu.au

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