

Neonatal nursing: Improving skills in Samoa

THE NEONATAL Nurses College Aotearoa (NNCA) pilot project supporting neonatal nursing education in Samoa is being evaluated this month.

The project, which began three years ago and is being conducted in partnership with Counties Manukau District Health Board's Pacific regional development unit, supports the United Nations' millennium development goal (MDG) number 4 to reduce child mortality. The NNCA project also meets the objectives of the Council of International Neonatal Nurses (COINN), which is committed to improving the health of neonates and creating a global community of specialised nurses working towards this goal. The three major causes of death in the first month of life are pre-term birth, birth asphyxia and severe infection.

A developing Pacific Island nation, Samoa has an infant mortality rate four times greater than New Zealand's. Providing specific neonatal education and skills has been identified as a means of reducing this rate.

The project got underway after a site visit by New Zealand neonatal nurses Wendy Hines and Anevili Purcell to Tupua Tamasese Meaole (TTM) Hospital in Apia, Samoa, in 2011. The nurses established relationships with the nurses working in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), obtained data and completed a neonatal needs assessment.

During 2011 and 2012, a neonatal nurse education package called P.O.I.N.T.S. of Care was finalised and rolled out in Samoa. The programme covers core aspects of neonatal care: pain management, optimal oxygenation, infection prevention, nutritional and temperature management, and supportive care.

Originally developed by an international

team of both nursing and medical staff from New Zealand, Brazil, and England as part of a quality improvement project in Rio de Janeiro NICUs, the programme was adapted to fit the Pacific context. An important aim is the on-going capacity building of nurses providing neonatal care, so a "train the trainers" element is part of the P.O.I.N.T.S. of Care programme.

Nurses Dale Garton, Gina Beecroft and Karien Mannering (now NNCA Pacific project leader) delivered the education package over two weeks last February, and Beecroft and Mannering delivered it over one week last August.

Beecroft and Mannering plan to visit Samoa again this month to complete an evaluation of the P.O.I.N.T.S. programme. A template for neonatal nurse education, to be used in other Pacific countries, may then be developed.

It is anticipated a workshop to introduce other New Zealand neonatal nurses interested in delivering neonatal education using the P.O.I.N.T.S. programme will be provided, following the completion and write-up of the Samoa project. It is also hoped NNCA members will present progress on the project at the COINN conference in Belfast in September.

With the MDGs due to end in 2015, the



Gina Beecroft and nursing school tutor Ma Fulu Aiolutepa review previous education visit scenarios.

NNCA hopes to provide annual support and on-going education to neonatal nurses in Samoa.

Neonatal nurses involved in the project believe it has already achieved significant and noticeable changes in neonatal nursing practice in Samoa, thus contributing to reducing infant mortality. It has raised the profile of neonatal nursing and provided education in neonatal resuscitation to the neonatal nurses at TTM Hospital. In addition, the hand hygiene '5 moments' programme is now evident in the neonatal unit; better pain relief measures are being practised; premature babies are supported developmentally; and neonatal education is being embraced enthusiastically.

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Report by NNCA Pacific project leader Karien Mannering and co-editor Anne Manchester

Infection control: National division achieves college status



Committee members enjoy their success. Back row, from left, chair Ruth Barratt and Julianne Munro. Front row, from left, Katharine Clarkson, Barbara McPherson and professional nursing adviser Anne Brinkman. Antony Shannon and Deborah Jowitt were absent.

NZNO'S NATIONAL division of infection control nurses has now officially become a college, following its application to the board of directors in February. It will now be called the Infection Prevention and Control Nurses College NZNO.

Speaking at the board meeting, section and college representative Carolyn Dobson said she commended the committee's two years of hard work to meet all the criteria needed to transition to a college. Chair of the new college committee Ruth Barratt said gaining college status would raise the infection prevention and control profile, both nationally and internationally. She thanked all past and present committee members who had worked so hard for this achievement. She looked forward to the college having its official launch at its conference in Palmerston North in August.

The theme of this year's conference is "Intrepid Journey". Abstract submissions close at the end of this month. •

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