

Red Deer Conference 2008

From the first dynamic speaker to the last session, this conference had diverse speakers and topics which made it difficult to choose which session to attend. The opening session with Barb Bancroft set the stage for a humorous and thoughtful look at our practice. She had so many bits of pertinent information that it was hard to keep track of them all, but she had everyone laughing and ready to enjoy the rest of the conference.

One session that peaked my interest was the presentation on the use of simulation in educating new employees and keeping experienced nurses current with the latest practices. In our ORs we don't often see the critical incidents, but by use of simulation we can still be prepared for them when they do occur. Since it is a simulation, different aspects of an incident could be highlighted, and the learners could be taken through the many and varied phases of treatment, all within a relatively stress free environment.

The presenters highlighted the effectiveness of this tool, as after the simulation all have time for debriefing and discussion of what could have been done differently or what was done well, without the impact of having a real patient presenting in a crisis. The simulation also focuses on varied learning styles, such as "hands on" learning, learning through discussion, and if needed, through repetition of the incidents. Another advantage of this type of learning situation is that there are no extraneous people around. Sometimes in a real critical incident, the number of people involved prevents true learning, in that there are so many things happening at once, that a learner does not have the capacity to remember everything that occurred, or in which order things were to be done. With use of simulation, the incidents can be presented in such a way that it is not overwhelming to the learner. It would be helpful if all areas were able to access this type of learning, and I look forward to seeing the expansion of this program.

Another session that was relevant to my practice was the one on preceptoring. In a time when there is a shortage of nursing staff, the issue of preceptoring is always critical. Even though this is a rewarding experience, it is also time and effort consuming. Many who have preceptored in the past may not feel they have the energy to do it on a recurring basis. The presenters made a good case for continuing to mentor and preceptor new learners, as this is the only way to retain young new recruits.

All in all it was a very enjoyable conference, and a privilege to be able to attend.

Submitted by
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