

## Ghana 2018

On January 13<sup>th</sup> 2018 Kate Woodhead and Diane Gilmour, accompanied by Mary Knight (FoAN Canada) flew to Accra for a week, to provide an update to nurses in Ghana on patient safety and risk management across differing specialities and on different sites.

We were hosted by the Medical and Surgical Skills Institute (MSSI) on the main hospital Korle -Bu site in Accra- and use their modern purpose built facilities.

Our goal was to deliver two x two days courses focussing on more general aspects of patient safety followed by the final day specialising on perioperative patient safety and in total 163 nurses benefited from the education which was provided.

The patient safety and risk management programme focussed not only on clinical aspects (patient identification, medication errors, falls, HAIs, safe surgery) but also covered communication, teamwork, documentation, accountability, principles of human factors, stress and fatigue.



The first course was based at MSSI and attended by 54 nurses from all aspects and grades of nursing. The delegate evaluations of the 2 days reflect that overall they enjoyed the mix of clinical and theoretical aspects; they found the programme well organised and planned; with relevance to their own practice. In fact throughout the evaluations positive feedback on all of the sessions was noted by one person or another. Not only did they comment on the content many praised us as facilitators, how we had worked well as a team, and how we interacted with each other throughout the sessions. What will they do differently as a result- many acknowledged that they needed to put the theory into practice now but that they had gained the knowledge to do this through this course.

“The topics were well presented and have given me more knowledge to impact as a manager”

“I will assess the health risk of every client; effective communication among colleagues”

“To motivate my staff who are patient safety conscious and develop a forum to make reporting of such occurrences easier”

The course was then repeated at Kumasi on the Wednesday and Thursday. This involved a 30 minute flight for us but a 5-6 hour journey by road for some of the MSSl team who bought the necessary presentation equipment with them. The ride from the airport to the hotel (at night) was a journey through African street life – bustling full of market stalls, people selling their wares, food being cooked – a sight to wonder at.

The course at Kumasi was held in the local hospital where in the middle of the grounds is a museum displaying African artefacts of the local people and a “Sword in stone” with details of the legend behind it. Interesting to hear of the culture and history of the local area.

Again different backgrounds and grades of nurse attended- this time just 13 in number- but a few had travelled some distance to be there. Although a smaller group who interacted well with each other and contributed within the groups, the evaluations reflected similar themes.



And then back to Accra. On the Friday our final day we were to deliver a perioperative safety programme. On the Monday, earlier in the week we, as were MSSl, were unsure of the numbers coming so were very surprised, but delighted, to have 96 delegates turn up for the day.

The day focussed on updating delegates on the surgical checklist, latest on surgical site infection, human factors, decontamination, risks, management of normothermia, bullying. We were joined by Joel one of the local Ghanaian Clinical Ambassadors who presented on surgical smoke. Whilst this was a large group they interacted, shared experiences and generated much discussion and debate. The evaluations again reflect a well organised, strong educational programme, highlighting patient safety and one which provided the nurses with the skills and knowledge to go back to their areas, supporting them to make a difference.



Whilst the programmes had been patient focussed the evaluations and reflections illustrated how the delegate themselves would make a difference in their environment – it was encouraging though that there were a couple about the patient themselves.

“Empowering patients to speak of anything bothering them”

“Place my patient first”

“Keep my patient safe”

As with many African countries the main hospital structure and building showed signs of extensive wear and tear and in need of repair. During our visit to the operating theatres at Korle- Bu it was interesting, and encouraging, to see that there was evidence of new equipment- such as beds, trollies, patient warming, operating lights and diathermy machines- having been introduced although it is likely that this had been donated by companies. The surgical site checklist was prominently displayed on the theatre walls.



Ghana was not all work and we did manage to visit a school and orphanage for the street children in Accra, supporting them with donations for mosquito nets, pens and paper, and then a cultural market.

Our thanks to Kwame (Director MSSI) and his team for their support not only to the education programme but also to the FoAN team (they were our drivers, our guides and our friends).

As a team, Mary, Kate and I, reflected on our week, its success, how we had worked as a team and what would we do this differently next time round. A job well done and on our return we received a note of thanks from Kwame and the chair of the MSSI Board of Directors which I think sums up our week in Ghana

*Dear FOAN team,*

*I want to take this opportunity to express the sincere appreciation of the MSSI Staff for you recently teaming up with MSSI Ghana to train health professionals across the country on " Patient safety and Risk Management" and "update in theatre practices" Courses. We were impressed with the passion with which you taught these courses coupled with your preparedness to travel all the way to Kumasi to replicate these courses for the northern sector as well.*

*We indeed learnt a lot from your devotion to work. We also still continue to receive feedback from participants as to how much practical the courses were and the fact that they will make a big impact towards the provision of quality healthcare in their facilities.*

*We want to say a big thank you to the whole team as we look forward to a stronger collaboration in the future. Thank you*

Diane Gilmour

Trustee, Friends of African Nursing, February 2018