

EAUN Fellowship addresses patient safety



Berne University Hospital hosts short-term visit



Kaija Tylli
Registered Nurse
Helsinki University
Hospital
Helsinki (FI)

kaija.tylli@hus.fi

Helsinki University Hospital (HUCH) provides high-specialised medical care for more than a million people within the Helsinki region. The coordination of the service provision is divided between four departments: Department of Medicine, Department of Surgery, Department of Gynecology and Pediatrics, and Department of Psychiatry.

The 17 HUCH hospitals form part of Helsinki and Uusimaa Hospital District (HUS). HUCH hospitals serve as training centers and provide excellent facilities for both national and international research projects. As of last year, the number of employees for the whole HUS organisation totalled to around 21,322.

I work in the Clinic of Urology as a registered nurse. The Clinic of Urology covers the entire range of adult urology, from diagnose to high-specialised medical care and follow-up. The clinic consists of two Outpatient Clinics (in Meilahti Hospital and in Peijas Hospital), three wards (48 beds), operating theatres and a stone treatment center. I work mainly in the urodynamic laboratory.

All in all the team in Clinic of Urology consists of one professor of urology, 18 urologists, six senior residents (residents in urology), around three junior residents (residents in surgery), and 84 nurses. Last year, 2,392 elective urologic surgical operations were done in addition to about 250 emergency operations. (Matikainen, 2012).

My aim with this Fellowship short term visit is to improve the current patient safety culture and bring concrete improvement proposals to daily practice and procedures. This work greatly benefited from

comparing practice and procedures to those of a hospital operating in a completely different environment. As a renowned Swiss hospital, the Berne University Hospital provided an ideal setting for this comparative work.

Host institution

Berne University Hospital was founded in 1354. It is named Inselspital and it provides highly specialised medical care and has an international reputation of being equipped with high-technology and engaging in excellent scientific research. The hospital employs over 7,100 people (Inselspital, 2012).

Inselspital has committed itself to a continuing and long-term investment in nursing development and research, and the strategy is to focus on Evidence Based Practice (EBP) for at least the last 10 years. (Willener, 2006).

The Department of Nursing Development and Research has developed several standards and strategies of different nursing interventions for the whole organisation, and every clinic has adapted them to their own speciality. All patient education material is produced here. (Hirter, Shaha, 2013).

The Department of Risk Management organises patient safety education for all of the clinics in Inselspital, and there is a systematic reporting and evaluation system of adverse events. The reports are mostly concerned with medication. There is a system of emergency notifications if an acute defect is noticed with products or operation modes. These notifications are immediately transmitted to the Intranet. (Paula, 2013).

The Department of Urology in Inselspital (Fig. 1) is internationally renowned for its surgical techniques in treating bladder and prostate cancers. The Department of Urology consists of an Outpatient Clinic, two wards



Figure 1: Clinic of Urology (Anna-Seiler Haus) at Berne University Hospital.

(39 beds), operating theatres, Intermediate Care Unit (five beds) and a stone treatment centre (eight beds).

The Department of Urology has a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) who cooperates with the Department of Nursing Development and Research and is responsible for nursing development and nursing quality within the clinic. The CNS has also been part of research groups of the clinic. (Willener, 2013).

The Clinical Nurse Specialist organises education in the clinic regarding current topics twice every month. To share knowledge of experienced nurses with their younger colleagues, additional short sessions (20 minutes) are organised in the ward. (Willener, 2013).

“The Department of Nursing Development and Research has developed several standards and strategies of different nursing interventions for the whole organisation.”

Before my visit to Berne I was in contact with the very kind and experienced CNS Mrs Rita Willener, who arranged me a versatile programme in the Department of Urology. Mrs. Willener founded the Swiss Association of Urology Nurses while being an EAUN board member. She has really done a remarkable career.

Improving patient safety

I found my visit to Berne very rewarding and I learned much about patient safety. In the following I list the main points that I found during this project.

A clear relationship has been demonstrated between inadequate nurse staffing and increase in e.g. mortality rates, urinary tract infections, pressure ulcers and length of hospital stay. There are studies showing the improvement in quality of care and increase in job satisfaction following the implementation of the mandated ratios. (Berry & Curry, 2012).

Evidence based nursing is a type of evidence based healthcare. It involves identifying reliable research results and implementing them in nursing practices. The aim is to provide the highest quality of patient care in the most cost-effective way. In order to

effectively identify and implement relevant procedures, every organisation needs dedicated staff that has proper resources. One possible way to support the implementation of evidence based nursing practices is to have a separate department for this. It provides a solid support for clinical work.

Once proper nursing practices have been identified, their implementation in the daily work needs an ongoing effort. Ideally, every clinic should have dedicated staff for this type of work. The staff, e.g. a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS), is important for all aspects of nursing development and nursing quality. The CNS is an important link between research and development and the daily nursing practice: from selecting the development topic to implementing and evaluating it. The CNS could be used for nursing consultancy or as a visionary of the future.

The latest strategies, evidence based nursing practices and guidelines should be easy to find in the daily practice. An up-to-date and structured Intranet is one way of providing this important source. It serves both the newcomers and the experienced nurses. It is also important to have a continuing discussion about clinical topics. These routine sessions will aid both the newcomers and the experienced nurses, and the goal of this developing work is that the nursing practices will be solid and safe.

The above is supported by our own survey results. (Tylli & Koskinen, 2012). Here one finding was that newcomers found it difficult to get sufficient proper information needed for decision-making in nursing.

Even if patient safety thinking belongs to everyone in the organisation, it is important to have a separate unit for this. With is a systematic reporting and evaluation system of adverse events and near-misses in place, patient safety can be improved.

Acknowledgement

This visit was made possible with a grant of the European Association of Urology Nurses Fellowship Programme.

Note:

The references and an extended version of this article are available on request at EUT@uroweb.org. Please mention title, author and EUT edition March/May 2013 in your email.