Bente Thøft jensen
Chair EAUN
Ærhus (DK)
thoft@c.dk

Europeaian Association of Urology Nurses

As the representative of the European Association of Urology Nurses (EAUN), I joined our overseas colleagues in an advisory board meeting on Cancer Induced Bone Disease (CIBD) held on November 1, 2008, in Prague, the Czech Republic.

The Nurse Advisory Board collaborated with Amgen Europe with the aim to support and promote the educational needs of nurses and assist in developing an educational programme that addresses the care and management of patients suffering from CIBD. Amgen initiated the first Nurse Advisory Board of CIBD to seek advice from nurses with CIBD expertise and who are knowledgeable on the supportive care needs of prostate cancer patients.

The advisory board and Amgen also intended to identify programmes that can meet the educational needs of nurses on this subject. Another major focus was to support the development of an international consensus and the creation of possible guidelines and good clinical practice on CIBD management from a nursing perspective.

Ten clinical nursing specialists across Europe gathered in Prague. Our discussion focused on the various perspectives for educational needs and possible future cooperation and research-programmes. The content and possible impact of an educational programme was also tackled by the multidisciplinary board, which represents a broad range of closely related healthcare associations across Europe.

The meeting is significant in the sense that it marked the initial attempts to bridge different perspectives despite the wide diversity in cultures and national and healthcare policies. Notably, the meeting achieved a clear consensus among the attendees regarding the obvious need to increase the general awareness on CIBD despite the differences on national approaches and policies.

To gain a bigger insight into the topic of “awareness,” significant discussion aspects rather than the involved in two parts related to CIBD management and assessment. The most important factors in both groups were then identified and will be described to serve as future guidance.

One of the main themes considered by the board was that in every country or healthcare setting, nurses must be ready to meet the challenge of a growing number of patients suffering from CIBD. Another key consideration is the growing population in many highly developed Western countries and the need for nurses groups to confront and effectively deal with a disease such as cancer.

The meeting also recognised the fact that it is high time to change existing attitudes in the healthcare industry which often has bias for unilateral or ‘isolatist’ thinking rather than the involvement of various experts, and which implies a multidisciplinary team approach and organisation.

The meeting participants also acknowledged that plans need to address the necessity of defining the role of nurses in CIBD management, and how these roles vary across European borders. Other issues involved the need for education, identifying the right approaches and the need to match educational and training goals with the more practical concerns and views of patients.

Consensus was expressed that research is needed in order to properly address these issues.

Everyone in the Prague meeting recognised the full significance of the meeting for the future and effective collaboration among European nurses from both urological and oncological branches. We do not only look forward to these type of meetings but also wanted to use this meeting to attempt to achieve the continued and close collaboration amongst various healthcare specialists.

As a nurse specialist, I had the great opportunity of visiting different Dutch hospitals and meeting nursing experts from all over the Netherlands. I was impressed and inspired to consider working in another EU country. I feel that the links between our two countries can now develop further and we are hopefully going to undertake nursing research together to help inform and improve our practice.

At 11 a.m. everyone went for coffee together including nurses, doctors and support staff and the same thing happened at lunch time. People seemed to genuinely get on well together which is a big contrast to the London hospitals in which I have worked.

I had a great week visiting different departments and getting the opportunity to ask questions and see things that I wanted to see – it was like being a student and I loved it! On Friday afternoon, at the end of the shift, the nurses who were on duty invited some of us to a bar in the hotel and needless to say we had a drink together. There was a real sense of collegiality and respect between the staff.

Some tips
Following my visit (from November 3 to 7, 2008), my expectations were met and having met several British, Irish nurses and patients in Amsterdam, I have been inspired to consider working in another EU country. I feel that the links between our two hospitals can now develop further and we are hopefully going to undertake nursing research together to help inform and improve our practice.

I would very much encourage anyone interested to take the opportunity to undertake a fellowship programme but I would have some top tips. Get the host to arrange the hotel accommodation and transportation from the airport as this could save you a lot of unpleasant surprises. Research the price of drinks and meals before going to include in your proposed costs. Take a present from your home country for your host because they will really look after you, and most importantly, take a visiting nurse and share your experiences, as we nurses are knowledgeable on the supportive care needs of prostate cancer patients.

Fortunately, I was inspired to consider working in another EU country for my host because they will really look after you, and most importantly, take a visiting nurse and share your experiences, as we nurses are knowledgeable on the supportive care needs of prostate cancer patients.

Finally, listing all the names of the people who gave their support and assistance would not be enough. But, in particular, I sincerely grate to the EAUN and Elsbeth Van Der Laan, Department Head Nurse at the Netherlands Cancer Institute in Amsterdam. To Elsbeth and her staff, in particular Willem De Bliek, my mentor, my thanks for all your warm welcome and support!