
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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“Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do.

Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.”

- Aristotle

Over the years I've had many conversations with colleagues and friends about the meaning of excellence in perioperative practice. Many of them readily speak about what excellence looks like to them and how they feel it can be lived. I've heard everything from excellence stemming from being good at one's work to excellence being innate for those to whom nursing is a vocation and not just a job.

When I think of perioperative nursing practice excellence I have an image in my mind. I see:

- an effective team easily identifiable by its collective knowledge and skills; and
- a group that can work in near silence because each member's attention and focus is directed outwards to the patient and the rest of the team.

This attentive silence and purposeful focus allows the team to attend to the patient's and one another's needs immediately. The ability to constantly assess the situation at hand, focus on multiple points in the operating room, modify care as necessary, and communicate with others are basic skills of the circulating nurse.

When I first started in the operating room I was amazed by the proficiency of some nurses and I quickly selected mentors from the group. The ones I admired the most were the ones who could stand at the nursing desk (with their heads down but not with their backs to the surgical team) completing the OR record and yet they were still able to respond to requests

or comments made by the surgeon, anaesthesiologist, or scrub nurse. They didn't miss a beat – literally. They were observing and listening constantly even while they taught students. I found this ability to focus on multiple things the hardest skill to perfect. Multi-tasking was hard enough but to be working and yet fully aware of my surroundings was a learned skill that I desperately wanted to perfect so I could be like the exceptional nurses who mentored me. I consider this awareness to be, to this day, a skill that must be constantly practiced.

This year's Perioperative Nurses Week (November 10-14) theme will be “Excellence. Every Patient. Every Time.” What a great mantra for perioperative nursing! It makes me think of optimized and individualized patient care facilitated by nurses who strive to achieve excellence. The best perioperative nurses I know live by this mantra and treat people with unwavering constancy.

Excellence in patient care helps to demonstrate why registered nurses are important for perioperative patient care. I feel tremendous gratitude for each and every nurse who lives by the mantra “Excellence. Every Patient. Every Time.” 🍁

Kind Regards,

Rupinder Khotar