

ÉTABLISSEMENT D'UN NOUVEL ORGANISME PÉRIOPÉRATOIRE EN PAPOUASIE-NOUVELLE-GUINÉE

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Suite à une demande d'un groupe d'infirmières périopératoires en Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée soumise à la *International Federation of Perioperative Nurses (IFPN)*, Kate Woodhead et Phyllis Davis ont offert une session à Port Moresby en Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée sur la création d'une association locale dont le but serait de fournir des conseils au gouvernement au sujet des politiques touchant à leurs services et de créer un lieu où seraient discutées la formation et la motivation des professionnels en soins périopératoires. L'article décrit le processus, l'enthousiasme rencontré et les techniques qui ont permis la création de la *Papua New Guinea Perioperative Nurses Association*.

Cet article a premièrement paru dans le *Australian College of Operating Room Nurses (ACORN) Journal*, volume 19, numéro 1, pages 18 à 22. Réimprimé avec la permission de l'auteur et de l'ACORN.

DEVELOPING A NEW PERIOPERATIVE ORGANISATION IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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A request to the International Federation of Perioperative Nurses (IFPN), by some nurses

in Papua New Guinea led to Kate Woodhead and Phyllis Davis running a workshop in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. They set out to help the perioperative nurses establish their own organisation to advise the government on policy which affected their service, and to serve as a forum for perioperative education and motivation. This article describes the process, the enthusiasm which greeted them and the mechanisms by which the Papua New Guinea Perioperative Nurses Association came into being.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most pleasurable pieces of work which I have undertaken as president of the International Federation of Perioperative Nurses (IFPN) was to be involved in the start of a perioperative organisation for the islands of Papua New Guinea (PNG). The country lies north east of Australia, south of the equator and comprises a string of small islands with the main island being the eastern half of New Guinea Island. The country is dominated by a central spine of high mountains (<13,000ft) covered by tropical rainforests. There are over 750 languages spoken in PNG.

Fortunately for me English was spoken by all the nurses, although they spoke to each other in a language called Pidgin, which borrows words from a number of different languages, particularly German and English.

The Lonely Planet Guide (2006) did not give me much comfort when doing my homework before travel. It describes Papua New Guinea by warning of petty crime, banditry and isolated instances of violence, much of it concentrated in Port Moresby, the capital, where it was planned we would be staying.

PROJECT PLANNING

The first approach from PNG to the IFPN for assistance was to my predecessor, Carolyn Webster, in 2001. This came by way of a letter, which was passed to me for exploration. A number of companies working in the Asia-Pacific Rim were approached to see if they would help IFPN with the project. Funding

was eventually identified during a visit to Australia in 2003. Johnson and Johnson Australia agreed to fund a colleague and I to run a workshop for the nurses. Following this offer, a formal proposal was developed and accepted by Johnson and Johnson. During the same conference that funding was offered, following some collaboration with the Australian College of Operating Room Nurses (ACORN), a great many colleagues approached me to share their knowledge of working in perioperative practice in PNG. This helped to understand the potential conditions that we would find there.

A colleague, Phyllis Davis, known to AfPP members for her excellent Daisy Ayris Memorial Lecture in 2002 (Davis 2003), was to travel with me, and coordinate the PNG Project. With hindsight, this was a wise decision as her enthusiasm for the task, as well as her ability to raise further funds linked into the region's medical device companies, has been invaluable. Together we developed a project plan by email as Phyllis lives in Sydney, Australia.

The first, vital element of this plan was to contact PNG's Ministry of Health, chief nursing officer (CNO) and other officials, in order to give the workshop credibility and enable nurses to be given study time to leave their posts for two days. By chance, during the International Council of Nurses Conference in Geneva in 2003, I met the CNO of Papua New Guinea and told her of the project plan. Soon, we were in regular email contact and she supplied many names and addresses for local hospitals and health officials. Letters were subsequently dispatched.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Phyllis and I booked hotel rooms and a small conference room for the workshop online and made our own travel plans. We finally arrived and were met by the perioperative nurses that had written initially to Carolyn. They were excited that we had arrived, and had spent the morning picking Bougainvillea blossoms and sewing them into welcome garlands with black silk from theatres. After such an extended



Photo by/par K. Woodhead

Imagine our surprise when 28 nurse showed up!

planning phase, it was wonderful to finally arrive, in May 2004.

The enthusiasm from the nurses was evident when we asked to be shown their operating theatres in the main referral hospital in Port Moresby. Many colleagues approached me to share their knowledge of working in PNG.

The plan had identified that between five and eight local perioperative nurses would attend the two-day workshop to explore and set up, if possible, an organisation which they had expressed a desire to have in the country. Imagine our surprise when 28 nurses showed up! A bit of hasty re-organisation of the room and the catering arrangements had to be done, but otherwise, it was a case of 'the more the merrier!' We were amazed that the hospitals had allowed so many nurses to be present, and many had travelled for hours to get to the capital and attend the event. Indeed, many hospitals had funded their travel and accommodation too.

IDENTIFYING GOALS

We spent the next two days brainstorming: working out the details of membership categories, structure of the organisation, the name and other vital minutiae. The majority of the work was done by small groups, who fed back to all and, with much debating, a consensus was gained. Phyllis and I facilitated

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the groups, encouraged and motivated where there appeared to be insurmountable problems and wrote endless notes.

We devised application forms, membership cards, and flyers for advertising and spent a great deal of time at the photocopier, so that everyone had a record of all the work undertaken.

Action plans were distributed and role descriptors for the agreed positions in the Steering Group were given to all participants. By the end of the second day, we had already got members signed up (including two overseas members!), and the Steering Group elected. It was time to get the interim president and secretary to meet the chief nurse at the Ministry of Health. They were thrilled to bits when she told them that they had beaten the midwives to setting up a professional organisation, and promised her support to the new group. The official launch was discussed prior to our leaving the country and we left the nurses with short, medium and long-term action plans. We had no doubts that with the enthusiasm shown by everyone, and with dates for the Steering Group meetings already set, that action would follow. The overriding goal of this group is to provide education and to enhance knowledge and skills within the perioperative environment. A number of goals were identified during the workshop:

- Develop new knowledge and skills through research;
- Provide advice and assistance to the national Department of Health and the Nursing Council of PNG in relation to policy development;
- Conduct in-service education, workshops, and a national conference; and
- Effectively communicate with the national and international perioperative community.

JOINING TOGETHER

The Steering Group had given themselves six months until the official launch of the organization to get everything in place including the bank accounts, the terms of reference and a great deal of fundraising. We thought this a short time but, in November 2004, the Association was officially launched with great ceremony, with a

number of Ministry of Health officials and dignitaries in attendance. Support was given to the nurses, by preparing a press release for them, by the IFPN project team, and welcoming them as pre-members of IFPN. At the meeting during which the organisation was launched, there was also an infection control study day, and over 50 perioperative nurses were present. Once again, hospitals had supported their nurses, and there was much joy at seeing colleagues within the organisation. Phyllis and a colleague, Sue Resnik, from the New South Wales Infection Resource Centre, were once again generously sponsored by Johnson and Johnson to travel. Many books, educational tools and gifts were taken as raffle prizes, kindly donated from Sydney hospitals. Phyllis chaired the first Annual General Meeting of the Papua New Guinea Perioperative Nurses Association and substantive positions were elected. Some seed funding was given by the Patron, the Honourable Bob Danaya to add to the funds raised by the nurses in their local areas.

CONTINUING SUPPORT

Work with the organisation continues to focus on developing the membership base, the terms of reference or constitution and further support as identified by the organisation's officers. Through close working ties with Australia and continued support from Johnson and Johnson Australia, a member of the Papua New Guinea Perioperative Nurses Association will travel to the ACORN



Photo by/par K. Woodhead

The enthusiasm from the nurses was evident as they showed us around the operating theatres.



Photo by/par K. Woodhead

Participants at the first workshop with Kate and Phyllis.

conference this year. Continuous support has been given by the IFPN project team, as well as boxes of textbooks and other gifts. Experience gained in PNG, Uganda, Zambia, Tanzania and Malawi with start-up perioperative organisations has encouraged the development of a generic toolkit to assist individuals with enthusiasm to set

up their own organisations. This is an on-going piece of work which, when completed, will be distributed via the International Council of Nurses. IFPN has been delighted to have been involved in the developments in Papua New Guinea and thanks Phyllis Davis and Johnson and Johnson Australia for their invaluable support and assistance.

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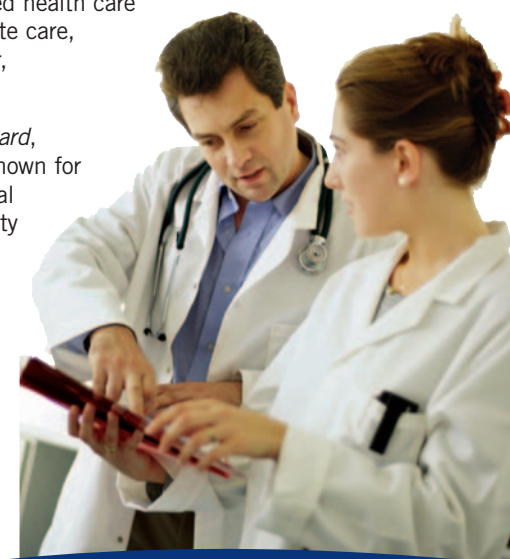
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