

Aged care news

ANF AGED CARE CONFERENCE

Quality care requires clinical skills, creativity and compassion

Mark Staaf, Professional Officer



More than 200 aged care nurses, carers and nurse managers attended the recent ANF Aged Care Nurses Conference which provided a professional and clinical examination of dementia care, palliative care and residents' end of life decisions.

Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner Julie Paul, the Training Manager at Banksia Palliative Care Services, gave an insightful overview of palliative care perspectives in Australia. By broadening the definition of palliative care, beyond the last days or weeks of 'terminal care', Ms Paul suggested that if a facility was providing residents with quality aged care then it was also providing quality palliative care.

Dementia Care Consultant from Southern Cross Care, Ben Gatehouse, a psychiatric nurse, highlighted the importance of quality dementia care in residential aged care facilities. He challenged aged care nurses to find out why some residents displayed challenging behaviours. He also challenged facilities to implement simple and creative ways of implementing 'person-centred care' for residents with dementia such as injecting variety into the weekly menu with a take away night and Sunday morning bacon and eggs.

Mr Gatehouse acknowledged that the key to person-centred care was the 'ongoing issue with retention of staff who become an important part of the facility for residents. They are very important people and it's a challenge for every facility to keep staff.'

Captions from top: Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner Julie Paul, Dementia Care Consultant Ben Gatehouse, Director of Nursing Rebecca Grant, Dr Tickle (aka David Symons) and ANF Professional Officers Jill Clutterbuck and Mark Staaf



Austin Health's Managing Patient Choices Program Project Officer Lynne Jackson discussed her research into respecting patient choices and end of life decision making whilst employed in a high-care residential aged care facility.

The program has been implemented at Austin Health and several aged care facilities across Victoria and is achieving significant improvements in meeting residents' medical and personal wishes during the dying process and at the time of death. An unexpected impact of the program has been a reported

improvement in staff morale and confidence because they felt they could fulfil residents' wishes.

Director of Nursing Rebecca Grant gave a young person's perspective on the aged care industry. Ms Grant was 24 years old when she was first appointed to a director of clinical care/ nursing role at a 60-bed high care facility with 60 staff.

ANF Professional Officers Jill Clutterbuck

and Mark Staaf gave an overview of professional standards embedded in medication management in residential aged care services.

The conference closed with a visit from Dr Tickle (aka David Symons) from the Clown Doctors program, who explained a new aged care program called Laughter Boss. With balloons, balls and gags, Dr Tickle proved there really was a place for humour and laughter in hospitals and aged care.

FIND OUT MORE

End of life decisions program

www.respectingpatientchoices.org.au

Clown Doctors

www.humourfoundation.com.au

Aged care medication management nurses' guidelines

www.nbv.org.au

*You matter because you are you.
You matter because to the last
moment of your life,
And we will do all we can
Not only to help you die in peace,
But also to live until you die."*

**Dame Cicely Saunders
Founder of the modern hospice
movement**