

Scottish Stroke Nurse Forum

SSNF website: www.chss.org.uk/links/ssnf/ssnf.shtml

Foreword, Hazel Fraser, Chairperson

On behalf of the Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum (SSNF) I am pleased to present an update and adjunct to the 'Strategy for Stroke Nursing in Scotland.' In 2003 we set out a number of strategic aims for 2003-2006, and I am delighted to say that we have achieved these. It is now time to update this and to set out new aims for SSNF for the next 3 years. These will then form the core elements of the forum's work, and we will strive to advocate high quality, evidence based stroke services for all of Scotland. This work is only possible with the hard work and the commitment of our members, sponsorship from Boehringer Ingelheim and in particular the continued support of Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland. The SSNF are looking forward to the new challenges set out in this updated strategy.

Definition of Stroke Nursing

Stroke Nursing is a specialist area of nursing practice that focuses on meeting the holistic needs of individuals and families and the varied consequences of stroke.

Key Elements of Stroke Nursing

- Ensure a holistic approach to the care of every individual with stroke
- Perform a comprehensive nursing assessment to identify the needs of the stroke individual and their families
- Provide evidence based stroke nursing care
- Be an active member of the multi-disciplinary team
- Participate in multi-agency working to promote collaborative stroke care
- Contribute to research and audit related to stroke care

Activity of SSNF (2003-2006)

Contribution to National and Local Policy

The SSNF is now represented on the National Advisory Committee for Stroke, the Stroke Information Technology and Audit Subgroup and has participated in the development of national guidelines and standards for stroke with the Scottish Executive, Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) and NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (QIS). Many members are active in their local Managed Clinical Networks for Stroke.

Research and Development

'Burning Issues in Stroke'

In 2005, the SSNF commissioned the Stroke Evaluation Therapy Programme (STEP) to undertake a research project to investigate what the key issues are for stroke nurses in relation to future research. This project was funded by Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland and is due to be completed in October 2006.

Bench-Marking Exercise

Nursing staffing and skill mix were highlighted as a key issue in the previous strategy. SIGN (2002) recommend that for a 10 bedded Stroke Unit 10 whole time equivalents with a skill mix ratio of 2:1. The report 'Benchmarking Scottish Stroke Services Nursing Establishments' has shown that there are wide variations in the staffing and skill mix across the NHS Boards, with some failing to reach the minimum levels recommended in SIGN.

Education and Training

Conferences

The SSNF have held annual conferences since 2001 and has covered a diversity of themes from the development of stroke nursing roles, expert practice, complimentary therapies, issues of remote and rural practice, and longer term challenges. These conferences have attracted a wide variety of professionals and have been well received.

"I always find them very uplifting and encouraging"

"Excellent networking opportunities"

"Value for money"

Knowledge Exchange

In 2005 the SSNF Knowledge Exchange was established through the E-library which allows members to share discussions, documents, information on projects, journal articles, resources and web pages. The Knowledge Exchange can be accessed on:

www.elib.scot.nhs.uk

Educational Packs

A Scottish Supplement was developed for the Hospital Education Stroke Folder. The packs and supplement were widely distributed across Scotland to all our members. The use of the packs was evaluated following this and we received very positive feedback on its use in all clinical areas providing stroke care.

"Different aspects of the pack are useful through-out the patient's journey"

"A great resource for our area"

Stroke Core Competencies

The launch of 'Stroke: Core Competencies for Healthcare Staff' for all Health Professionals in 2005 by NHS Education for Scotland was supported and welcomed by the SSNF. These competencies support a collaborative approach to education and training across boundaries.

Career Development

Since 2003 Scotland has seen the development of specialist roles within stroke nursing. These roles are diverse and have been developed in relation to local needs and national guidelines. Through the Coronary Heart Disease and Stroke Strategy (Scottish Executive, 2004) there has been an investment in service developments particularly an increase in acute stroke units. These improvements have been due largely to the input of multi-disciplinary teams, Managed Clinical Networks for Stroke and the significant contribution of Stroke Nurses.

There is a need for further research to evaluate and enhance the career development of Stroke Nurses. It is important that training and education needs are supported, as well as key Stroke Nursing roles in expert practitioner, leadership, education, service development and research.

The implementation of Stroke Consultant Nurse posts across Scotland is essential to the retention and the development of nurses with expertise in stroke.

Strategic Aims (2006-2009)

- Continue to influence national and local policy on stroke through the participation of SSNF in key committees and groups
- Continue to support the work of Managed Clinical Networks for Stroke
- Complete the 'Burning Issues in Stroke Nursing' research and act on its findings by supporting further research
- Act on the findings of the 'Benchmarking Exercise' and to pursue resource investment and the recognition of Stroke Nursing as a speciality
- Undertake and support further evaluation and audit of Stroke Nursing
- Continue to support training and education of all staff working within stroke care through the delivery of educational meetings which promote high quality and innovative practice
- Develop specific Stroke Nursing Competencies and contribute to the development of a training and competency framework
- Develop a recognised career pathway for Stroke Nursing in Scotland
- Facilitate the creation of Stroke Nurse Consultant posts, in line with service developments
- Support existing and the development of local new Stroke Nurses Forums
- Continue to produce a regular update of the work of the SSNF through the publication of a Newsletter

The Way Forward

The SSNF will continue to support the essential role of nurses by facilitating the development of their knowledge and expertise. We aim to ensure that the influence and resources of the forum are used to deliver the best evidence based practice in Stroke Nursing care in Scotland. We will continue to advise, influence and support the drive for further development of Stroke Nursing Services at both a local and national level.



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Nurses Forum

