

Veterinary nursing: career options in the 21st century

'21st-century nursing' was the focus for the nursing stream at the 10th annual University College Dublin Veterinary Hospital Conference, which was held in O'Reilly Hall, UCD, in July, writes Lorraine McDonnell



The UCD Veterinary Hospital stand at its recent conference.

The nursing stream at this year's UCD University Veterinary Hospital (UVH) conference explored the wide range of career options open to the experienced nurse. The presentations focused on specialised roles, from the pharmaceutical industry and management roles to specialist nursing positions.

The first speaker of the day was Ann Marie Byrne DipVN RVN, who currently represents veterinary nurses on the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI). Ann Marie began by giving us the '10-year highlights of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005-2015', explaining how the role of veterinary nurses has changed, both in training and career development, over the past few years. Ann Marie explained that it has come a long way from initially having to study one evening a week in Dublin to now being able to study nursing in five colleges nationwide in full-time education. The Veterinary Practice Act was discussed, as was the code of conduct, which everyone was urged to review. These policies were highlighted as they are integrated into our daily work. Ann Marie also told attendees that the process has begun to establish a veterinary nursing board, and every nurse is urged to complete the survey from the VCI as it will help to improve our nursing profession.

Following that, Aoife Joyce DipAVN (Syrge) Grad Cert VPM RVN, head nurse in UVH, brought us along the management career pathway. Aoife delivered an in-depth

personal account of both her career and her personal choices in life. Aoife explained how it has guided her to where she is today, in a management position as head nurse in UCD managing more than 30 people. She illustrated the scope of her responsibilities and the problem-solving skills she uses in a typical day. Aoife also shared her thoughts on the differences between a good manager and a bad manager. After a short tea break, Doireann Dowling RVN BA(Hons Mod Env Sci), lecturer of NFQ level 7, BSc in veterinary nursing in Dundalk IT, brought us down the career path of becoming a lecturer. She decided to bust the myths surrounding these prestigious positions with a very frank account of what lecturing entails. She gave a very honest account from her personal experience, guiding us through each step a potential nurse lecturer needs to take. She also left us with some tips for applying for a veterinary nursing lecturing position.

Following lunch, Ronan Kilcommins VN MBVNA discussed veterinary nursing in industry, where he illustrated the pathway that led him from where he started to the position he holds today, also covering his involvement in the consultation and integration processes required when Novartis Animal Health was acquired by Elanco. The last talk of the day was from Georgina Self RVN DipAVN (surgical), senior veterinary nurse of anaesthesia in UCD Veterinary Hospital. Georgina focused on the

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specialist nursing aspect. Georgina emphasised researching your chosen field properly to determine perception versus reality, noting the importance of CPD in your chosen field. She also took us through some of the options available at present. We were then introduced to a day in the life of an anaesthesia nurse, from setting-up and assisting in cases to balancing all the equipment, running her own cases, monitoring and teaching, not to mention repairs.

ROADSHOW

This year, the Irish Veterinary Nursing Association (IVNA) roadshow is aptly named 'Life begins at 7'. In a change to previous years, we are holding a day event on Saturdays focusing on the geriatric patient, from setting-up a geriatric clinic to practical sessions in the afternoon with a short talk on physiotherapy, followed by a practical session on how beneficial it can be for elderly patients.

This CVE event will take place in Dublin, Cork and Galway. Please refer to Facebook and the IVNA website for further details. Spaces are limited so please book early: IVNA members €50, non-members €70.

HUG UPDATE

The total amount raised at our congress for HUG (Homes for Unwanted Greyhounds) was €631. We wish to thank everyone who donated and purchased raffle tickets. All

proceeds went directly to HUG. If anyone wishes to donate to this fantastic charity, please visit www.ivna.ie and use the donate button.

INTRODUCING THE NEW IVNA STUDENT LIAISON OFFICER

Sarah Dunniece Bsc VN RVN is the new IVNA student liaison officer. "Having grown up loving animals, I knew I wanted to work with them," Sarah said. "After finishing school I did the veterinary assistant course in Cavan Institute and from there studied veterinary nursing in Dundalk IT, where I graduated in 2013. I have been working in small animal practice in north Dublin and am involved in small animals mainly.

"I joined the IVNA committee in May of this year and am very excited to take up the position as student liaison officer. I am eager to get as many student nurses as possible involved, in creating a better future for our profession. I also wish to encourage students to get involved in fundraising for our chosen charity, HUG. Please do not hesitate to contact me with your ideas or if you are seeking advice on student-liaison@ivna.ie."

DUBLIN WOMEN'S MINI MARATHON

This year, once again, our committee and non-committee members took part in the Dublin mini marathon, which was something of a washout this year! This year we managed to raise €2,068, which all goes straight to our charity of the year, HUG. We wish to thank everyone for sponsoring our athletes for this mini marathon. A special thank you to IVNA members who participated and helped raise such a fantastic amount.

The Evening Echo Women's Marathon is taking place on Sunday, September 27, 2015, at 1pm. Some of our committee members are participating. If you wish to join the team, just register online at www.eveningecho.ie/minimarathon and please email Sarah Dunniece at student-liaison@ivna.ie so that we can arrange a place to meet. We would love to see you there!

If you are unable to take part you can simply go to our website at www.ivna.ie and click on the donate button. All money goes straight to HUG.

Part 2 of the series on 'The importance of the decontamination life cycle', which commenced last month, will be published in a future issue of the Veterinary Ireland Journal.



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