

## EfCCNa visit.



Pic 1 EfCCNa Board

I was lucky enough to win a competition for BACCN regional committee members that enabled me to attend the European federation of Critical Care Nursing Associations (EfCCNa) meeting in Jerusalem on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> October 2011, as an observer. For those of you who do not know who EfCCNa are they are a group of European critical care federations (of which the BACCN are one) whose objectives are:-

- To represent critical care nurses and critical care nursing within Europe
- To promote co-operation and collaboration between European critical care nurses
- To advance the art and science of critical care nursing across the European countries
- To improve the recognition of critical care nursing by all European health care institutions by serving as the authoritative voice of critical care nurses across the European community / Europe
- To maintain effective co-operation between all health care professionals, institutions, agencies and charities who have a professional interest in the care of the critically ill patients
- To establish standards for education, practise and management of critical care nursing
- To harmonise the education of programmes in critical care nursing in Europe
- To provide conferences, congresses and continuing education for critical care nurses

The meeting was hosted by the Israeli Cardiology and Critical Care Nursing Society and was attended by many of the member associations. I felt very lucky to be warmly welcomed to the meeting, and active participation of observers was encouraged. Despite all of the members of EfCCNa coming from different countries the meeting is conducted in English, with all members speaking fluently.

At the beginning of the meeting all members present talked about the most prominent issues for critical care nursing within their country. It was very interesting to hear that there were lots of recurring themes. These included issues regarding the standards of education, which included post registration standards and standards of critical care nursing education. Many countries are experiencing a lack of critical care nursing staff, and continue to have nursing vacancies. One of the most influencing factors for all members present was the current financial climate, with some member associations reporting wage cuts, wage freezes and a few members reporting that they will not be paid in December.

Following the initial meeting the group splits into the working committees, where work is undertaken on a number of projects including the writing of competency documents, position statements and planning research projects. The progress made in these meetings is fed back to the group on the end of the second day.

One of the projects feedback was from the Exchange committee, this is a working group that has been set up to assist critical care nurses in visiting other European countries to see how other countries work. This programme was set up in 2006 and so far 23 nurses have taken advantage of this opportunity. The exchange often does not take a long time to arrange due to the collaborative working of the member associations. Out of these nurses that have completed an exchange all have reported that they have had their horizons broadened and most of them found the exchange very helpful. Many people chose to spend 1 to 2 weeks in 1 country, making the most of this time by visiting different areas. Many of the nurses receive funding for this from their member associations (so in the UK that would be the BACCN) by applying for sponsorship.

The meeting also included information, presented by the Croatian committee member, regarding the 8<sup>th</sup> International Congress of World Federation of Critical Care Nurses and the 5<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the Croatian Society of Anaesthesia, Reanimation, Intensive care and Transfusion in Croatia on the 12-15<sup>th</sup> April 2012. This is titled Current and future challenges of critical care nurses. This sharing of information is common within EfCCNa and many of the member associations encourage their own members to attend these international conferences.

It wasn't all work, the Israeli society had arranged a fabulous social programme that included a trip to a local market, floating in the Dead sea and a guided tour of a Kibbutz. In typical nurse fashion all of these excursions lead to discussions about work related stuff. While floating in the Dead Sea the swim barrier leads to a discussion about health and safety, the kibbutz leads to discussions about education/ educational standards and social responsibility.

After a long day of work on Saturday one of the highlights of the trip was dinner at the President of the Israeli Cardiology and Critical Care Nursing Society home. Critical care nurses came from all over Israel to meet us, along with Barbara Maclean (from the USA, who is over as a guest speaker at the Israeli Cardiology Conference). We talk about all kind of things, including how the award winning design of the Utrecht Intensive care (in Holland) could be translated to cope with the needs of shatter proof glass. The welcome we receive was very warm and there was a wonderful atmosphere. There was even some singing and dancing.

I felt privileged to be able to attend this meeting, and was inspired by many of the members of the committee. I now plan to use this inspiration to improve the delivery of education within my region, and can't wait to meet the rest of the Wessex regional committee to chat how we might be able to use some of my found information.

Much more information can be found on the EfCCNa website and there are links to a free online journal and other helpful documents.

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Pic 2 Israeli Flag



Pic 3 Relaxing