



October 2008
Issue no. 10

Quality Matters

The monthly newsletter of Hunter New England Health Clinical Governance

Inside this issue

From the Director

Feedback from the
2008 Quality
Exposition and
Scientific Program

Venous
Thromboembolism
(VTE) Guidelines
Alert

2008 Quality
Award Winners

In profile: Meredith
Caelli, Patient
Safety Officer

Clinical Unit in
Health Law and
Ethics Seminar:
"Caught in the Act 'Itself':
The Moral Psychology of
Killing and a Review of
Some Morally Relevant
Distinctions"

Safety Alerts

Editorial team:
Dr Kim Hill, A/Prof
Anne Duggan,
Ms Jeanette Upton
and Ms Tracey Currie.

From the Director...

The Third Annual HNEH Quality Exposition and Scientific Program was held in September 2008 in Taree, and our thanks go to Dr David Gleadhill, who has kindly contributed to this month's newsletter, having been our able chairman for the Day One session. Our thanks also go to Dr Peter Wakeford for his role on



Day 2, and to our speakers from across Australia, such as Professor Baggoley, Dr Tim Smythe, Dr Bill Runciman, Professor Val Robertson and Mr Kelvin Genn. The Speakers' Presentations are available on the Clinical Governance section of the HNEH intranet at http://intranet.hne.health.nsw.gov.au/cg/Quality_CPI/Awards/quality_exposition_and_scientific_program

2008 HNEH Quality Exposition and Scientific Program: Participant Feedback on Day 1

The first speaker was Professor Chris Baggoley, Chief Executive of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare on "Effecting Change in a Complex System". Chris, whose background is in Emergency Medicine, provided a fascinating, at times hilarious, insight into some of the complexities of quality in healthcare, making reference to veterinary surgery, social work and emergency care along the way! He presented both conventional thinking and new territory, and the audience was indeed inspired to "think outside the box" by his material and eloquent delivery.

Dr Tony O'Connell, A/Deputy Director General, Health System Performance, NSW Health, presented "The NSW Patient Survey – The Learnings", an overview of a state-wide patient survey; the largest of its kind. The results gave an insight into the wishes and expectations of patients, some of these unexpected and even paradoxical. Dr O'Connell drew some interesting comparisons with the 'wishes and expectations' of health care systems, and demonstrated that these two groups were not necessarily always on the same page! Dr O'Connell suggested that healthcare providers need to listen more closely to their clients, and suggested that surveys of this kind and scale should become a normal part of the health care culture in the future.

Professor Mike Hazelton, Head of the School of Nursing at the Faculty of Health, University of Newcastle, gave the final presentation of the first day "Overcoming "reality shock": outcome of a group mentorship project for new graduate nurses working in mental health services". The presentation painted a very graphic picture of the issues and difficulties facing new graduate nurses in a harsh clinical environment, and outlined the potential and real benefits of increased mentorship for this group. Much objective and subjective information was presented, and the presentation sparked great interest.

The program provided an excellent mixture of science, review, anecdote, philosophy and conjecture, and gave a fascinating and thought-provoking insight into current thinking and practice in Quality in Health Care and Clinical Governance. The material was of equal interest and relevance to busy front-line clinicians as to the drivers of quality, governance and patient safety. The busy clinician who cares about quality and safety would have found the material not only enlightening and informative, but also – strangely perhaps -encouraging and invigorating. It is an event to be highly recommended for clinicians!

Dr David Gleadhill, Emergency Physician, Deputy Chair, Southern Area Clinical Council



In profile.....

Meredith Caelli,
Patient Safety Officer

Meredith is the Upper Hunter Cluster and Singleton Health Services Patient Safety Officer covering an area from Singleton to Werris Creek in the north and Tambar Springs in the north-west and is based at Singleton and Muswellbrook. Since 1999 after returning from the U.K. Meredith has worked for our health service in various guises including as a registered nurse, some 15 years in infection control (so hand washing is very dear to her), and as a project officer with the University of NSW in epidemiology and surveillance as part of a state pilot program; more recently with the Public Health team at Wallsend campus and even more recently as the Biopreparedness Officer, planning HNEH's response to the expected influenza pandemic. Meredith studied clinical epidemiology and biostatistics at Newcastle University and hopes to complete her PhD this year. She believes that patient safety's greatest role is as a support for staff and clients and looks forward to working closely with the team in meeting the needs of our colleagues.



Meredith enjoys travel, reading and the challenge of house building!

Clinical Unit in Ethics and Health Law

Dr Charles Douglas, Lecturer in Clinical Ethics and Health Law at the University of Newcastle, and a Breast and Melanoma Surgeon will present the November CUEHL seminar. Charles will be presenting a paper entitled "Caught in the Act 'Itself': The Moral Psychology of Killing and a Review of Some Morally Relevant Distinctions". This is a discussion around one of the classic problems in ethics, that of euthanasia, but it will not be an argument for or against. Instead, Charles will be exploring some philosophical and psychological concerns around the contentious distinctions between killing and letting die, and between intending and foreseeing harm, incorporating some interesting thought experiments, and some clinical observations. The seminar will be held on Monday November 3rd, in the usual place (Royal Newcastle Centre, Conference Room 1), at the usual time (6pm for supper, seminar to begin at 6.30). All are welcome to join us, entry free, no RSVP necessary.

2008 Quality Awards

Congratulations to all of the HNE Health 2008 Quality Award entrants. A list of winners is at:

<http://intranet.hne.health.nsw.gov.au/achievementawards/winners>

Congratulations to projects nominated for the NSW Health Awards. Four of the 21 project finalists are from HNEH; The Greater Newcastle Cluster Wound Management Model Redesign Journey Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle in a Small Country Community; Building a Sustainable Psychiatry Workforce Through Education and Training and Ring o' Rosies' Mass Vaccination Clinic Exercise. The NSW Health Expo will be held on Friday 31 October 2008 in Sydney. To register click on: <http://www.eventoffice.com/nswhealthexpo>

Safety alerts and notices

Please click on the hyperlink for more information

Number	Type	Issues covered	Date of issue
SA:002/08		Safety Alert (supersedes Safety Alert SA:001/08)	13 Oct 08
SA:001/08		Safety Alert PICC lines	10 Oct 08
SA 010/08		TGA Recalls	26 Sep 08

Preventing Venous Thromboembolism (VTE) – review of recent pamphlets

Venous thromboembolism is a major cause of death in patient care and is largely preventable. Both Medical and Surgical patients can develop venous thromboembolism. High risk groups are in Orthopaedics, Trauma and major surgery as well as people who have had stroke, previous and family history of VTE, cancer, heart failure, lung disease and acute inflammatory disorders such as pneumonia. The risk increases with age and the nature of the procedure and illness. Immobility and obesity also increase risk.

A strategy has been released by NSW Health called 'Prevention of Venous Thromboembolism' as well as 'VTE prophylaxis guidelines' in medicine and surgery. These are a guide to prevention of VTE. There is an error in the charts in the use of the word contra-indications. Both a previous history of gastrointestinal bleeding and palliative care are not absolute contraindications to VTE prophylaxis. Active bleeding and terminal care are most certainly contra-indications. High falls risk and bleeding from therapeutic anticoagulation share similar risk factors. High risk of falls in itself is not a contra-indication to VTE prophylaxis. Indeed some of these people are at the highest risk of VTE.

It is requested that these pamphlets not be distributed until the printing is fixed and a tool is designed to assist clinicians in remembering to order this important component of care.