Neonatal nurse knowledge and skills set in syllabus

Working group has developed a framework to standardise practice and competency UK-wide

By Sophie Blakemore

A KNOWLEDGE and skills framework for neonatal nurses has been developed to standardise practice and clinical competency across the profession.

Matching Knowledge and Skills for Qualified in Specialty (QfS) Neonatal Nurses: A Core Syllabus for Clinical Competency details the essential elements of the role so that the content of education and training programmes across the UK is consistent. The core elements set out in the document are:

- Fluid, electrolyte, nutrition and elimination management.
- Respiratory and cardiovascular management.
- Neurological pain and stress management.
- Skin, hygiene and infection prevention management.
- Management of thermoregulation.
- Managing and supporting the family.

The syllabus was developed by a working group of senior neonatal nurses that included members of the British Association of Perinatal Medicine (BAPM), Neonatal Nurses Association and the Scottish Neonatal Nurses' Group.

Chair of the working group Sue Turrill said the syllabus would provide a consistent picture of what the QfS neonatal nurse role should look like across all geographical regions.

'The aim is to standardise knowledge and skills across the UK so that there are no differences in the specialist education provided for nurses between different neonatal units,' said Ms Turrill lecturer in neonatal care at the University of Leeds and nursing and midwifery representative at BAPM.

'The syllabus will add value to the learning provided by universities through courses and programmes, giving confidence to nurses and employers about skill levels. Changes in education and NHS services put the emphasis on quality and this syllabus will enable the quality of education for neonatal nurses working at QfS level to be measured against a standard framework.'

Ms Turrill added that the syllabus is relevant to QfS neonatal nurses, mentors who monitor their practice, universities, neonatal networks and NHS trusts who liaise on course content, and education commissioners.

The RCN has endorsed the syllabus as complementing its own guidance on neonatal nurse competencies.

Find out more
The syllabus is available on the RCN website at http://tiny.cc/jyutuf
The RCN guidance can be downloaded at http://tiny.cc/pwmufw

Swimming manifesto calls for every child to have lessons

AS OLYMPICS fever takes over and sport is high on the UK’s agenda ministers are being urged to prioritise swimming for primary school children.

A report by the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) and Kellogg’s revealed that one in three primary school leavers cannot swim 25m – the required distance set by government. In addition, just over two thirds have never been offered lessons, despite this being a statutory element of the national curriculum.

The organisations have developed a six-point manifesto calling for schools to prioritise swimming lessons so every child has the chance to learn to swim, regardless of socioeconomic and ethnic background:

- Every child learning to swim in primary school.
- Improve training for primary school teachers
- Ofsted monitoring of school swimming
- Swimming as a school budget priority
- Support at secondary schools
- Help keep school pools open

Chief executive of the ASA David Sparkes said swimming helps to encourage children towards a healthy and active lifestyle.

'It is also the only subject on the national curriculum that can save your life,' he added.

Young people have alarmingly high levels of STIs, report reveals

DIAGNOSES OF sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among heterosexual teenagers and young adults remained the highest in England in 2011, Health Protection Agency (HPA) figures show.

The annual HPA report revealed 57 per cent of all new gonorrhoea diagnoses, 56 per cent of all genital warts diagnoses and 43 per cent of new genital herpes diagnoses were highest among the 15-24 year age group. Overall, STI diagnoses rates rose by 2 per cent with nearly 427,000 new cases, reversing the small decline observed the previous year.

Head of STI surveillance at the HPA Gwenda Hughes said the data were a matter of concern. 'We anticipated some increase due to improvements in testing, but not on this scale.'