

REFLECTIONS ON ORNAC IN NEWFOUNDLAND

Submitted by Heather Lifeso

Besides the educational opportunities to be had at the lectures, just being in Newfoundland was an education! I may have actually learned a lot about our youngest province way back in school when we were taking Canadian History, but the details were kind of fuzzy! Although I had been to the Maritimes a couple of times, I had never been to Newfoundland before, but I will definitely be returning at some stage. I feel some inkling of the passion and pride that is felt by the native Newfoundlanders for their home province. At times, places felt like I was in Ireland, or England, or Alaska, often within a half-hour drive of each other! I did not encounter an unkind person and that sense of welcoming and willingness to accommodate was indicative of the entire conference.

The keynote address by Rex Murphy was a fitting beginning to the conference. Being a native son, he brought humour, pathos, and delightful insight into the history of his province, along with some phrasing that made it sound as if he had never left Newfoundland. You can take the boy out of the province...

It's always a challenge when the concurrent sessions are running to decide which ones to go to. Everyone has their own interests, whether it's because of what services you're in, where you'd like to be, or just something you haven't run across before that peaks your interest. Invariably, the ones that you REALLY want to go to are on at the same time. Some of the Call for Papers Presentations could have been separate sessions on their own. Living in a multi-cultural city that is also a gateway city to Mexico and South America, I found the paper presentation on Cocaine Toxicity to be very interesting and informative.

The material presented in the Laser Safety presentation and the Smoke Exposure session makes nurses launch a class action suit in the future against their employers and Compensation for knowing the risks associated with surgical smoke and failing to provide protection for their employees.

The presentations on Inventory Management and Automated Consignment made me positively salivate! Of course, like most new technology, the up-front costs are rather onerous, but they showed how the savings over a 5 year period was huge. There were major cost savings in the number of cumulative hours that were returned to direct nursing care, a 21% decrease in implant errors, and huge savings in the time spent gathering, processing and case-costing.

In a related session, Changes in Reprocessing (CSA Standards) was very interesting! They talked about an accreditation course for anyone doing reprocessing and flash sterilization is morphing into a very hot topic (pun intended!) for ORs. Not having sufficient inventory is no excuse for having to flash items. According to them, there should not be flash sterilizers in the theatres, nor in cores where there are sterile sets and supplies as the humidity levels differ, thereby compromising sterility. They should not be in any traffic areas. So, they are meant to be in

their own little rooms, with proper air cycles and venting. Naturally, everyone in the room asked their neighbour if they had an OR like that, and no one did! This is the direction that the not too distant standards are moving toward. Hospitals in new or reno planning stages should be able to integrate the designs required for these standards, but the scope of change for existing hospitals is staggering.

As someone whose parents donated whatever organs were of use and whose husband is a living kidney donor, I found the session on Organ and Tissue Donation very timely. I have also been employed over the years at a few hospitals that participate in the program. The merging of the Canadian Council for Donation and Transplantation with the Canadian Blood Services in 2008 has expanded the national system substantially. The planned changes will greatly improve and streamline the national registry.

As always, the networking and casual conversations are very informative and educational in their own right! It's amazing what you can find out after people have had some great fish and chips, been screeched in, and had a few drinks on a pub crawl! All in all, it was a great conference and Newfoundland is fabulous! Thanks to all who made it so.

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