

Irish Veterinary Nursing Association Congress 2017

The eighth annual Irish Veterinary Nursing Association Congress was held on Saturday and Sunday, May 27-28, in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Galway. This year's Congress was sponsored by Royal Canin, Allianz and Bayer, and saw 200 delegates attend both days' practical sessions, writes Lorraine McDonnell RVN, vice-chairperson, Irish Veterinary Nursing Association

The two-day Irish Veterinary Nursing Association (IVNA) Congress was suitable for both the newly-qualified and more senior veterinary nurse.

Saturday started with Kenichiro Yagi MSRIT VTS (ECC SAM) speaking on the topic of 'Shock has two faces'. To know shock, we must understand the process involved in the body and how it works, he explained. Kenichiro provided a comprehensive look into key aspects of shock, such as hypoxaemic shock, oxygen in energy production, tissue perfusion, monitoring and therapy, along with oxygen-carrying capacity.

Hilary Orpet MSc VetED BSc Dip AVN (surgical) Cert ED FHEA DipCABT RVN, senior lecturer in veterinary nursing, then looked at 'Evidence-based veterinary nursing'. In today's practice, nursing is based on tradition and moves at a fast pace. It is essential for veterinary nursing to move forward and embrace the concept of lifelong learning, she said. 'Hilary went through the five A's of evidence-based practice: ask, acquire, appraise, apply and assess; and gave advice to help nurses who would like to be published. Louise O'Dwyer MBABSc (hons) VTS (anaesthesia/analgesia and ECC) DipAVN (medical/surgical) RVN gave a lecture on 'Nutrition in trauma', which highlighted that nutrition is vital for the body to repair, and that critically-ill patients will not have sufficient voluntary food intake to meet even minimal nutritional needs. Louise reviewed resting energy requirements (RER) and calculations. She also covered refeeding syndromes, various feeding tubes, complications, tube removals, gastrostomy and jejunostomy tubes.

INTERNATIONAL VETERINARY NURSE AND TECHNICIANS ASSOCIATION MEETING

This year the IVNA Congress held the meeting of the International Veterinary Nurses and Technicians Association (IVNTA), giving a unique opportunity to hold a discussion panel, hosted by Ginny Thomas. The panel included Kenichiro Yagi representing the US, Hilary Orpet from the UK, Ginny Thomas representing New Zealand and Melanie O'Donoghue from Ireland. The panel started by giving an overview of the nursing profession in each country. The US system is complex as each State has different criteria and educational requirements to become a licensed veterinary technician. Hilary gave a review of the UK nursing programme and qualifications required.



Lisa Joyce, chairperson, IVNA; Aibhe Lawlor RVN, Veterinary Nurse of the Year; and Marguerite Treacy, Royal Canin.

Ginny, who worked for a number of years in New Zealand (NZ) as a veterinary nurse, told us that nursing is still quite a young profession in NZ, set up in the 1970s, with a three-tier system, and unregulated. Veterinary nursing, as a profession, is currently under review, in order to standardise it. Qualifications from other countries will allow nurses to work in New Zealand. Melanie discussed the nursing profession currently in Ireland, highlighting the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, mandatory premises accreditation, and said that having a nurse representative on the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI) was a step forward for the nursing profession. The panel also discussed specialisation within the various countries.

THE NEW IVNA COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

- Chairperson – Lisa Joyce;
- Vice-chairperson/secretary – Lorraine McDonnell;
- Treasurer – Eilis Nichol;
- PRO – Corina Fitzsimons; and
- Committee member – Ciara O'Reilly.

OUTGOING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

- Caroline O'Regan;
- Mairead Deacy; and
- Jacinta Codd.

We would like to thank members for all their hard work over the past few years. If you would like to become a committee member, please contact secretary@ivna.ie



Lisa Joyce, chairperson, IVNA; Aisling Holmes, Student Veterinary Nurse of the Year; and Joe Campbell, Allianz.

The afternoon session continued with the second of Louise O'Dwyer's talks, on 'Acute renal issue' (acute kidney injury [AKI]) with a focus on nursing management of AKI. She reviewed the kidney physiology, focusing on numerous causal conditions and events. She covered the most common causes of pre-renal, intrinsic-renal and post-renal problems.

It is very important to follow the steps in treating these patients, including history taking, clinical examination, lab evaluation, imaging, biopsy, catheter placement, correct fluid balances, electrolytes, management of anuria/oliguria, dialysis, supportive care and nutritional support.

Paul Aldridge BVSc Cert SAS MRCVS gave a talk on 'Caesarean section – a stress-free approach'. It commenced with a reminder of what is considered normal parturition, followed by criteria for diagnosing dystocia. Where Caesarean section is indicated, we reviewed the most important stages including preparation for puppies, surgical procedure and resuscitation of puppies. It is very important to be aware of complications. We need to be able to recognise any changes in our patients post-Caesarean section, particularly neonates.

Kieran Corry MVB spoke about 'Treatment of Irish wildlife'. Kieran explained what veterinarians' obligations are, both ethically and legally. In relation to wildlife, history taking is very important, as is the clinical exam. Kieran also gave us great insight into best techniques in restraining different types of wildlife. We covered common conditions in swans, otters, badgers, foxes, etc., along with fracture management. Kieran showed us his preferred anaesthesia, which covered most of the wildlife species. And, he reminded us that when hospitalising wildlife patients, we must consider their environment and treatment plans. He concluded by looking at some case studies.

SUNDAY PRACTICALS

On Sunday, following feedback from the past year, we ran three concurrent practical sessions. Louise O'Dwyer's



Lisa Joyce, chairperson, IVNA; Jules Guerin, Support Staff of the Year; and Melanie O'Donoghue, Bayer.

practical session, focused on 'Nursing techniques for critical patients' after a presentation on intravenous access, catheter size, vein selection, central venous catheterisation, nasal oxygen catheter, feeding tubes and urinary catheters. With numerous models set up and equipment at hand, there was an opportunity to practise the different techniques that Louise went through.

Paul Aldridge's practical session was on 'Management and closure of wounds'. Paul's presentation focused on wound classifications, infection rates, closure options, management of traumatic wounds and appropriate suture materials. He accompanied the suture practical with videos of different sutures used in practice. We practised different suturing techniques at our own pace. Paul concluded by taking us through some wound cases he had treated. Hilary Orpet's interactive practical session, 'Patient care plan', divided delegates into groups of four. It started with admitting the patient, and progressed to forming a nursing plan for the hospitalised patient. Life stages are important and a major factor in hospitalisation of a patient. We also focused on nursing diagnosis, implementing care and nursing plan evaluation.

AWARDS AND BBQ

In a departure from the formal dinner of recent years, the annual nursing awards was a BBQ on the Saturday night. The awards ceremony is an opportunity to acknowledge the contribution made by individuals within the veterinary profession. Royal Canin sponsored the Veterinary Nurse of the Year award and Marguerite Treacy presented Ailbhe Lawlor RVN with her award and a €500 hotel voucher. Our Student Veterinary Nurse of the Year was sponsored by Allianz. Joe Campbell presented Aisling Holmes with her award, along with a €250 hotel voucher. Our third award of the evening, sponsored by Bayer, is Support Staff of the Year, and Melanie O'Donoghue presented Julie Guerin with her award and a €250 hotel voucher. Congratulations to all winners.