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for neonatal and paediatric
healthcare professionals

Neonatal globalisation – a celebration

Marshall McLuhan first suggested a couple of decades ago that we were all now living in a global village. Since then world events have proved this to be so, as today in small villages in some of the remoter parts of the world, examples of modern technology can be found.

There was evidence of the development of globalisation in neonatal care at the 6th International Neonatal Conference held in Delhi in September 2007.

Although this was the 6th International Neonatal Nurses Conference in many ways it was also a first for several achievements:

- n To be held in Asia
- n Supported by UNICEF
- n Attended by nurses, doctors and other therapists, often as a unit team with many more countries being represented than at previous international meetings.

All these factors demonstrated that the world of the neonatal healthcare professional is truly a global one. Obviously there are differences in culture, language and goals but in our highly westernised part of the world it is so easy to miss out on those aspects of care that some technocrats dismiss as being basic, but which we are ignoring at our peril e.g. those issues around infection control, home care of the small infant and of the whole raft of nutritional needs. How illuminating also to hear about 'the dark side of care' as discussed by Janet Green (Australia) who presented a paper on the use of extremely premature infants as research subjects, highlighting that the overzealous pursuit of scientific knowledge can lead to the total disregard of the humanity of the infant.

But the really exciting event of this conference for me was the formal announcement of the establishment of 'The Council of International Neonatal Nurses' (COINN) the only international organisation that represents the global community of neonatal nurses and their organisational partners. Carol Kenner President of COINN has achieved this unity with the affiliation of national neonatal nurses organisations (including the Neonatal Nurses Association (UK) and the Scottish Neonatal Nurses Group) and by the establishment of regional networks of neonatal nurses and midwives in many parts of the world. This global development will help neonatal nurses



to work towards reducing infant mortality and in meeting United Nations Millennium Development Goals worldwide.

All work and no play makes for a dull existence and so incorporated into the conference programme were some social events and visits. Amongst my memories of this conference will be beves of the attendees wearing colourful saris and other national dress, spread across the conference hotel lawns, where we were able to enjoy some exotic and tasty food on a beautiful balmy Indian evening in Delhi. Another vivid memory too will be of the number of individuals who were exchanging names and addresses for future contact – some nurses from the same country were meeting up for the first time. This was both national and global networking for real.

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Reference

1. McLuhan M. The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man. The University of Toronto Press. 1962.

WATCH THIS SPACE

The 7th International Neonatal Nurses Conference in 2010 is being held in Durban, South Africa. Further details will be published in *Infant* as they become available. Start planning NOW.... It will be an exciting occasion.