

International Skin Care Nursing Group — ISNG

By: Corinne Scicluna

The International Skin Care Nursing Group (ISNG) was initiated in 1998 by a group of nurses in Oxford, England who had concerns about skin care provision globally. Their view, that there was a need for consensus on issues related to nursing people with compromised skin function, has been ratified in a number of different quarters. The group is primarily about networking and influencing policy, practice, research and education. Since 1998 the group has been involved in a number of activities aimed at attracting nurses from different parts of the world to communicate with one another.

At the beginning of last year, I was approached by this group to become a member of their advisory committee. It was a great challenge for me to accept this offer because I felt I did not have the necessary experience required. However, today I am glad I did. This opportunity has provided me with a global understanding of nursing and also of skin care issues.

The key areas of work has been established as follows:

- ☛ The provision of education
- ☛ Facilitation of nursing networks
- ☛ Working on skin care projects
- ☛ Promoting and developing a political function of the group

The provision of Education

One of ISNG's aims is to increase the level of knowledge on Skin Care. There are only a few courses in Dermatology and Skin Care that are available to nurses and other health care professionals. Therefore, ISNG is trying to establish a database on available courses on this subject to provide interested nurses with relevant information on how they could further their knowledge and experience. The group is also linked with the Commonwealth Health Secretariat who is in the process of harmonizing nursing programmes in Commonwealth Africa. A conference is planned to be held next November in Moshi, Tanzania.

Facilitation of Nursing Networks

ISNG is also responsible for a network facility. The network continues to grow and despite technical hitches the database is now functioning. Several links have already been made with our group. Now we have formal links with the Dermatology Nursing Association, the East, Central and Southern African College of Nursing and the International Council of Nursing. The group's research nurse is also planning an educational trip to Malta. A seminar is hoped to be held in the near future on skin care. This will provide an opportunity for all nurses to become more aware of their clients' skin care needs.

A workshop has been organized at the World Congress of Dermatology in Paris – this is entitled 'The role of the Dermatology Nurse'. I will hopefully be presenting a paper in this conference. Again this is an innovative event since nurses and doctors will be listening and learning from one another in a conference that was originally set up for doctors and dermatologists.

Working on skin care projects

ISNG is now part of a Global Alliance of governmental and non-governmental organizations committed to eliminating Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) by the year 2020. The work on the LF project has moved significantly in Moshi, Tanzania.

LF is a disease that affects 120 million people in 80 countries with around 1 billion people being at risk of contracting the disease. The International Task Force for Disease Elimination has identified LF as one of the 6 infectious diseases that is possible to eliminate. The disease is transmitted by mosquitoes and is only found in humans – animals are unaffected. The disease can be prevented from being transmitted by giving a drug yearly over 4-6 years which kills the microfilarae thus preventing them from being spread to other humans by mosquito. Although the drug can effectively kill the microfilarae they do not reduce the associated swelling which affects 10% of the population in endemic areas. The swelling is caused by recurrent inflammatory

responses caused by bacteria and fungi. It has been shown that meticulous skin hygiene, elevation and exercises can have a large beneficial effect on reducing swelling. This morbidity control improves the immediate quality of life for those with LF.

It is in this area of skin hygiene and patient education that the ISNG has become involved. The group will be offering advice about a teaching package for effective skin hygiene measures and will be at the forefront of research into areas associated with this.


Political function of the group

The group continues to try and raise the profile of ISNG and it's work at international level. The LF is a high profile public health project and is an

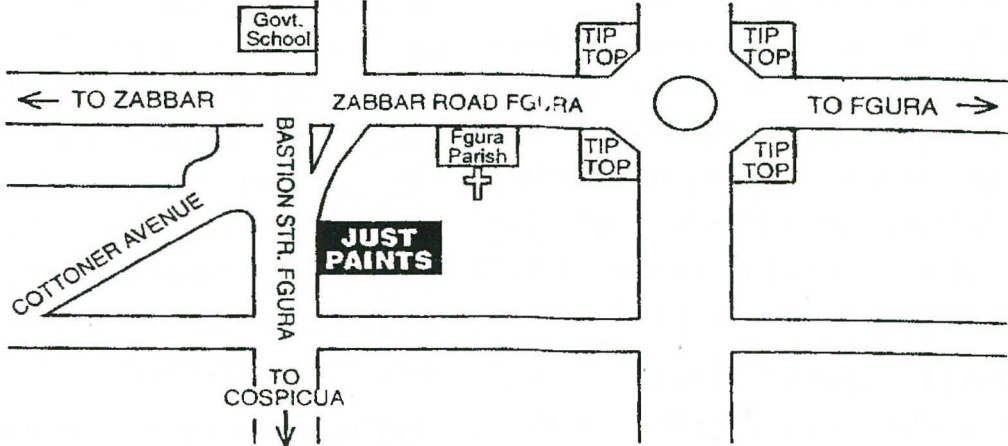
excellent example of how the ISNG can impact on policy and practice at the highest level. Many of the lessons learnt from this project about basic skin care and community involvement will be transferable to other projects in the future.

The group also aims to submit papers in journals and encourage group members to participate in conferences both in general nursing and in Dermatology. Till now we have published a paper in the International Nursing Review, the Journal of the Royal Society for the promotion of Health and the British Journal of Dermatology Nursing.

If you are interested in this work and/or would like to receive more information please contact Corinne Scicluna at: Dermatology Department, Sir Paul Boffa Hospital, Floriana or email on; corpev@yahoo.com



THE COMPLETE PAINT CENTRE



Opening Hours: Mon-Fri 8.00 - 1.00 / 4.00 - 7.00
Saturday 8.00 - 1.00

Bastion Street, Fgura • Tel: 822668