

## PCRS-UK Affiliated Local Nurse Groups form a lifeline for practice nurses in Oxfordshire



**Dr Robin** PCRS-UK Affiliated Group Lead, Oxfordshire

It is cold and we are all being encouraged to dig deep and look out for all those vulnerable respiratory patients so as to avoid any more admissions.

The responsibility for people's health can be a daunting one and the seemingly endless number of targets and achievements we are exhorted to reach can produce a degree of "snow blindness".

Here in Oxfordshire CCG we have found that the local nurse groups, which now run in all the localities and are affiliated to PCRS-UK, have provided a lifeline for the hard pressed practice nurse with an interest in respiratory illness. Meeting regularly, 3-4 times a year, they provide a welcome opportunity for nurses to talk with colleagues and discover that they are not the only one who struggles with preschool wheeze or end stage breathlessness in COPD. It can be a lonely job in the consulting room but the knowledge that we all face similar challenges can be very reassuring.

Keeping up to date can be really hard, and the last thing you want to do at the end of an 11 hour day when it is dark and cold, is go out again; but educational events are as much entertaining as they are informative. The camaraderie also contributes to the educational content, with each person chipping in with their own experience and how they managed a situation. There are many of ways of doing some parts of our jobs, and sometimes no evidence to provide guidance. So having lots of tried and tested examples can really help; something that only comes from getting together with

your fellow practice nurses. It's a hard job but it is massively rewarding and made all the better by some mutual support.

We have an informal mentoring scheme which has been helpful, and has meant, for example, that Association for Respiratory Technology & Physiology trained nurses can either teach spirometry, or help interpret results or symptoms, when asked by fellow nursing staff. This collaboration helps those asking, and enables them to learn as well as empowering those who have the skills and wish to use them. In short we all win.

Our network of networks also means that when we were organising a couple of study days we were able quickly and efficiently to contact the majority of the local respiratory nurses to tell them when it was and what was on. We have also had the opportunity to ask the nurse groups what they wanted to learn about this year, how far people were prepared to travel, and when during the day would be convenient. We then produce a table of what is on, when and where it is to be held, which encourages nurses from one group to meet colleagues in other groups and the learning and bonding continues to build.

If you have a group, do keep going, it is worth it, IN SPADES...

..and If you don't have a group, do consider setting one up. If you want any help or some enthusiastic support, please ask, we have enthusiasm and advice to spare, even in these cold and dark winter times.

**PCRS-UK is here to help you deliver excellence locally!**



If you are keen to follow any of the examples highlighted in this section or have other ideas about how you want to improve care locally, but are not sure what to do as the next step, then please contact [info@pcrs-uk](mailto:info@pcrs-uk) or call **Tel: +44 (0)1675 477600**. We will put you in touch with someone who can help you .