



8th Congress of the European Society of Contraception
"A holistic approach to sexual health: is it needed, appropriate and possible"
23-26 June 2004
Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

Report from Meet the Expert session:
" Teamworking in sexual health (skill mix) "
Thursday 24 June 2004, 13:00-14:00

Experts: Ms. Kathy French (UK) & Ms. Yvonne Hazeveld (The Netherlands)

This session was jointly hosted by myself and a colleague from Amsterdam, the session was oversubscribed with 30 delegates attending on the first day.

Advantages

The session gave the delegates an opportunity to share ideas and problems within their services. Many of the problems in the UK were around staff shortages, training for nurses in Sexual health and the demand of the services over the past few years.

We asked the delegates to highlight the key issues and some offered solutions which worked for them. Some of the issues were similar for the UK and Holland. Nurses in Holland are not especially trained in the field of sexual health in advance of taking up posts but have experience in other related areas. Staff shortages were a real problem also in the UK.

Kathy explained the current professional groups which nurses belong to in the UK and described the recent Distance Learning Skills Course published by the Royal College of Nursing which was funded by the Department of Health /Department of Education and Skills. This programme is available to nurses, health visitors and midwives who have sexual health as part of their remit but who are unable to access courses. Currently 1,500 have registered their intention to do the course and the first course started in June this year. Nurses study the programme in their own time and attend two assessment days, one mid course and one at the end. They gain 30 credits at Level 2 or 3 at Greenwich University London by completing two pieces of written work of 1500 words each on a related topic.

Disadvantages

In some ways the group needed to discuss their issues and this became the focus of the session. However this was important for them. The room was small for the numbers attending.

Solutions

It might be good to do this again but have a doctor and nurse present the session. Gaining an insight into how others solved their problems was useful for all of us.

In conclusion

The session provided an opportunity to share ideas and network and the feeling from our colleagues in Holland was that the UK nurses are more organised in networking and appear to be more involved nationally within their groups.

Kathy French, 13/9/2004