

Training for nurses working in SRH

I read the article¹ by Mehigan and Burnett in the July 2012 issue of this Journal about training for nurses working in the field of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) with interest.

This is certainly a challenge faced by many, and one which we are trying to work on in Solihull at the moment. We have a significant number of nurses who are shining stars in the world of SRH and are waiting for funding to attend a university-based course that is currently being run in Coventry. We have an excellent relationship with our commissioner here and luckily have managed to secure two or three places this year, which is great news! However, some general practitioners are asking for a payment to backfill the nurse's post whilst they are out of the practice.

All of our practice nurses have access to Sexual Health in Practice (SHIP) Training (<http://www.ship.bham.nhs.uk/>), which provides an excellent foundation of knowledge at entry level, with the course at Coventry being the next level.

I agree and support the authors' thinking for nurses to have access to the Diploma of the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare (DFSRH) with equal accreditation. This would certainly overcome the need to invest large amounts of money into a university-based course and would give nurses an even footing within our field. It also provides an established and structured programme of learning that has certainly been tried and tested.

Over the coming months we will be making some decisions around the type of training offered to our nurses, both within our contraception and sexual health (CASH) and genitourinary medicine (GUM) services as well as within primary care. Taking on board the authors' comments about "wobbly wheels" has really helped to clarify where we'll be heading with our discussions.

Journal readers will probably gather that training and development within the field is close to my heart as I am sure it is to Mehigan and Burnett. Consequently, I would be willing to offer my assistance and support to the worthy cause of improving training and accreditation for nurses working within SRH.

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Reference

- 1 **Mehigan S**, Burnett J. An innovative training for nurses in sexual and reproductive health. *J Fam Plann Reprod Health Care* 2012;**38**:194–195.