

How Far Forward Have We Come

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1. Short Communication

Professional evidence has told us that children are different. History has this theory well documented from Florence Nightingale to Sir Ian Kennedy in 2001. The progress for PACU has been slow but since centralisation of Children's Services, and the changed in nurse training in the UK, there has been a gradual appreciation that 'children are different'. Between 2013 and 2018 there have been ground breaking changes to guidelines and recommendations from professional organisations.

However, for those who don't know, they don't know. There is still a difficult relationship between adult services and children's Services. Adult trained nurses being promoted to senior management posts in children's services reminds us of how historically, adult nurses were promoted to senior posts over children's nurses. Directives on the provision for a safe service advises for strong leadership and management in nursing. In promoting this there must also be the right people in the right place with the right skills.

Why is history important? Knowing our history allows us to reflect, to understand how we arrived in the present day and why change is important, so we move forward in the right direction with the right perspectives and the right skills. The most destructive influence is inexperience and knowledge, but what you don't know, you don't know.

The acknowledgement of children's service in the shared PACU areas still fall short. Many shared PACU's don't have children's nurses on their staff and rely on awareness training sessions and study days to gain knowledge which will be applied to clinical practise. Shared PACU are reluctant to finance staff to degree level education in the care of children specifically in the recovery room as it is seen as not financially viable for the ratio of paediatric patients. Shared units also still are reluctant to employ children's nurse to their units as there is a perception that a children's nurse cannot care for an adult patient.

The struggle for Children's services especially in PACU continues with individuals. How far forward have we come? Considerable, historically, but unnecessary barriers remain. Would a Paediatric organisation specifically for the PACU, highlight the plight of children's nurses and particularly, children's services in adult PACU.

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