

Scoping Out Canadian Gastroenterology Nurses

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Nancy Campbell is the President of the Canadian Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates (CSGNA) for the term 2004 to 2006. She currently works in Ottawa, Ontario, at the Montfort Hospital Gastroenterology (GI) Unit and Operating Room.

PA: Can you introduce our readers to the CSGNA?

NC: The CSGNA is the largest GI nurses group in Canada, boasting a membership of approximately 650 members. The association started in 1984 and was strictly for the province of Ontario. In 1986, it expanded to a national level and became a regional society of the American Society of Gastroenterology Assistants. In 1991, the CSGNA became an independent organization. The organization is committed to excellence in client care while enhancing the educational and professional growth of the membership within the resources available.

PA: Can you describe some of the educational initiatives of the CSGNA?

NC: The CSGNA has developed position statements and guidelines to assist Canadian GI nurses in their practice. We have position statements regarding registered nurses (RNs) performing flexible sigmoidoscopies, role of the licensed practical nurse/registered practical nurse in endoscopy, role delineation of the advanced practice nurse in GI, the role of the RN related to scope advancement, the responsibilities of the RN related to conscious sedation, the role of the RN in percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy tube placement and staffing for therapeutic endoscopy procedures. Our guidelines include infection control in the endoscopy setting, use of reusable medical devices in endoscopy settings, care of the patient receiving conscious sedation, documentation in the endoscopy setting, preventing allergic reactions to natural rubber latex and the patient having a bronchoscopy.

In addition to a 12 member national executive comprised of Canadian GI nurses, there are 18 chapters across Canada that each offer a minimum of four educational hours per year. A national conference is held yearly, alternating in venues from west to central to eastern Canada. This year, our 22nd national conference is being held in Regina, Saskatchewan on September 15th and 16th. Our Web site at www.csgna.com is maintained to keep our members informed. Three times a year, we publish a newsletter entitled *The Guiding Light*. It is full of articles (including research findings), executive reports and, yes, even recipes! *The Guiding Light* is our main communication tool with members throughout the year.



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Another wonderful tool offered by the CSGNA is an orientation package. This is a concise guide on what to include when offering a GI orientation to a new employee. Arguably, orientation varies among units, depending on what procedures

are performed as well as the background experience of the nurse being oriented. We offer 12 national scholarships per year to enable members to attend our national conference. This year we are offering a new member scholarship for the first time.

PA: What is the current situation with certification?

NC: In 2004, GI nursing was recognized as a specialty area by the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA). The CSGNA in collaboration with the CNA developed a GI certification examination that is offered annually. The examination itself was written by nurses working in the specialty. RNs who are Canadian certified may use the initial's CGN(C), meaning Certified Gastroenterology Nurse Canadian, after their names. There are presently 147 certified GI nurses in Canada. The certification examination is based on five competencies relating to GI. They are anatomy and physiology, pharmacology, diagnostic tests and therapeutic procedures, care of the GI patient and

performance assurance.

The competencies, examination development and maintenance are overseen by the CNA. This point is significant because it ensures a national standard with relation to credentialing. Therefore, certification is envisioned to be an excellent tool to be used when hiring a nurse to work in a GI setting. If a nurse applies for employment and is GI certified, that indicates to the employer that he or she has attained a level of competence in GI.

This past September, the CSGNA broadened its horizons by working with an international nurses group, The Society Of International Gastroenterological Nurses And Endoscopy Associates, to present the nurses program at the World Congress Of Gastroenterology, held in Montreal, Quebec. There were over 400 nurses from all over the world registered for the nurses program!

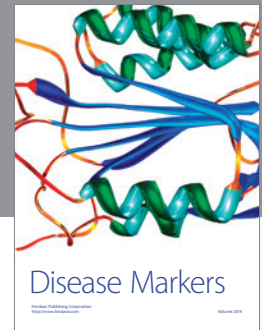
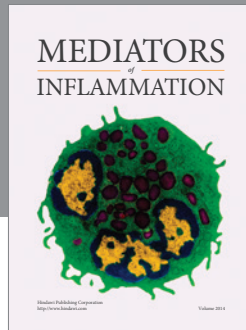
PA: What are the challenges for the future?

NC: All Canadian GI nurses are well aware of the wait time dilemma. We want to do our part to help with this issue and are hoping that we will be included in the solution. As units grow and become busier and more complicated procedures are undertaken, the nursing role will also evolve and change. GI nurses are ready for this challenge, as we always have been.

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