



Renal Society of Australasia

## **2019 RSA Annual Conference Funding – Recipients Report**

**Prepared by Glenda Rayment**

I chose to attend the 2019 RSA annual conference in Auckland for an opportunity to update my knowledge and skills in renal nursing and also to network with colleagues around Australia and New Zealand. The conference also gave me the opportunity to hear the innovative work of the keynote speakers and fellow renal nurses.

The first important lesson learned from the conference was to explore my communication skills with patients and to identify any bias I may have, whether known or unknown. Nigel Latta presented an enlightening session on communication and the need to 'stop and think' before responding to challenging communication events. Through his honesty and humour, I was able to identify current skills I use and learn new skills to improve my communication. Mia Carroll also challenged me with my communication with colleagues and I now will endeavour to no longer use the terms 'frequent flyers' or 'non adherent' when discussing patients. My focus will be on patient centred care exploring why patients are not receiving the best healthcare possible and eliminating any bias I may have. Cat Pascoe also challenged me to explore my bias during her presentation on 'fat' attitudes with healthcare workers and how 'fat' people are discriminated against in the currently healthcare system. Both Mia and Cat urged attendees to undertake the Harvard Implicit Attitudes test to identify our bias and while I have not done so at present, it will be on my 'to do' list and one that I will share with my colleagues and encourage them to undertake.

The second lesson learned from the conference was how alike the population cohort I work with here in Sydney is similar to the population cohort in New Zealand, especially the Pacific population. Rachel Walker's presentation on the kidney houses was inspiring and something that could be implemented in the renal service in which I am currently employed, subject to governance. The house provides for a home dialysis environment for people who do not have suitable housing for home haemodialysis. The improved health experienced by the patients due to the empowerment received to take control of their own dialysis treatment is commendable to Middlemore renal service. I have already discussed the use of the kidney house with my manager as a strategy to provide an opportunity for those patients who do not have suitable housing to receive the benefits of home HD.

The third lesson learned from the conference was the use of asetic acid (vinegar) for use in PD exit sites for both prevention and treatment of pseudomonas infection. Royal Prince Alfred presented a paper on the successful use of asetic acid to treat pseudomonas infections at the PD catheter site and Princess Alexandra hospital in Brisbane presented another paper using asetic acid as a prevention for exit site infection. Both presentations on this novel use of asetic acid is something that could be used in the unit in which I currently work

The main benefit of attending the RSA conference was to attend the presentations and see the new and novel practices across Australia and New Zealand that could be incorporated into clinical practice in my workplace. The networking with colleagues also proved to be informative and motivational.

I would recommend attending the RSA conference for any renal nurse working in the field. It not only informs but stimulates and motivates your practice. It also encourages you to undertake research to improve the care provided to our patients with end stage renal disease.