Attending a nursing conference provides me a wonderful opportunity for my professional growth. I found RSA Annual Conference very educational as most of the best renal nurses and nursing leaders usually presents their latest findings in nursing practice. Learning from them and from what other renal unit practices will prevent us re-inventing the wheels, most of the time we adapt and change the way we think will work with our unit settings. For this year, 2019 RSA Annual Conference in Auckland I was fortunate that 4 out of 5 abstracts I have submitted, were accepted for oral and poster presentations.

The annual conference is also the best time for networking opportunities, the best opportunity to meet and learn experience from my renal colleagues. As renal nurses we have so much experience to share with others.

Who doesn’t enjoy the exhibit hall? These allows me to see, touch and learn the latest products and gadgets in the renal market. Most of the medical representative from each stall are always eager to tell us about their new products.

One of the presentations that interested me was the “Bring on the Patient Revolution” by Mia Carroll. She talked about our regular patients and the way we call or label them without understanding why their compliance in their treatment is very poor. We often forget that these patients have family to look after as well as themselves. Therefore, their priorities are sometimes different from what we expect from them. Since I came back to work after the conference, my prospective was change every time I encounter patient like “Hone” – the patient that was described as an example in Mia’s presentation. I learnt to listen more rather than questioning them about their compliance in their treatment. Mia’s closing remark “go to work every day with the perspective of a patient” does help me understand my patients and their feelings.

The other topic that interested me was “Change is good...unless you are a werewolf. Trials and tribulations from the dark side of paediatric nephrology” presented by Chanel Prestidge, again it is about non-adherence and understanding young transitioning patients from paediatric to adult care. We should individualise our approach to them, they need to learn to trust us by spending time to figure out what is going on with them.

The topic of social media and transplantation by Ian Dittmer is a very timely topic. Today’s generation are mostly hooked on social media and if you need attention for something, you’ll definitely get it when you advertise it. Ian was able to catch all the conference participants attention with the live voting which was used to capture our opinion during his talk. Live donations are good but most patients, both donor and recipient should also be aware of short term and long-term disadvantages of it. Not all organ donations are successful, future donors and recipient should be informed of possible complications.
My attendance at this year conference helped me understand our renal patients more than before, their everyday struggles and reasons why they are unable to be compliant the way we want them to be. Sometimes we questioned them of their decisions when they failed to attend appointments, missed their dialysis session and medications without finding the reason behind them. Most of the time we just want them to listen to what we are telling them, but we never take time to listen what they want to tell us.

I do recommend RSA Annual Conference to my colleagues because I believed attending this conference is the best chance to learn from great renal nurses and will be beneficial in advancing their career in renal nursing.