

## **Report on Attending the Intensive Care Society State of the Art Congress**

**(27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023)**

**Rebecca Sumnall**

I was lucky enough to receive a BACCN grant to allow me to attend the ICS State of the Art (SOA) Congress in Birmingham. This is a 3-day conference organised by the Intensive Care Society. SOA allows opportunities for professionals from all disciplines to come together to learn and network.

SOA is a multistream event over three days which allowed me the opportunity to attend many sessions on various topics. Too many to talk about them all of them but these are my highlights. The conference platform allows access for 6 months so I will be going back to watch some sessions I missed

Day one began with a plenary session focusing on the critical workforce and how we could meet the challenges of staffing critical care units. The panel had representation from several different organisations with an interest in critical care with different professions represented. As a nurse sometimes it is easy to see workforce issues as only affecting nursing but there are critical care workforce issues for all professional groups. There are no easy solutions, but it seems there needs to be a greater focus on retention but the elephant in the room is money.

Another highlight of day one was the delirium session. Part of the session was a patient talking about their experiences which was really interesting. Patient stories are so important to understand what our patients go through.

A highlight from day two for me was a short session on health literacy. The speaker was making saying that the average reading age of the UK population was 8 and this was the level that the Sun newspaper was pitched at. The speaker was saying this means that health information that is given out should be pitched her as well and that when giving out information healthcare professionals should be going through information with our patients and relatives when giving this out. This made me think about the language we use when completing patient diaries. We encourage staff not to use medical terminology but is the language simple enough?

I ended day two with a session from NHSBT about breaking bad news. This made interesting points about planning these conversations.

The closing plenary session asked the question is this the end of critical care rehab in the UK? The answer of course is no, but listening to experts in the field argue the other was fascinating.

As an educator I spend a lot of teaching. I really value the opportunity to sit and listen to others present - It helps keep me up to date and allows me to think about what techniques I can use to improve my teaching.

For me the other major benefit of attending conference is the opportunity to network. I got to meet people I have only met on the screen before and catch up with people I only see infrequently.

I would like to thank BACCN for giving me the opportunity to allow me to attend this conference and encourage other members to apply for grants!