

# International year of the nurse – not the celebration we imagined

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Welcome to the summer issue of *HIV Nursing* in what was to be a celebration of the 'International Year of the Nurse and Midwife' and would have contained abstracts from the annual National HIV Nurse Association conference, which has been cancelled for this year. With the advance of COVID-19 everything has changed. So, with the issue a little later than planned and taking a slightly different tone, I felt this was an opportunity to write from my own experience as a community HIV specialist nurse. In my first article of the issue, 'Aye corona!' I describe being uprooted from my normal 9–5 role and redeployed to ITU after 20 years out of the hospital setting. I have tried to explain this to my friends and family in a way they may understand, along these lines:

*I love flying, I love the whole experience, visiting new countries, the airport, planning my activities during the flight, the sense of expectation, and, being someone who has flown for many years, I feel I have much experience, skill and knowledge in travelling and flight. However, now I am told that for an unspecified time, with one day's training, I'm the co-pilot of the aeroplane, to support the pilot and to take the reins when the pilot has a break or two ... it was intense. Oh, and by the way, can I still manage my cohort of patients with HIV at the same time!*

During these unprecedented times, HIV and sexual health nurses have been praised by the intensive care team as they showed professionalism, expertise, resilience and flexibility to change, this has been pleasing to hear. I'm sure many of you have your own experiences that I'd encourage you to reflect on and write up in future issues. Most of us are now back to the day job and I'm inspired by my colleagues who thrived in intensive care, some have even changed career because of this experience. I remain hopeful that I won't have to repeat this ... time will tell.

One of the nurses I was lucky enough to work alongside during this experience was Christina Antoniadi and her article 'NEED: care delivery in the HIV field' for this issue highlights and discusses empathy, sympathy

and compassion in HIV care. At the 2019 European HIV Nurses conference Christina, and Damian Kelly, held a powerful workshop on these three issues, which she has developed into this article. It really shows the unique role of the nurse in holistic, individualised, patient-centric care, something that HIV nurses have developed since the beginnings of HIV care and an area that our medical colleagues are just recognising.

Continuing this strand this issue's continuing professional development (CPD) article looks at the 'Value of the HIV nurse', an issue that may come into sharp focus following the COVID-19 response. When many sexual health and HIV services have been depleted, changed and cut, proving our worth and value to HIV care may well be called into question. What will be our role going forward? This is something that will need much thought and development over the coming months as we find new ways of working but continue to provide a gold standard service.

Finally, Charlie Hughes and Michelle Croston's systematic review 'Psychosocial factors that impact maintaining health and wellbeing in women aged over 50 years living with HIV: a systematic review' highlights issues for older women living with HIV and discusses the intrinsic and extrinsic factors they deal with as they age. What is the nurse's role in this and how can we support our older female patients going forward?

Hopefully we can start 2021 in better health with HIV nursing working in different but secure ways. We now have an opportunity to prove our value and worth to the future of HIV care.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *HIV Nursing* and we invite feedback on these articles. If you would like to comment, please send a message to [info@hivnursing.net](mailto:info@hivnursing.net)

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