



Community Updates

International Updates

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Below is information submitted from members either via email or who have attended the AFN International Special Interest Group (SIG). This group is held every month on the second Tuesday of the month. Information on the group is on the AFN website, or contact ccartersnell@afnmail.org.

United Kingdom (UK)

M. Peel reported that there is a UK Association of Forensic Nurses and Paramedics - www.ukafnp.org. Ms. Jennie Smith is the President. The UK Association of Forensic Nurses and Paramedics is hosting its annual conference this year on Friday, September 20, 2024, in Solihull, near Birmingham, England. The seminar titled “Empowering Wellbeing: Overcoming Inequalities in Health and Justice” is intended for nurses, midwives, and paramedics across the UK working in sexual assault referral centres and police custody suites. Tickets are available now. This pivotal event brings together leading voices in healthcare and justice to address our communities’ critical issues. We are honoured to host Paula McGowan OBE, advocate for mandatory training on learning disabilities and autism, who was inspired by her son Oliver McGowan. Satveer Nijjar will enlighten us on the sensitive use of language around self-harm, while Colin Foley from the ADHD Foundation will share his insights on neurodiversity training. Karen Stepanova of the Pathological Demand Avoidance Society will discuss avoidance behaviours. Together, we will explore transformative approaches to enhancing forensic healthcare, ensuring a more equitable future for all.

Switzerland

V. Kaegi, President of the Swiss Forensic Nurses’ Association, reported that Switzerland hosted its third annual forensic nursing conference. It was successful and Deb Holbrook (AFN president), Jennifer Johnson (AFN past president), and executives from IAFN were able to attend. There were about 65 attendees with presentations on the role of forensic nurses in death identification—a fairly new role with European conflicts—as well as child and elder abuse, rescue services as first responder, wound morphology, and courtroom testimony. The next one will be held in Bern, Switzerland, May 9–10, 2025.

France

M. Guyomard reported that France is holding its first congress for French-speaking forensic nurses in fall.

Brazil

L. Cardoso from Brazil reported that they experienced catastrophic flooding in the south, affecting over 300 cities. There was a significant impact on nursing and insufficient humanitarian assistance. The Brazilian Forensic Nursing Society are having their third annual congress in November. <https://www.even3.com.br/iii-congresso-internacional-de-enfermagem-forense-445686/>

Canada

C. Rock-Altenhof from Nova Scotia- reported that their team is expanding to include a domestic violence response in addition to sexual assault. Their five programs adding it in gradually. Jacqueline Campbell is coming to their province to educate them on the Danger Assessment tool, individualizing for their area. They will also be introducing DV screening throughout their healthcare system.

C. Carter-Snell reported that Alberta is spreading their rural sexual assault program province-wide to key rural areas and to post-secondary nursing programs. It is a healthcare-specific extension of the free four-hour course on Enhanced Emergency Sexual Assault Services (EESAS) (www.forensiceducation.ca/courses/eesas) and is offered through Northwest Polytechnic.

Germany

S. Benthaus reported that there is an organization called the European Training Center of Active Forensic Sciences Disaster Victim Identification (ETAf), which focuses on body identification in disaster. They have specialists in 30 different European countries and have a multidisciplinary approach. <https://www.etaf-dvi.org/>