

RCN Forum Annual Report 2023

Forum Name: Bladder and Bowel Forum

Introduction:

The RCN Bladder and Bowel forum has played a pivotal role in working with other organisations in lobbying for evidence-based Continence (Bladder and Bowel) care. We have contributed to National guidelines, research, commissioning documents, and the setting of national standards for continence service.

The Committee have continued to support National groups that have met both virtually and face to face this year, by representing the RCN on the projects helps to inform and shape future Bladder and Bowel pathways. Working collaboratively and in partnership with other interested groups to highlight the discrepancies in Bladder and Bowel across the United Kingdom and we have successfully recruited to vacancies within the steering group which reflects the membership across the UK to strengthen our offer.

The Steering committee have reviewed and updated the Bowel Care Management of Lower Bowel Dysfunction, including Digital Rectal Examination and Digital Removal of Faeces Guidelines and the Catheter Care Guidance for Health Care Professionals, these are both with Publishing and Production.

The Steering Committee have also been working with the IT department to relaunch the Bladder and Bowel Learning Resource in a more interactive format.

Membership of the forum

- Total number of forum members: 3406
- First choice membership: 1262
- The Forum has an active Facebook group which steadily increases' year on year with a membership of 776.
- Twitter followers total 1.8k which is an increase from the previous year.
- Social media presence is crucial in engaging with members and the current staff shortages has highlighted the need for robust and an increased visibility via social media channels.
- Committee membership – we are quorate as a committee with no vacancies.

This year we have introduced Bladder & Bowel link nurse groups for those working the adults field (7) and also those working in the paediatric field (8). The link nurses are from all 4 countries and work in a variety of areas, this gives the Forum a longer reach and a wider range of knowledge and experience.

2023 Reflections - (Outputs and outcomes)

➤ **Congress 2023:**

- A Learning and Wellbeing Programme event – “Tums and Bums! Updating the RCN Catheter Care guidance and Bowel Care Management of Lower Bowel Dysfunction guidance.” was submitted for Congress. The event was a great success. The attendees actively participated in the session and asked many questions.
- The Bladder & Bowel forum also had a stand one lunchtime to explain the work of our forum, this was well attended and promoted the important work of the forum.
- The forum applied for an agenda item “The RCN Bladder & Bowel Forum requests that this meeting of RCN Congress asks Council to lobby the

Secretary of State for Health & Social Care, NHS England , CQC, and all healthcare professionals to make it mandatory that all patients in primary care, at hospital admission and in the community setting, whether presenting with incontinence or not, receive a continence assessment.”, However we were unsuccessful but plan to put another agenda item in for Congress 2024.

➤ Webinars

The forum held a series of lunchtime webinars this year:

- Webinar 1 - Fundamentals of Continence 16 March 2023
- Webinar 2 - Bowel Management in Spinal Injury - 21 June 2023

Further webinars on Catheter Care, Bowel Care and Challenges in continence care which had been booked for 2023 had to be postponed due to circumstances beyond our control they will be reorganised for 2024.

Contribution to Consultations/Policy development the forum continue to work with:

- All Party Parliamentary Group for Continence Care
- Paediatric Continence Forum.
- NICE
- Patient Industry and Professionals forum (PIP's)
- UK Continence Society
- NHS England. Excellence in Continence Care Programme Board
- Unplanned Admissions Consensus Committee
- EICC Programme Board National Bladder & Bowel Health Project
- Spinal Injury Association

Current projects

- NHS England. Medical Directorate
 - The forum were asked to contribute to a Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, regarding 29 incidents reported over a 3 year period where a 3 way catheter had been incorrectly connected to irrigation fluid. Several meetings were held virtually with Julie Windsor Patient Safety Clinical Lead – NHS England and The British Association of Urological Nurses. We have worked together to share information and work with manufacturers to see if improvements can be made to prevent
- Spinal Injury Association
 - The forum were approached early in 2023 by the SIA, with regard to Nurses being, unable / refusing to give bowel care to patients with spinal injuries. Patients were suffering harmful neglect because too many were being denied essential bowel care in medical settings. The forum agreed to support the SIA's "THIS IS #SERIOUS SHIT" campaign. The Chair spoke at APPG and the forum invited Carol Adcock Special Nurse Spinal injuries to deliver a joint webinar.

Strategy day is taking place on the 14th of November at RCN Head Quarters, this will be the first time that several members of the committee have met in person.

Plans for 2024

- Unplanned Admissions Consensus Committee have approached the forum to improve continence care in undergraduate nursing training / newly qualified nurses. Initial discussions have begun and further meetings are planned for 2024

- Bladder and Bowel care – lunchtime webinars will recommence in 2024
- The forum plan to hold face to face conference at the end of 2024, this may be a joint event with another forum.
- Committee members to attend Congress 2024
 - Learning and Wellbeing Programme application
 - The committee also plan to submit an agenda item to be debated
- Due to delays in the Catheter and Bowel guidelines being published we are yet to complete the below plans, so aim to do this as soon as guidelines are published:
 - The Bladder & Bowel Forum have been invited to collaborate with Primary Care Issues & Answers – an educational partnership where the forum would have its own RCN Bladder & Bowel Forum page this will allow the committee to share links to any relevant articles, write articles and do webinars, this would also link to the RCN forum page.
 - The RCN Bladder & Bowel forum have also been approached by Guidelines for Nurses a digital resource (guidelinesfornurses.co.uk) that launched in 2016 under the trusted, recognised Guidelines brand. It delivers tailored content – including guideline summaries, feature articles, and educational resources to help with CPD – to meet the needs of nurses in primary care. The resource have offered to publish our updated Catheter and bowel care guidance. This will make it more easily available to nurses across the UK. This will also, meet the expectation of the FGG who felt it would be more beneficial if the project team focussed more on promotion of the publications rather than on the evaluation of the output.

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By: Fiona Le Ber Chair of the RCN Bladder and Bowel Forum Steering Committee