

Optimising Medical Equipment to Tackle the Gridlocked Healthcare System

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The UK's healthcare system is crushing under tremendous pressure, resulting in enormous backlogs in patient care. The NHS recently reported that over 7.2 million UK residents are waiting for medical treatment, with over 2.9 million patients waiting over 18 weeks for necessary care. These numbers reflect patients already in the system on waiting lists; the real number of patients in need of care is likely considerably higher.

While there are a myriad of issues in the healthcare system that have collectively created this situation—which was exacerbated by the pandemic—there are changes that healthcare systems can make to help ease this strain. A large portion of the backlog is patients awaiting surgery, and by utilising advanced medical devices such as ambulatory infusion pumps for post-operative pain management, we can ease the strain by enabling faster recovery to free up beds.

Enhanced Recovery

The mobilisation of post-op patients is crucial for enhancing recovery. Getting patients moving soon after surgery will reduce the risks of complications, and decrease the length of hospital stay—in turn reducing care costs. However, post-op infusions may pose a challenge to this goal, and therefore it's crucial that healthcare systems use the right drug delivery device.

Advanced infusion pumps are small and lightweight, enabling movement soon after surgery that will allow patients to get on the road to recovery faster. Furthermore, ambulatory smart pumps have many other benefits that can enhance recovery, such as the reduction of medication errors and improvement of workflow for medical staff. By providing the technology necessary to mobilise patients quickly after surgery, we can expedite patients' return home, improve outcomes, and free up much-needed hospital beds. Additionally, the current trend of care moving from hospital to home can complement the goal of discharging patients sooner by allowing for continued recovery at home through virtual wards.

Nursing Shortage - A Ticking Time Bomb

In late 2022, the WHO Europe called the shortage of healthcare workers across Europe a 'ticking time bomb' and the NHS reported over 46,000 nursing staff vacancies across England. Staff working in overloaded healthcare settings experience added stress on top of an already stressful profession, which can harm their wellbeing, increase sickness absence, burnout, and further exacerbate the lack of sufficient healthcare workers.

With this reality of overburdened staff, healthcare settings should consider the use of infusion devices that have simple user interfaces with Dose Error Reduction Software (DERS) for optimum safety. Devices designed with the end-user in mind will ensure nurses can easily, seamlessly, and safely administer infusion treatments to patients, even when dealing with a heavy caseload. Care must also be taken to work with reputable device manufacturers and suppliers that have a robust supply chain and products that are reliable and safe.

Accelerated Onboarding

Due to nursing shortages, new nurses need to be onboarded quickly. If a healthcare setting is lacking experienced and qualified staff to properly train users, it can potentially create the situation of untrained staff operating medical devices. By utilising an infusion pump with installed safety measures, such as password controls, healthcare providers can ensure that only appropriate staff are using the device. Furthermore, intuitive infusion pumps generally require a simpler training process that takes less time. Additionally, E-learning training videos are a great resource for all end-users, to learn and regularly update their knowledge base.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) reports that the current state of healthcare in England is gridlocked and unable to operate effectively, which is clearly having a negative impact on people's experiences of care. Many of these problems are due to social, economic, and governmental issues, but as healthcare professionals, it is important for us to find small measures we can take to help ease this situation. By optimising our medical equipment to ensure we have the most efficient devices and technology, we can prioritise our patients' care and recovery, which will in turn improve healthcare outcomes for all.

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/nhs-delivery-and-workforce/pressures/nhs-backlog-data-analysis#:~:text=The%20latest%20figures%20for%20October,slight%20increase%20from%20last%20month.>

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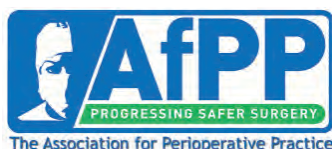
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Perioperative Charity AfPP CEO Announces Retirement



The AfPP Board of Trustees are sad to announce that Dawn Stott has made the decision to retire. Dawn will be stepping down from her position as AfPP CEO at the end of May 2023.

Commenting on the end of her tenure, Dawn Stott, AfPP CEO, said:

"It is with great sadness that I have decided to retire from the position of CEO. I have worked with the Association since June 2009, so it has been a difficult decision for me to make, as I love the organisation and the work that we do. I plan on continuing my involvement with AfPP, as such, I will be attending the AfPP Annual Conference 2023. I look forward to seeing many of our members and colleagues there and saying my farewells in person."

Commenting on the announcement, AfPP President, Ruth Collins said:

"Dawn's leaving marks the end of an era for AfPP, and she will be missed greatly. Dawn has worked with seven Presidents and championed their endeavours during their tenure. She has been a hands-on CEO and has developed the HQ team to ensure the organisation has been profitable and achieved its goals and objectives."

Ruth continues:

"Dawn has worked for the Association since 2009 during which time she has made improvements to the operational processes, developed new commercial services to improve profitability and introduced new initiatives whilst driving the Association forward to ensure it continues to be capable of supporting its members. She has supported the Board with strategic decision-making to ensure the charity meets the requirements of the Charity Commission and the Companies Act. She has developed strong relationships with health services and commercial decision-makers to guarantee that AfPP is at the forefront of safer surgery and supporting practitioners within their roles."

Dawn has a willingness to continue to support the organisation following her retirement. Alex Duke, current Commercial Development Lead will take on an interim CEO role for six months, before the position is ratified by the AfPP Board.

AfPP would like to thank Dawn Stott for her years of service to the Association and for her dedication to the role.

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