



BACKGROUND

Critical care is a complex and fast-paced environment (Rothschild *et al.* 2005). The effective integration of technology, together with a collaborative approach from expert interprofessional health care practitioners, occasionally results in the critical care patient being unintentionally overshadowed by the intensive and urgent nature of the treatment required.

Understandably, critical care experiences can be challenging to understand and articulate, and research has shown that survivors of critical care can often experience long-term detrimental effects (Connolly *et al.* 2014). Whilst the implementation of patient diaries aims to aid recovery, Lowe (2006) suggests creative writing approaches may also have potential to promote well-being.

METHOD

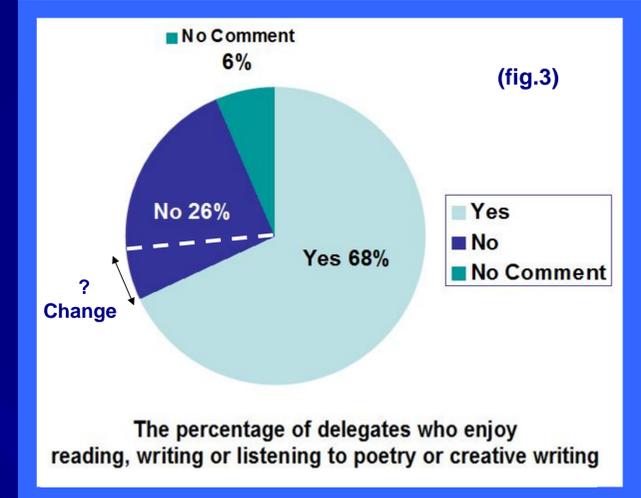
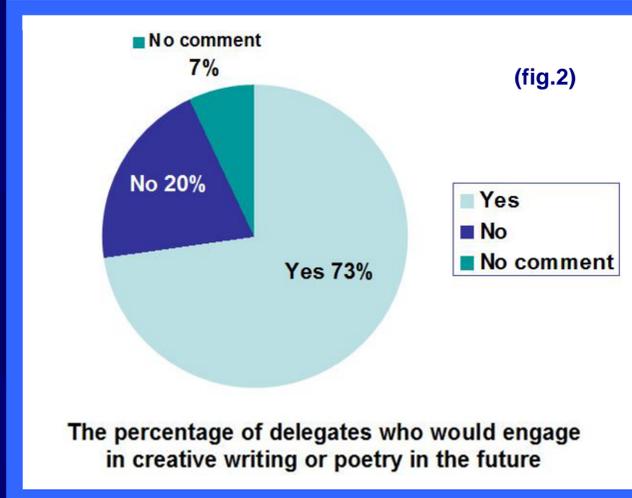
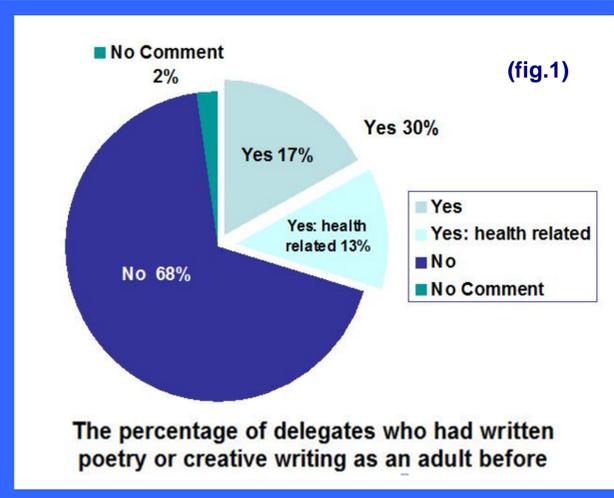
- FORMAT:** 2 short, interactive workshops.
- THEME:** Creative Writing to Enhance Critical Care Rehabilitation
- PRESENTERS:** BACCN committee member – *NE Regional Treasurer*
Relative (husband has 'survived' critical care)
- PURPOSE:** Explore the language used in critical care and the perceived value of using creative writing in relation to key theories, such as holistic care.

Both presenters actively write & disseminate their poetry about their critical care experiences.

AIM: To use creative writing and poetry to explore different experiences of critical care

FINDINGS

Only **1/3** of delegates had **previous experience** with creative writing as an adult (fig.1), however, **2/3** said they **enjoyed** reading, writing or listening to poetry or creative writing (fig.3). By the end of the workshop **73%** (more than 2/3) claimed they were likely to use critical writing **in the future**, a gain of 43% (fig.2). Following the workshop there is a margin of 5% difference where people, who were previously disinterested or unlikely to engage in creative writing and poetry, appear to have changed their perspective (fig.3).



QUALITATIVE COMMENTS

Keywords describing critical care were generated and the perceived value of creative writing regarding critical care was discussed during the workshop. Qualitative comments support the statistical evaluation that a small margin of delegates changed their perspective with regards to the value of creative writing & poetry in critical care. 100% of delegates who remained unlikely to use creative writing all considered the potential value to others, even though it was not appealing to them individually.

Common Keywords:

FEAR NOISE LOSS STRESS SCARY FRUSTRATION HOPEFUL
EMOTIONAL DYING CARING CRYING ILLNESS COMPASSION

“Never thought of this before” “changed my mind; 360° turn”
“emotional, moving” “thought provoking” “a very personal choice”

CONCLUSION

Creative writing and poetry may:

- be used for many reasons
- capture real and individual experiences
- enhance key theoretical components of care in the critical care setting
- benefit care that is holistic, family centred & patient centred
- also facilitate reflection and increase practitioner awareness of practice
- be perceived to have value in critical care.

KEY MESSAGES

- Creative writing and poetry is not for everyone and using it can be a very 'personal choice'.
- The language used by critical care staff captures the emotional complexity of the unit.
- Creative writing and poetry may benefit patients, staff & families.
- Creative writing and poetry may reinforce nursing value-based skills, e.g. reflection, the art-of-noticing and empathy.
- More research is needed in this area.

PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

Further exploration is needed to establish if creative writing about critical care experiences is of value to nurses, patients & their families.

This workshop began to explore the potential that creative writing and poetry have in terms of promoting holistic, patient centred and family centred care, to increase the 'art of noticing' and to strengthen 'value-based' nursing. This, with the prospect of aiding continual professional development, warrants further exploration into creative writing in critical care.

REFERENCES

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