Role of the Nuclear Medicine Nurse.
Reviewed 27th April 2010

Introduction

Nuclear medicine provides treatment and investigations mainly as an outpatient department but also for in-patients, across all age groups and specialities. The service is usually provided on a Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 basis. Nuclear medicine nurses work as part of a multi-disciplinary team which may include clinical scientists, technologists and clinicians.

Any level one registered nurse may work in nuclear medicine. They will require specialised training to be eligible to administer radiopharmaceuticals to patients. Many registered nurses working in Nuclear Medicine have post registration experience and some advance to become highly skilled practitioners in the field.

Specialist nurse roles have been developed in nuclear cardiology, thyroid therapy, oncology and osteoporosis.

The role is governed by regulations such as Ionising Radiation Regulations IR(MER) and ARSAC (Administration of Radioactive Substances Advisory Committee), which governs the administration of radioactive substances.

In order to develop within the role, a good general knowledge of Nuclear Medicine will be required.

Training and Education

Much of the training for Nuclear Medicine nursing is performed locally. It is essential that skills and knowledge are updated regularly, which will include:

- Administration of radiopharmaceuticals
- Venepuncture and cannulation
- Radiation Protection Legislation covering staff (IRR99) and patients (IR(ME)R2000).

Clinical Audit and Research

Nurses working in Nuclear Medicine are often involved in or
instigate audit and research in order to assess quality of care provided and where possible improve the way in which procedures are performed.

**Liaison**
The nurse has a vital role in ensuring effective liaison between staff. Since many in-patients attend Nuclear Medicine, the nurse can be a key point of contact for communication between the wards/units and the department, not only in ensuring the best possible continuity of care for the patients, but also in updating and developing the knowledge of ward nurses and doctors.

**Where to find information.**
The best advice is to contact your nearest Nuclear Medicine Department and try to arrange an informal visit.
Further information about the BNMS Nurses’ Group can be obtained from:-

Chair of the BNMS Nurses’ Group
Sr. Heather Scicluna

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