

# Networking in Hemophilia and Other Bleeding Disorders Care: The Canada – Germany Nurse Experience

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## Background & Objectives

Hemophilia nurses are vital to the care of patients with hemophilia and other bleeding disorders. They are involved in nearly every aspect of the patient's care. Networking amongst hemophilia nurses provides a valuable opportunity to expand and strengthen their knowledge and skills, share common experiences, understandings, and resources. Networking can assist in improving access to timely patient care, safety and the patient's overall experience with the bleeding disorders team.

The "Bayer European Hemophilia Nurses Scholarship" (BEHNS) was created in 2001 to provide training opportunities on the diagnosis and management of hemophilia and related bleeding disorders, specifically for nurses. The program also creates opportunities for nurses to meet, work and develop networks with their colleagues from highly regarded hemophilia centers in Europe.

As a result of BEHNS a networking opportunity arose for the nurse coordinator of the Saskatchewan Bleeding Disorders Program (Canada) to travel to the hemophilia center in Heidelberg, Germany.

The objective from spending time in the hemophilia center in Heidelberg was to learn and share treatment practices related to bleeding disorders. To bring back any new learning's and potentially adopt them into the Saskatchewan Bleeding Disorders Program (SBDP) in hopes to further enhance and optimize the provision of care and treatment for people living with hemophilia in Saskatoon Canada.

## Methods

During the time spent in the hemophilia clinic in Heidelberg the Canadian nurse coordinator shadowed the hosting nurse through all routine clinic activities.

Participation and observation in the patient event called "Fit For Life" program.

In addition learning and teaching opportunities related to the diagnosis and management of hemophilia and related bleeding disorders patients were exchanged by both nurses.

**Table 1**

Comparison of our Hemophilia Treatment Programs	
Saskatchewan Bleeding Disorders Program	SRH Kurpfalzkrankenhaus Hemophiliacenter Heidelberg
At clinic visits the patient is reviewed by almost all members of the comprehensive care team (Hematologist, Nurse Coordinator, Research Nurse (when applicable), Physiotherapy, Social Worker, Dentistry, Genetics (when applicable). The appointment can last over 2 hours.	At clinic visits the patient is reviewed by only a few members of the comprehensive care team (Hematologist, Nurse Coordinator, and Research Nurse). The other team members (Physiotherapy, Psychotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Social Worker, etc.) are referred to and seen as needed. The appointment is usually less than 1 hour long.
Usually weekly clinics.	Daily clinics.
See bleeding disorder patients only.	See bleeding disorder and clotting disorder patients.
All blood work is drawn at the test center by someone other than the nurse.	All blood work is drawn by the Nurse and the lab picks it up.
Treatments are not done at the clinic visit, thus if prophylaxis treatment is needed an additional needle stick must be performed.	After the blood is drawn by the nurse, she will administer any necessary treatments in an already situated needle. This lessens the number of needle sticks.
Usual hours are Monday – Friday 800-430. No nurse on call. No relief nurse.	Usual Hours are Monday – Friday 800-430. With nurse on call for after hours and weekends and a relief nurse.
The nurse types up all letters and enters lab results in CHARMS (Canadian tracking program).	An administrative assistant types and sends all letters dictated by the nurse. They also enter all lab results in the appropriate tracking program.



## Results

A number of similar and unique differences in managing patients between the two clinics were identified (table 1).

Unique to the clinic in Heidelberg is the "Fit For Life" program. This program points out the risks and identifies suitable physical activity options and outlines appropriate training programs. "Fit For Life" is also intended to encourage people with hemophilia to share the joys of spontaneous movement in games, sports and dance.

Common and unique barriers were discussed leading to ideas and suggestions regarding how change could occur in each of the current clinical practice areas to overcome these barriers.

## Conclusions

Networking provides the most productive, efficient and enduring tactic to build relationships. The collaboration of bleeding disorder nurses on an international level promoted the creation of connections and enabled the building of an enduring, mutually beneficial rapport. This relationship resulted in both nurses gaining knowledge, experience and inspiration to implement change within their respective clinical practices and a new found friendship.

Possible implementations that SBDP is considering adopting in their clinic from the BEHNS experience include the following:

- ❖ Making a better plan with test center regarding lessening the amount of needle sticks for all patients.
- ❖ Recruitment of a relief nurse to cover for sick days and vacation time.
- ❖ Pilot project of trialing the "Fit for Life" program in Saskatchewan.



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