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Prince of Wales Hospital eSimulation program improves mental health care

A simulated learning program aimed at educating nurses on how to best care for mental health patients within a general hospital setting, has been named one of the finalists in the 2014 HESTA Australian Nursing Awards.

The eSimulation program developed by two mental health liaison nurses at the Prince of Wales Hospital in Sydney, in collaboration with 'Inky Smudge – Online and Interactive' is one of five finalists in the Team Innovation category.

The program is recognised for providing an interactive multimedia learning environment for non-mental health specialists.

Project Manager, Scott Lamont, said the program was one way of educating nurses about mental health care when access to specialist services or to training are unavailable.

"Generalist nurses within hospital settings are increasingly required to assess mental health symptoms and deliver mental health care," Mr Lamont said.

"The eSimulation mental health education program helps provide further training through an interactive multimedia tool that can be made more widely available than traditional training methods.

"The program has four distinct scenarios that reflect 'real life' critical incidents and the learner has to assess the different scenarios and determine the best possible outcome for the central character/patient.

"The learner encounters degrees of challenges and crises, interacts with central and secondary characters, makes decisions based on options for care and management and has opportunities to reflect upon their decisions."

Mr Lamont said the program has been incorporated into numerous university nurse training courses around the country, and local health district education programs in Australia and overseas.

Since being uploaded on inkysmudge.com.au in early 2013, the program has averaged 3,000 visits per month.

Prince of Wales Hospital Director of Operations, Jon Roberts, said the nomination reflected the culture of innovation at the hospital, which is one of the premier medical teaching facilities in Australia.

"This assists us to provide excellence in care in conjunction with our commitment to clinical teaching and medical research," Mr Roberts said.

Mr Lamont and his co-developer, Scott Brunero, will attend an awards dinner in Sydney where the winners will be announced on Thursday 8 May 2014.

Visit hestaawards.com.au for tickets for the awards dinner or to learn more about the awards.

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

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