Returning to India-February 2019 and the successful launch of Indias' first Perioperative Nursing Association: Indian Association of Registered Perioperative Nurses (IAoRPN).

The road and traffic management has not changed, it remains chaotic and noisy in the towns and cities, a whole unrecognisable set of rules apply that are only understood in India; beep-beep, beep-beep, cars and motorbikes zoom in and out, Auto Rickshaws do the same, seat belts are an occasional feature for the driver, but for others these are not available. Even new cars have the seat belts tucked away as a non-necessary feature for travel. It is all part of the experience in returning to India.

We were once again honoured to visit many hospitals across Kerala, meeting surgeons, anaesthetists and nurses who provided us great generosity, kindness and welcome.

We were particularly thrilled to visit the Government Medical College in Calicut, and meet again with **Dr KM Kuriakose,** head of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery; where we had last year observed a very busy and underfunded public hospital, with minimal surgical instrumentation available to carry out the necessary work required.

Last year we visited the operating theatre where surgery was taking place, and described '*The operating surgeon had only one micro needle holder and one micro forceps to do the*

coronary anastomosis. This is what is provided in each set. Overall, the instrumentation was seen as very sparse compared to the UK.'

We were thrilled to be able to present to Dr Kuriakose some 'tools of his trade' which we had promised to source on our visit in 2018. The surgical instruments were new, and had all the relevant letters of authority, which we presented at airline 'check-in' during the various stages of our journey.

We had no desire to be questioned in relation to transporting numerous 'quirky scissors' and the other sharp instruments which were part of our general luggage. Mini and I provided a ½ day education session to 150 delegates at the Medical College, following the handover of the equipment.

We had little luggage room for fashionable clothing, as we also transported numerous copies of AfPP Standards and Recommendations for Safe Perioperative Practice, (2011), which were gratefully received by Hospitals and Institutions that we visited.

We want to thank AfPP, and the surgical instrument companies for their contributions and support in our endeavours.

We also visited Baby Memorial Hospital in Calicut where we met 200 staff and senior nursing faculty, who attended the sessions on topics relating to infection prevention and control, communication and leadership.

At the Matria Hospital Calicut we were welcomed by 60 nurses and senior nursing leaders and delivered sessions on perioperative patient safety, and the 6C's of nursing.

We took a flight from Cochin airport to Chennai where we met with **Professor Jane Reid** who had arrived from the UK, and **Patrick Voight** from the US, and where, together, many months of planning came to fruition.

21-24 February- Chennai – 65th Indian Association of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery Conference

We are very grateful for the support of the cardiac surgeons and IASCTS, especially **Dr. Rajan S**, the organisation secretary, without whose support and commitment, we are certain, it would have taken a great deal longer to establish the perioperative nursing association.

It was also a pleasure to catch up with **Dr Jose Chacko** who has been in our corner from the start; and continues to be supportive and influential with our perioperative nursing colleagues.

This 4-day conference was attended by 1500 delegates, and it was a great pleasure to meet some old friends from across the world. It was a privilege for us to be supported by **Professor Jane Reid** from the UK, and **Patrick Voight** from the US for the launch of the

Indian Association of Registered Perioperative Nurses (IAoRPN).

As part of **IACTS** conference, on the **22 and 23 February** the **Perioperative Nursing Conference** at **Madras Medical Mission Hospital** was held, and a full education program was provided and committed to, by Indian nurse leaders as well as the international faculty.

The nursing coordinator at the hospital, **Nurse Deepa.M** provided unwavering support, delivering the objectives of the conference to over 450 delegates. We met some outstanding nurse leaders including a representative from the India Nursing Regulation Council, who was there to vet the quality of the event, and, who provided positive feedback at the end of the second day.

We made some good friends and professional contacts for future similar endeavours; and also managed to visit the Appollo Hospital in Chennai.

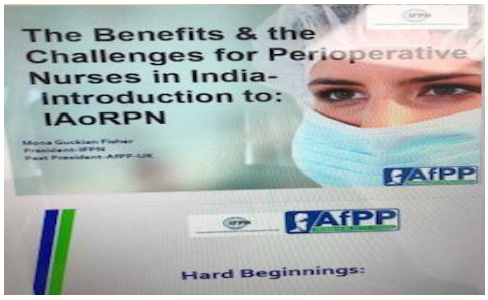
When the conference ended, we took a flight to Delhi, and then further onward internal flight to Rishikesh. Rishikesh is a quiet peaceful place located in the north of India, situated in the foothills of the Himalayas. It is known as the Gateway to the Himalayas and as the Yoga capital of the world.

Meeting the people here was a special experience for all of us, and we were privileged to visit some Temples, and to participate in a local ceremony at the Ganges River, on the night of our arrival. We were not prepared for the cold, having travelled from extreme heat in Kerala and Chennai.

On the 26 and 27 February- International Perioperative Nursing Symposium All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)- Rishikesh, Uttarakhand

We were welcomed very warmly by the CEO and Director of AIIMS, **Pdama Shri Professor Ravi Kant,** together with the Dean of AIIMS College, **Professor Suresh Sharma** and Associate Professor, **Dr Rakesh Sharma**; and a traditional inauguration ceremony was conducted commencing with lamp lighting, and attended by all the senior faculty and colleagues from

AIIMS hospital. Senior members of the faculty were engaged with us over the course of 2 days, delivering a comprehensive and full programme of education to 200 delegates.



We really want to pay tribute to the surgeons that we have met, who recognise and value perioperative nurses, and who are willing to support our colleagues, to achieve an empowered personal and professional status.

The World Health Organisation **(WHO)** has designated 2020 as the year of the nurse in honour of the 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale. The International Council of

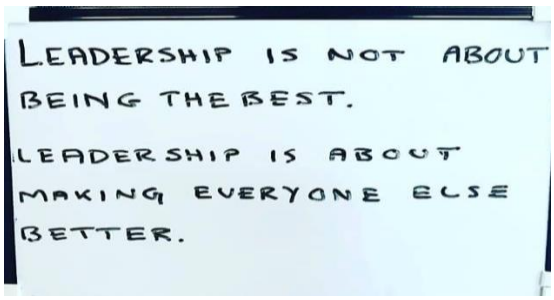
Nurses **(ICN)** and the **Nursing Now** campaign also support and welcome this proposal, setting the scene for a year of global celebration for nurses and midwives.

It is imperative to recognise that nurses are at the heart of all healthcare providers, and this campaign aims to enhance and promote the role of nursing across the world; with the purpose of improving health outcomes for all people. Nurses make up approximately half the healthcare workforce and are vital to all activities where healthcare is delivered along the entire trajectory from 'the cradle to the grave'.

Nurses are a crucial ingredient in the mission to bring Universal Health Coverage (UHC) to all corners of the world. This global commitment was set out by members of the United Nations (UN) in 2015, with an ambitious agenda for a safer, fairer and healthier world by 2030. (www.who.int)

It cannot be achieved without recognition, support and strengthening of relationships to enable our profession to bring the nursing voice to the table, in order to serve and advocate on behalf of the patient and the profession.

Love your work, love your team, be helpful and kind at all times, teach, engage and support when required.



This visit has again, brought us into contact with hundreds of healthcare workers, and afforded the opportunity to provide engagement, support and interaction with like-minded colleagues.

Whilst there are many differences in culture and organisation, there are significant similarities in the education, training and delivery of perioperative care with our western systems. In terms of our humanity we are undoubtedly as one.

We sincerely thank all those who allowed us the privilege of visiting their hospitals and engaged so openly and honestly in this shared experience.

Indian Association of Registered Perioperative Nurses (IAoRPN)

The aim of the Association is to support perioperative nurses and facilitate the sharing and promotion of best practice standards throughout the membership regions. Additionally, it is recognised that perioperative nurses as a specialty need to be engaged in the shaping and development of healthcare policy.

The common theme is a desire to provide safe standardised patient care. The seat of this new Association is at AIIMS Rishikesh, and the Organisations first President is **Professor Suresh Sharma.**

IAoRPN will hold its first conference in Rishikesh in **2020, appropriately named 'The Year of the Nurse',** and the bicentenary birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale.

IAoRPN (pronounced Aprin) is a recognised member of the International Federation of Perioperative Nurses (IFPN). (www.ifpn.org.uk)

We will be returning to Rishikesh in 2020, with Jane and Patrick, and we are hopeful that some of our other international perioperative colleagues will support this first IAoRPN conference.

Mona Guckian Fisher

President IFPN (2018-2021)

Past President AfPP

Minija Joseph

Theatre Matron-Kings College Hospital London

(The UK and US international Faculty were self-supporting, undertaking this privileged endeavour on a 'pro bono' basis; and, there are no conflicts of interest to declare. We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of our Medical Device partners for donating surgical instrumentation; and, to AfPP for the copies of 'Standards' provided).

(We also thank most sincerely the Kalarickal family, Victor, & Mary Joseph, Seena & Babu, whose hospitality and friendship collectively knows no bounds.)