



## Conference Report

# “One Passion, One Vision and One World” Reflections on the 9th Council of International Neonatal Nurses (COINN) Conference 2016

### KEYWORDS

Sustainable  
Development Goals;  
Global workforce;  
International/global  
collaboration;  
Neonatal nursing

This report presents our reflections and feedback of the 9th Council of International Neonatal Nurses (COINN) conference 2016 that took place at the Westin hotel, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada from August 13th to 17th 2016. This sophisticated venue overlooking a beautiful harbour captured the welcoming atmosphere and positivity that was to embrace the conference experience for the 4 day duration of ‘COINN 2016’. As you read this short article which describes the highlights and key messages from the conference, we invite the readers to hear the actual words from some of the first-time participants who stated that they will place the next ‘COINN 2019’ on their calendar with high anticipation.

The Canadian Association of Neonatal Nurses (CANN) welcomed us with open arms. Over 400 neonatal nurse delegates from approximately twenty countries met for this triannual event. Since our last COINN conference in Belfast 2013, Northern Ireland, our CANN colleagues tirelessly worked to create an unforgettable experience where neonatal nurses from all over the world could gather, mingle, network, learn, explore, nurture, challenge, stimulate, collaborate and more. The event offered delegates the opportunities for sharing their accomplishments as well as challenges. It was a first class experience.



## Conference highlights

The pre-conference sessions were held on August 14th, prior to the opening of COINN 2016. The two valuable workshops organised comprised a research workshop and another that introduced the participants to the opportunity for volunteering in areas of global health.

The official opening session later that day, gave us the sound of dramatic bagpipes echoing throughout the hall as pipers led a line of delegates carrying their national flags representing the many countries attending the conference in Vancouver. The multi-colour flags from around the world stood proudly behind the podium throughout the remainder of the conference reminding us daily, how significant it was that we were there and of the important central theme: "One Passion, One Vision and One World". Dr. Karen New, the COINN president and Karen Lasby, the CANN president both welcomed us all to the venue and to the full programme ahead.

This year was the third time that Save the Children's "Saving Newborn Lives Program" supported the International Neonatal Nursing Excellence Awards with COINN. This award is designed to recognize nurse leaders who are making a difference in lives of newborns in low to mid resource regions of our globe. It was with great anticipation that we awaited the announcement and presentation of the winners on the morning of the first day. This year's two honoured recipients were Nguyen Thi Minh Hong of Viet Nam and Adeyemo Abass Kola of Nigeria, chosen from nominees

representing more than fourteen countries. The Healthy Newborn Network website which is an initiative of the 'Saving Newborn Lives' Program introduced each recipient through a beautifully created slide show, available on open access for anyone to view ([Save the Children Federation, 2016a,b](#)). This award ceremony was a strong reminder to every neonatal nurse that it is the workforce that makes the difference to improving the lives and outcomes of sick, small, vulnerable neonates and their families.

Global health workforce issues in fact were the subject of the first keynote speaker. Strong words of encouragement for nurses to engage with policy makers and to understand the global policies came from the president of the International Council of Nurses, Dr. Judith Shamian. In her session titled, "Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health" ([Shamian, 2016](#)), she challenged the audience by asking, "Who has contacted the regional representative in the last 6 months for the cause of Newborn related issues?" and "Who is familiar with United Nations' Sustainable Developmental Goals ([United Nations, 2016 a](#)) that world leaders adopted in 2015 and the goals' relevance to you?". At a glance, the relevance to neonatal nursing may not be clearly visible, however, significant accomplishments were achieved as a result of the Millennium Development Goals #4 which put forth specific efforts leading to reduction of newborn deaths. ([United Nations, 2016 b](#)) We must sustain this momentum. Now, the Sustainable Development Goal #3 defines many targets, but specific ones clearly indicate their relevance to

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