A Patient Story: Qualitative Evidence for the Role of Advanced Nurse Practitioners as a Consistent Workforce in Acute Medicine.

Kate Knowles, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Acute Medicine, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust.
Dr Rebecca Sims, Consultant Acute Medicine, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust.

AIM
Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs) have been established a permanent workforce within Acute Medicine at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust (NUH) since 2013. As this was a new initiative for NUH, with significant resource implications, it was important to measure and understand the impact of this role. Performance data has shown a positive impact in service provision and other quantitative evidence for the benefit of the role has been easily obtainable. However, the ambition was that, with a nursing background, clinical maturity and extensive experience, the ANP workforce would bring a variety of skills offering a broader patient benefit.

Qualitative evidence to illustrate this has been harder to secure. Patient feedback, particularly in the format of personal stories, is readily sought at all stages of the patient’s journey and this was considered an ideal source for such evidence of ANP work at NUH.

METHOD
Personal patient feedback regarding an inpatient stay in Acute Medicine at NUH was sought in October 2015. The patient’s story describes the care and treatment she received from an ANP. Main themes of ANP work were highlighted from the story and explored further.

OUTCOMES/ RESULTS

PATIENT STORY: “In early October this year I was unfortunate enough to have three episodes of chest pain which resulted in two separate overnight stays in the AMRU at the QMC in Nottingham. After the third incident of chest pain my GP sent me directly to the AMRU. I was assessed during the day, blood taken, ECG completed and lots of waiting! I eventually ‘secured a bed’ on B3, for an overnight stay. Morning came with a welcome cup of tea and very soon the doctors were at my bedside. It is impossible to read ID badges unless you get scarly up close and invasive! I now know that there was one doctor, and one lovely medical student. The third person present was a nurse practitioner (ANPX). I was brought up to date with my atrial fibrillation (AF) and the management of my symptoms. I then asked if my imminent trip to Australia could be compromised. Dr (Consultant), ANPX and I had a discussion about the possible pros and cons of taking the trip, particularly in regard to my medication.

During that afternoon ANPX came to see me to explain what had been found on the CT scan. As well as my AF, I have a small hiatus hernia and an abnormal liver function result. ANPX very patiently took me through everything, explaining with great clarity the new medications I would start that day. I am sure she was instrumental in the medication I was prescribed which would enable me to go to Australia without the need for my bloods to be monitored. She worked so hard that afternoon to bring together referrals for me to other teams. Both my husband and I felt totally supported. ANPX even took the time to write a list of my ‘conditions’ with thumbnail explanations and corresponding medication.

With ANPX’s help to facilitate I was released that evening with an appointment for the following day for an ultrasound. When I arrived at that appointment there was a note from ANPX waiting for me with another appointment (an ‘echo’) that had been expedited by her.

I am very fortunate that I usually enjoy good health, so these recent events have been unexpected, scary and confusing, not only for me but for my husband as well. Thank goodness for the staff on AMRU but particularly ANPX going that extra mile for someone she had never met before, but wanted to help.”

CONCLUSION
Evidence such as this patient story is invaluable in establishing confidence and worth within the ANP team but also illustrates the true importance of the ANP role within the directorate, within the Trust and nationally.

Acute Medicine and other directorates within NUH are seeking to train further ANPs through the Masters in Advanced Clinical Practice at the University of Nottingham.

Patient stories are a powerful way to bring the views of patients into the organisation and identify aspects of care that are of high importance on the patients agenda. ANPs at NUH, along with directorate and Trust teams, continue to seek patient stories and personal feedback to improve not only their own individual work but that of the service that we provide to our patients.