

Trillium ICU nutrition tops

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Photo courtesy of Trillium Health Centre

Demonstrating the teamwork that makes Trillium Health Centre's Intensive Care Unit nutrition program one of the best in its field, (from left) intensivist Dr. Neil Antman, ICU nurse Victorine Bate and clinical dietitian Vera Jovanovic consult on a patient's nutritional needs.

April 1, 2009 01:41 PM - Trillium Health Centre's Intensive Care Unit has received international recognition for its nutrition program.

The team of healthcare professionals was awarded a Best of the Best Outstanding Achievement from the International Nutrition Survey 2008.

Trillium's ICU ranked seventh among 82 ICUs in 22 countries based on a survey that assessed nutritional status, nutrition practices and outcomes of critically ill patients.

The survey was conducted by Kingston General Hospital's clinical evaluation research unit. Participating hospitals collected data over a three-month period. They could compare performance through a global database.

The objective is to see differences, highlight strengths and weaknesses and, hopefully, officials say, lead to improvements.

"Out of 167 ICUs around the world that participated in our International Nutrition Survey, 82 sites were eligible for consideration for the Best of the Best award, and Trillium was ranked seventh in this competition. You are to be commended for your outstanding accomplishments," wrote Dr. Daren K. Heyland, professor of medicine at Queen's University and director, clinical evaluation unit, Kingston General Hospital, in his letter to Trillium announcing the award.

Critically ill patients are highly stressed and their nutritional requirements are often greater. Still, at a time when they need nutrition most, patients can be too sick to eat, officials say.

That's where the ICU nutrition team enters the picture.

"Providing adequate and appropriate nutrition has a positive impact on clinical outcomes," said Trillium intensivist Dr. Neil Antman. "Giving the right nutrition at the right time improves wound healing, supports the immune system and maintains gut integrity."

Trillium's ICU team continuously evaluates how best to feed patients. It assesses whether the patient can eat, the need for supplements or specialized formulas and the need for special tubes to infuse nutrition.