



Celebrating Mother's Day – Comparing the Workforce across generations



For Mother's Day, the JETS Workforce team caught up with mother and daughter Pauline Hutson and Emma Regan. Pauline is the former BSG EAG chair and nurse endoscopist at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals, and Emma works as an advanced nurse practitioner in Gastroenterology and Hepatology in Liverpool.

We spoke to them about their parallel paths, the evolution of the workforce, and what it's like to share the "family business".

Could you tell us a little bit about what drew you to the endoscopy field and what nurse training was like when you first started?

Pauline: When I started my State Registered Nurse Training in 1973, the ratio between academic work and learning on the job was very different. We initially had a six-week period in Nursing School and then we were straight on the wards. Nursing students were always included in staff numbers and never supernumerary. Training was supervised by the ward staff, plus there were occasional visits from a Training Nurse Manager. We would return to school every 3 – 4 months generally for 2 weeks at a time. We had a personal training logbook to document progress. We covered all shifts including nights and as 2nd and 3rd year students, we were often left in charge of a whole ward at night with 2-3 visits from the Night Manager throughout the shift. We worked a 40-hour week consisting of five 9-hour shifts with one hour unpaid for breaks. Night shifts were 11 hours long. We were expected to study in our free time.

Once qualified I went straight into working in theatre, which became my passion for many years. My first introduction to endoscopy was as an Operating Theatre Manager in a private hospital in Sheffield. It was extremely busy with three theatres and a small endoscopy room. At the time we were still using glutaraldehyde to sterilise the scopes. As a highly toxic substance it carried many risks to staff and eventually, I became involved with purchasing one of the first endoscopy cabinets that helped to remove the fumes by carbon filtration.

I studied for a Health and Social Care degree during this time which helped me progress and update. I left private practice after 6 years and moved back into the NHS eventually securing the position of Day Care and Endoscopy Manager at Barnsley District General Hospital. With two theatres and a two-room endoscopy suite I was given an opportunity to become a nurse endoscopist. This was still a new concept and was met with much concern and criticism by medical staff. Despite the backlash it went ahead and thankfully after training at Hull and in-house for six months I qualified in upper endoscopy. I became a member of the British Society



of Gastroenterology and joined the Endoscopy Associate Group, eventually taking on the role of Chairperson.

During my time with the BSG I witnessed the early years of the Joint Advisory Group JAG and the development of the Gastro-intestinal Nursing GIN course, taking part as a lecturer. I also took this expertise to the main hospital in Gibraltar, which resulted in many changes in their endoscopy department including the introduction of an endoscopy manager. Following a move to the Northern General Hospital in Sheffield I trained in lower endoscopy, which allowed me to undertake more extensive procedures such as endoscopic mucosal resection (EMR).

Having seen the profession from when you joined to when you left, what would you say is the most significant change in how the workforce operates today?

Pauline: Having a daughter now working in a similar field of work is mind-blowing but also really interesting. The responsibilities of the nurse practitioner/specialist seem far greater in many ways and decision making more autonomous. The depth of knowledge required for her role is far greater than I ever achieved and expectations of her role are certainly higher. My knowledge base is now clearly out of date, but it is interesting to hear how this field of practice is changing. The nurse endoscopist is now a common feature of endoscopy units and their scope of practice certainly exceeds my own experiences.

Growing up with a mother so involved in clinical leadership, was a career in specialist nursing always the plan for you, or did you find your way to your current role independently?

Emma: My initial career aspirations never included nursing in any capacity as a child and in all honesty, probably as most children do, I paid little interest to all the amazing things my Mum was involved in as I was growing up. After finding myself a bit lost following an English degree, and subsequent jobs in administration, I came home and began my first NHS role as a band 4 secretary to the Clinical Risk manager in the Northern General Hospital Sheffield. Although the work was not for me the opportunity to see how a hospital functions from the inside was inspiring and made me want to be a part of that world. At this point remembered aspects of dinner table conversations and half understood memories about my Mums nursing career drifted back to me, and I began to consider it as a possible option for myself.

Observing the career my Mum had and the many different areas it had taken her appealed to me and it was the variety of opportunities that drew me to nursing rather than any aspirations to be in a leadership role. When I qualified in 2010 there was an abundance of nurses and roles were hard to come by. Now living in Liverpool, I went to large scale open day which included a maths and English test and full panel interview. There was no option to pick where the job would be, and it was by chance that I was selected to work on a colorectal surgical ward in the Royal Liverpool University Hospital.

After spending 10 years in a band 5 role across colorectal surgery and critical care I knew I wanted more of a challenge, and I applied for several gastroenterology band 6 roles before successfully obtaining a specialist nursing post working alongside the HPB endoscopy team.



This really did feel as I was stepping into my Mums world and through this role and now in my current job as an advanced nurse practitioner in gastroenterology, having someone who understands the joys and pressures of the speciality has been incalculable.

What would you say is the most surprising difference you've noticed when comparing stories your mum has told you about her own training versus your experience?

Emma: Although there are many differences from how healthcare is delivered and structured from the beginning of my Mums nursing career to current practices, I would say the most interesting development is how rapidly advanced nursing roles have changed and been adopted. There are stories from early in Mums career where nurses were very separate from the medical teams and their input far from the leadership sphere. This rapid change from being one of the first nurse endoscopists and prescribers in her organisation to my own current role where I can diagnose, manage and discharge patients completely independently is something we are both proud of, not only for our own careers but also for the nursing profession. However gastroenterology nursing has changed there remains some things that are fundamental, which can be observed by us both across the span of our twin careers. The passion for the speciality by those within in, the commitment to the advancement of disease management and prevention and the key role of the BSG and nursing has remained constant for both Mum and me.

Emma, what is the best piece of career advice your mum has given you? And Pauline, how does it feel to see your daughter navigating her own successful path in the same profession you dedicated so much of your career to?

Emma: Although on the bad days my Mum would regularly tell me not to go into nursing, I am glad to have rebelled against this advice and taken up the family business. Nursing within this speciality can be stressful, both physically and mentally challenging and not a job that you can always leave on time or in work. But for both of us a career within gastroenterology nursing has been full of opportunity, passion and fulfilment. Will I be encouraging my own children to continue this tradition? As with everyone it depends on the day, but after thinking about my career so far and what it has brought to both me and my Mum my answer today would be yes.

Pauline: I am continually surprised and obviously proud of Emma's progress and success. Her involvement with the BSG brings back many good memories and it is lovely to hear her speak of people I know who are still driving progress. Having a daughter who is navigating this rapidly evolving work is a joy to observe and I feel very lucky to still be involved, albeit as an outsider, in a profession that I occasionally miss but truly enjoyed at the time.