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Importance of Nurses in the Health Care Settings

Nursing

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ABSTRACT

Nurses are the backbone of the health care system; their knowledge, skills, work and commitment form the basis of patient care. Nurses are the people behind the scenes, the ones who make sure that everything is running smoothly. Nursing is the backbone of the medical field; as they take care and well-being of each and every patient. Their work, expertise, resources and commitment are devoted to protecting them even in crises situation

Introduction: "The best type of nursing girl is one who is tall, strong, and has a suppleness of movement. If she can dance, it is a great advantage. If she is favoured with good looks, it is all. So claimed a 19th century British medical manual. The Journal of the American Medical Association quotes: "Nurses are often conceited and too unconscious of the due subordination they owe to the medical profession, of which she is sort of a useful parasite."

Thankfully, nursing has come a long way since then. But even in the days when disrespect was the norm, nurses were making a difference in health care delivery, policy, ethics, and more. Florence Nightingale, for example, redesigned health care during the Crimean War so that mortality declined dramatically.

Today "there has never been a more exciting time to be a nurse," says Pat Donehower, a lecturer at the University of Vermont (UVM) College of Nursing and Health Sciences. "There are fabulous job opportunities in administration, research or practice settings."

Some of the new respect for nurses may be in place because increasingly, nurses are getting advance degrees enabling them to take on leadership roles in research, on hospital boards, and in continuing dialogues around such issues as cost containment, ethics, and training. Dr. Linda Aiken's research demonstrated that hospital nurses with a bachelor's degree or higher gave patients a "substantial survival advantage." She found that a 10 percent increase in the proportion of nurses with a BSN in hospitals decreased the risk of patient death and failure to rescue by five percent. If the proportion of BSN nurses in all hospitals was 60 rather than 20 percent, 18 fewer deaths per 1,000 surgical patients would be expected.

This kind of finding is supported by a 2010 report, The Future of Nursing, by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) that called for increasing the number of baccalaureate-prepared nurses in the workforce to 80 percent and doubling the population of nurses with doctorates in order to respond "to the demands of an evolving health care system and meet the changing needs of patients…"

Nurses are also taking their rightful place when the high cost of health care is addressed. While traditionally nurses have been viewed as a labor cost whereas physicians are seen as revenue generators, studies show that while improved nurse-to-patient ratios do increase cost they don't impact overall profitability.

As Betty Rambur, professor of nursing at UVM puts it, "Nurses go beyond the biomedical. We're holistic in our approach. That impacts the ethics of health economics. It's opened the door to exciting models that include thinking about broader systems of care."

Another challenge with ethical implications is keeping up with necessary technology while not losing sight of important interpersonal contact and communication. "The advent of the computer has helped in many ways," says Felicia Robinson, a labor and delivery nurse at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital's birthing center. "It's easier to assess someone's medical record or to see labs. But the computer can be a barrier between the clinician and the patient.

Ever evolving policies, practice norms and financing mechanisms coupled with institutional systems changes mean new opportunities as well as challenges.[1]

"Nurses are the unsung heroes of health care," said David McNeil, Health Sciences North's vice-president of patient services, clinical transformation and chief nursing executive, in a press release. "Our nurses provide the essential bedside care that patients and families rely on in their time of need. They really are the backbone of the health-care system." Not only do they provide direct patient care, they also conduct research, develop new models of care, teach learners and help patients navigate the health care system. Our nurses work hard and are committed to each and every one of their patients. May 12 is honored as Florence Nightingale's birthday. She was well known for the care she provided to the British soldiers in the Crimean War and is considered the founder of modern nursing.[2]

Five Reasons Why Nurses are the Backbone of the Medical Field:

1. Education

Nursing school is not for the faint of heart. After a rigorous set of courses filled with clinicals, practicals and hands-on experience, a nurse practitioner is well-equipped to handle any situation within direct primary medicine.

2. Expertise

Because hospitals are inundated with patients who need a doctor's surgical capability, there are not enough doctors to tend to each patient's ailment, recovery and needs. Without a nurse's experience and bedside manner, many patients would be left without the intimate care that is required for a successful recovery. Nurses are proficient in a range of areas in the medical field and must be prepared to tend to all situations that arise, from taking vitals to working a crash cart.

3. Relationships

Because nurses are with patients for an extended period of time, most know how to develop a relationship with people to keep them as comfortable and relaxed as possible. Often, patients are incapacitated and cannot take care of their personal needs. It can be extremely embarrassing to rely on a stranger to do things like administering medication, put in a catheter or offer a sponge bath, which is why establishing a comfort level is essential.

Nurses must acquire the necessary bedside manner to be sensitive in these private and potentially unpleasant situations. They can develop relationships with patients to make these actions

more bearable, and a respect for each individual can help patients to maintain their dignity and comfort.

4. Care

Nurses seldom treat their patients in the same ways that patients treat their nurses. For as many even-tempered patients they care for, nurses will also see their fair share of cranky sick and injured people. Because the patients' needs come first, the nurse provides charges with exceptional care. In the case of a terminally ill patient who is severely suffering, nurses must be particularly perceptive and recognize various aspects, including:

- Helping a patient with an extra dose of medication to ease pain
- Knowing when to escort family out of the area
- Understanding how to best protect the patient and when to cheer him or her up. Because the doctor is not always around as often as the nurse, a doctor might be less inclined to help with these sensitive everyday situations. A nurse has a personal seat to see the patient's suffering and offer aid.

5. TheNitty-Gritty

Nurses can spend their entire shifts charting patients' details. Without the charts, a patient's diagnosis would easily be lost, adversely affecting the quality of their care.

Nurses do the work that keeps a hospital running smoothly, but unfortunately, they sometimes receive little recognition for the nitty-gritty tasks that ultimately save lives. Nursing is a stretching profession that involves lengthy hours and self-sacrifice on a daily basis.[3]

Importance of Nurses, in the healthcare:

They work in hospitals, clinics, schools and businesses. You'll find them caring for people at Disneyland and on cruise ships. They serve in the military, work in public health jobs and even care for people in their homes. No matter where they work, we should honor nurses for their contributions to healthcare.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that with 2.6 million jobs, RNs are the largest healthcare occupation. You'll find 60 percent of these RNs caring for people in hospitals. It's also eye-opening to consider the substantial role nurses play in healthcare delivery. Many consider nurses the backbone of the healthcare delivery system, as they are involved in most every phase of healthcare delivery. To many, the most significant role that nurses play in patient care may be invisible. For example, hospitalized patients may see nurses dispensing medications, monitoring symptoms, administering treatments and starting intravenous (IV) lines. These are all important activities. What they do not see is that RNs collect information from these and other sources, synthesize what they learn and develop meaningful and effective patient care plans.

Nurses also provide emotional support to patients and their family members during difficult times. They instruct patients and their families about post-treatment illness or injury management. RNs with advanced educational training may perform diagnostic tests and prescribe some medications. Some RNs promote public health by educating their communities about disease symptoms. They also organize health screenings, immunization clinics and blood drives. The role of individual nurses depends on the work setting and the patient population served. In hospitals, nurses may work as "bedside nurses," who provide essential care for patients with a variety of illnesses and injuries. Other nurses specialize by:

• **Setting or type of treatment:** Consider the operating room where highly trained perioperative nurses work shoulder to shoulder with surgeons. Other settings where nurses specialize include emergency departments and intensive care.

• **Health or condition:** Diabetes nurse educators, for example, help people with this condition manage their health, by monitoring the status of individual patients and promoting diabetes prevention through community outreach.

• **Organ or body system:** Many nurses focus their work on specific human systems of interest to them. For example, cardiovascular nurses work with patients who have coronary heart disease and those who have had heart surgery. Dermatology nurses specialize in helping people with skin disorders. Orthopedic nurses care for patients suffering from muscular and skeletal problems.

• **Population:** Some nurses enjoy working with certain patient populations. There are geriatric nurses who care for older people and pediatric nurses who work with children. The abilities of nurses are valued in myriad settings.[4]

American nurses Association have recognized nurses for their knowledge, skills, work and commitment as they form the basis of patient care. The association has also appreciated the staff nurses for their work, expertise, resources and commitment as they are devoted to protecting them and the work they do.[5]

Nurses are the backbone of our health care system and often go unnoticed. They do so many things that we would never dream of doing in a million years. Do you know what nurses really do? They save lives people! All of the things and duties you have witnessed them do, these are only a part of what they are and what they do. They are life savers, in more ways than one. They are educators, advocators, and all around health care professionals. Without nurses, our health care system would simply fail. Plain and simple, it would fail and would not work without them.

However there is always some threat for every profession.[6]

A Threat to the Backbone of Our Healthcare System: Restricting Access to Nursing

Nurses are the backbone of our nation's healthcare system. As our population ages, the continued growth of our nursing workforce will be more critical than ever before.

Despite this fact, a burgeoning movement is underway that would limit access to careers in the field. A small contingent of special interest groups is advocating that certain hospitals restrict employment only to those with bachelor's degrees in nursing (BSN). Their efforts would have catastrophic results not just for those with associate degrees in nursing (ASN), but for our nation's healthcare system as a whole. It may also result in increased healthcare costs. One of the greatest concerns is that their position is supported by claims that just aren't true. For example, those promoting the BSN as a necessary prerequisite to a nursing career infer that ASN-credentialed nurses provide a diminished quality of care as compared to BSN-credentialed nurses. However, there is no evidence supporting these claims. Even studies that call for an increase in BSN-credentialed nurses -- including a 2010 study by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies -- have found no relationship between the education level and patient outcomes.

All candidates, regardless of their education level, take the same national licensure exam to become RNs -- the National Certification Licensing Examination (NCLEX). Today, in fact, the majority of new RNs are educated in ASN programs. If the NCLEX is the true determinant of career readiness, then, how can it be argued that one path that prepares students for the NCLEX is superior to another? The truth is, this argument is invalid, and it obscures the very real need for nursing candidates to have op-

tions.[7]

In the Indian scenario also, some of the threats persists in our system.

Nurses are not involved in the decision making.

Threat in decentralizing process.

Lack of resources.

No financial independence.

Minimum use of rewards and incentives.

Translation of knowledge and skill into practice.

No educational increments for the nurses.

Hindrance in development of nurses to attain their goals.

Improper communication techniques.

Educational disparity for the same post.

Adaptation/Implementation of new rules/regulation and policies which is not properly interpreted.

Minimum avenues for training and development.

Choices of postings in their workplace.

Working with competencies, commitment, transparency and honesty.

Preferring nurses with no registration (MNC) to work in the private sector.

Lack of computer training useful for patient care.

Lack of interest of nurses in diploma level courses.

Widening the gap between nursing education verses nursing service.

Absence of research environment among nurses and many more

Conclusion:

Nurses play a crucial role in every patient's experience – whether in a hospital, doctor's office or community clinic. While doctors often receive much of the praise, and they certainly deserve credit, nurses sometimes do not receive the level of thanks that they should for all of the time and effort that they put into a patient's care. Nurses are the people behind the scenes, the ones who make sure that everything is running smoothly. Nursing is the backbone of the medical field; it is essential to the care and well-being of each and every patient.

Although nurses are the heart and backbone of healthcare, the constraints which the nurses are facing is not communicated to their authorities and also misunderstood. There is little appreciation which amounts to lack of interest and frustration among nurses in spite of too much work overload. Also the nurse patient ratios are not maintained. Still her accountability is questioned. Will the authorities pay attention on the needs of nurses? Are the nurses recognized in the society and called unsung heroes in real sense?

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