



DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE FORENSIC NURSING CARE PROTOCOL: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH

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ABSTRACT The new expanded area of nursing care is Forensic Nursing care but in India forensic nursing is an infancy stage. There are various subspecialty under forensic nursing namely Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner, Death Investigator, Nurse Advocate, forensic psychiatric and so on. Forensic Nurse plays a major role in emergency department, trauma care unit but there is no standard protocol, policy to work independent nursing practice in this context. Forensic nursing specialization very recently started in India. So, a practice guideline or protocol is very much essential to establish an independent forensic nursing care practice. Conceptual framework explains the interrelationship between theory, concept and variables. For establishing a comprehensive forensic nursing care protocol this conceptual framework helps nurses to identify and illustrate the interrelationship between comprehensive forensic nursing care, patient advocacy and court testimony. This section explains two theoretical model which are useful for establishing this conceptual framework. For development of protocol The Forensic Nursing Conceptual Model by Lynch 2011 and for evaluation of effectiveness Donabedian Model of Health Care Quality to be adopted.

KEYWORDS : Comprehensive Forensic Nursing care, Protocol

INTRODUCTION:

'Every contact leaves a trace'..... Edmund Locard

As per Taber's Cyclopaedic medical dictionary (21st edition), Forensic nursing is defined as "A subspecialty of nursing in which nurses participate in sexual assault examinations and other legal affairs affecting mental, occupational and public health"².

The annual report 'crime in India-2019' by the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) indicated that a total of 405861 cases of crime against women were registered in India during 2019. The crime rate registered per lakh women population was 62.4 in 2019 in comparison with 58.8 in 2018 (6). In Indian health care delivery system, all forensic cases first managed by emergency department but there is no specialised training in forensic science³.

Forensic nursing has recently emerged as an expanding specialty within the broader field of nursing practice. In addition to having a major role in many forensic department, forensic nurse can be extremely important in the identification, gathering and preservation of forensic evidence and testimony in court⁴.

Establishing standardized care protocols enables nurses to manage forensic cases ethically and effectively, ensuring appropriate support for victims and their families. A conceptual framework guide to Formulate a comprehensive forensic nursing care protocol and evaluation of its effectiveness.

Comprehensive Forensic Nursing Care:

A comprehensive forensic nursing care emphasizes not only taking care of physical symptoms but also caring of all aspect of victims and their perpetrators including psychological, social, legal and ethical.

A comprehensive forensic nursing care protocol guides a first contact nurse for a systematic, organize, evidence-based care for victims, family and community of violence, trauma, accident, abuse. It also makes a path for court testimony of a forensic nurse.

Conceptual Frame Work:

The theoretical basis for forensic nursing was first established through a conceptual model, the integrated practice model for forensic nursing science, developed by Virginia Lynch as her master's thesis project (Lynch, 1990).

Virginia A. Lynch (2011) pioneer of Forensic Nursing, further described and refined Forensic Nursing Conceptual Model for taking care of forensic victims. This model to be used to formulate a comprehensive forensic care protocol. This model provides a structured way to understand the unique need of forensic victims, forensic science and law. This model emphasizes that forensic nurses

provide care within both healing and justice system⁴.

Development Of Comprehensive Forensic Nursing Care Protocol:

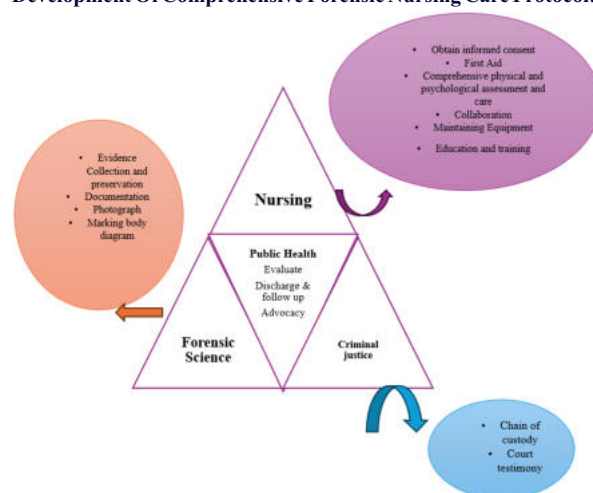


Fig.1 Development of Forensic Nursing care Protocol

Adopted From Forensic Nursing Conceptual Model (By Virginia A. Lynch 2011)

This model closely related to development of comprehensive forensic nursing care protocol in major four domain namely nursing, Forensic science, criminal justice and public health. Comprehensive Forensic nursing care protocol helps to provide qualitative evidence based forensic care of these four domains. Concept of these frameworks facilitated to develop a good quality protocol for caring forensic victims and their family.

Forensic nurse is first person in emergency department who directly handle the forensic victims and their family members in all forensic situations. The protocol aims to provide high quality, evidence based forensic care across these domains. It ensures systematic victim management and support family and community well-being.

Key components include:

Nursing: Obtaining informed consent from victim and relatives for collecting actual evidence before tampering the evidence, perform quick and thorough physical examination, collect evidence with competency and provide first aids management and comprehensive holistic care, decontamination and care of used equipment, collaborative patient care along with other team member and continuous knowledge upgradation with training and research.

- **Area of forensic science:** Include collection of actual evidence and preservation, proper and correct documentation, photography and body diagram marking.
- **Criminal justice domain:** Maintaining an appropriate chain of custody and providing testimony in court.
- **Public health domain:** Conducting evaluation, discharge and follow up of victim.

Care of all these aspects must strengthen the Comprehensive forensic nursing care protocol. The protocol must be standardized, contextually relevant to Indian and comprehensible to all members of the forensic care team.

Evaluate The Effectiveness Of Protocol:

Donabedian Model of quality Health care to be adopted for evaluation of protocol effectiveness. As per this model quality health care analyse through three interconnected component-like structure, process and outcome. Structure refers to health care context, process emphasise way of delivery of care and outcome measures the extends of effectiveness of care.

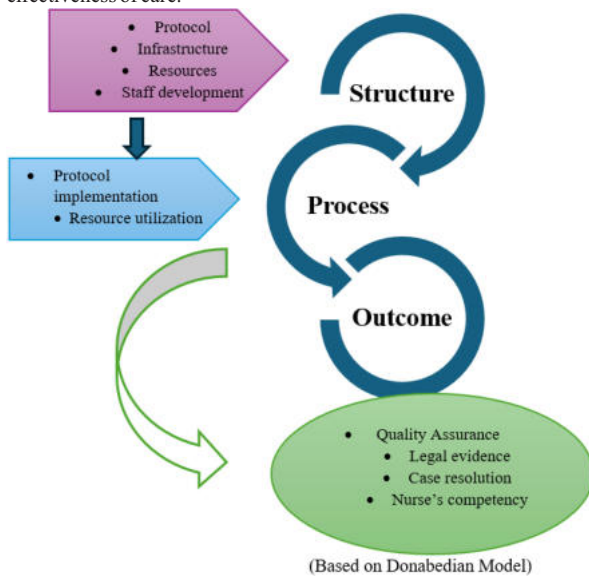


Fig: 2 Evaluations of comprehensive Forensic Nursing care Protocol

In this explanation,

Structure: Refers to comprehensive forensic nursing care protocol which include totality of victim care guide line along with evidence collection, documentation, follow up, referral and testimony in court. Other component of structure is appropriate resource in terms of knowledgeable nursing staff and other team members, adequate money for development of appropriate forensic infrastructure including examination area, forensic laboratory, staff development and material for forensic care, evidence collection kit and preservation facilities.

Process: Involves the implementation of approved comprehensive forensic nursing care protocol and authentic utilization of resources.

Outcome: Reflects the quality of health care facilities in forensic field in terms of patient's satisfaction, forensic case resolution, nurse's accountability in the field of forensic care and justice for forensic victim.

Thus, the development and evaluation of comprehensive forensic nursing care protocol are suggested and supported by both the Forensic Nursing Conceptual Model and Donabedian Model of Health Care Quality.

CONCLUSION:

The conceptual framework serves as the foundation for developing and evaluating the comprehensive forensic nursing care protocol. It guides the selection of indicators, assessment tools and data analysis for forensic nursing care protocol and practice. In modern context forensic science and forensic nurses has vast area of activity but with out proper protocol and policy a forensic nurse can not able to provide actual forensic care.

A Comprehensive forensic nursing care protocol must provide an appropriate nursing care guideline for handling the forensic cases, ensuring justice and promoting holistic victim care.

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