

Healthy Student Nurse: Brighter Tomorrow

Sr. (Prof.) Gilbert

As Trained Nurses' Association of India has decided the theme for this year SNA Biennial Conference "Healthy Student Nurse: Brighter Tomorrow", I am sure that selection of this theme is apt to make a change in health care globally.

When health is absent, wisdom cannot reveal itself, art cannot manifest, strength cannot fight, wealth becomes useless and intelligence cannot be applied." (Herophilus).

To prepare an enlightened nurse for tomorrow, consider the changing demographics and increasing diversity of the society and nursing student.

While considering the diversity and changing demographics of today's society, it is very important to think about the paradox of our time

Paradox of our time

More medicine, less wellness; Added years to life, not life to years; Times of fast food, slow digestion; Tall men, short character; More degrees, less commonsense; More experts, but more problems; Write more, learn less; Bigger houses, smaller families; Multiplied possession, less values; Buy more, enjoy it less; Have been all the way to Moon and back but have trouble crossing the street to meet the neighbour; Learn to rush but not to wait.

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Keep in pace with our time, today's nursing education, nursing practice and nursing research must embrace and respond to the changing demographics and diversity.

While planning nursing education to prepare healthy nurses for brighter tomorrow, selection of the educational methods, policies, curriculum, clinical practice settings and research priorities need to value and reflect the diversity of the student body and changing population.

While thinking about the preparation of nurses for tomorrow, I would like to point out a research study to explore motivators and disincentives for choosing a nursing career, conducted by Partners Chief Nursing Council of Boston, America in 2002. Surveyors conducted 400 telephone interviews of people in two target groups. Teenage students in grades 7 through 11 and adults age 18 to 39 who said they had consider switching careers. Among the samples 75% were female and 25% male.

Their opinion about the professional nurses' role today was studied and reported as that among the students 66% and adults 73% reported Nurses need to have a solid understanding of medical technology. 64% of students and 76% of the adults opinioned that Nurses have to react quickly to situations in a fast paced environment. Among the sample 59% of students and 73% of the adults reported that Nurses are

professionals who need to be skilled in the latest medical technology. 40% of the students and 38% of the adults said that Nurses work closely with doctors to make important decision about patient care. Both the groups also reported that Nurses are critical thinkers capable and intelligent problem solvers. 38% of the students and 50% of the adults were of the view that Nurses need to be creative to care for the patients. Among the participants 34% of the students and 29% of the adults opinioned that Nurses are becoming more respected and appreciated in the work place.

This study also brought out the perceived benefits of nursing career such as; a sense of making a difference, a sense of feeling what do you do is important, working with a group of people you enjoy, taking up challenging responsibility, good salary, job stability, schedule flexibility.

While reflecting the above opinions, we have to think deeply "Does today's nursing education in India prepare our nursing graduates to meet the role expected of them for brighter tomorrow?" For this we need to require a holistic model preparation. So training should focus on physical, social, mental, emotional, spiritual and intellectual strengthening of each Indian nursing student to compete in the global market. Major global crisis in nursing today are; position lying vacant due to inadequate number

of qualified personals, steady brain-drain due to unattractiveness in the job environment & poor payment in our country and man, money, material shortage for training.

In this scenario I would like to highlight certain issues in nursing education today, using a mnemonic word 'IMPOS-SIBLE'.

- I - Infrastructure: - poor class room, laboratory and hostel
- M - Manpower shortage in quality and quantity
- P - Poor practical training field: Clinical field, equipment, staff
- O - Over weighed curriculum: in number of courses and hours
- S - Selection of students: - External pressure to sacrifice merit

- S - Student status: - Use of students for service
- I - Improvement of faculty: - lack of opportunities for deputation, in service training
- B - Budgetary limitations
- L - Library facilities: - books, journals, internet access
- E - Educational freedom: - Lack of autonomy, rigidity

The deliberation and discussion of the conference should be an eye opener to think and strengthen the nursing education in India. I am sure that the theme of this conference Healthy Student Nurse Brighter Tomorrow and sub themes: Nursing education : limited resources, unlimited commitment, New strategies for im-

proving access in nursing education and Nursing students: Challenges ahead will help you to dream for a brighter future.

All of you have to go home with a dream at the end of this conference i.e.; I have a dream for myself, for my sick brethren, for hospitals of India - should be, for my professional colleagues, for my country India, for my professional association T.N.A.I., for future generation - should be, and for my family.

I wish and pray all the deliberations and discussions of these two days, enlighten your young minds to fulfill the dream.

I declare that the theme of the conference is officially unfolded for discussion and deliberations

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