

The Challenge of Secondary Prevention

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A SAFE life is a basic right. It leads to a longer and more productive life. To lose a healthy life only through carelessness is a tragic waste. The safety of each is the responsibility of all.

At least three and a half million people on our planet die every year as a result of injury caused either by chance or accidents or intentionally.

Deviation from Normal

Secondary prevention means identifying the deviation from normal as far as possible with prompt and adequate treatment.

Every individual has physical, psychological, social and spiritual homoeokinesis. Whenever there is a threat, either internal or external, to the homoeokinesis, it comes into play automatically, and brings them back to normal. When these mechanisms are not effective, then there is a need for intervention from outside, so the Nurse has got an important role, as a part of health team, to help the people to come back to the normal life, by identifying the deviation in initial stages. The first duty of the Nurse is to save the life of individuals by taking necessary measures, assist the individual by all means in order to attain an optimum level of functioning.

Staying healthy is within the reach of all, requiring simple measures that can be carried out by individuals, families and the community. It is well known that with the lamp of knowledge the darkness of ignorance, superstition and diseases are soon dispelled.

To attain 'Health for All by 2000

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A.D.' first primary preventive measures are to be taken. If there is negligence in implementing the measures at the individual level or at the group level, it will result in deviation. We have to identify the event and assess the risk factors, estimate the extent of damage and take prompt action. Any delay in making right diagnosis or not taking prompt action is also a kind of negligence of an individual, family and the community due to their unawareness and negligence of health personnel in involving the people, i.e., community participation in health measures. The health programmes initiated by the government at the level of secondary prevention are innumerable.

The Problems are: 1. Physical disorders, 2. Psychological deviations, 3. Social disorders, 4. Spiritual deviations.

The process of Nursing Education or Health Education involves learning, relearning or sometimes even unlearning. To enlighten the members of the community about the most valuable asset, i.e., health, is by community diagnosis.

Physical Disorders

Malaria: If the PHN or Health Worker has negligence in taking history, collecting blood smears, sending to the lab for investigation, giving presumptive treatment, or if she does not have the efficiency, sincerity, honesty the disease will automatically progress and complications will develop. Then the control and eradication measures will be a failure.

T.B.: The other condition is Tuberculosis, which is another major health problem of our country. The control of T.B. can be done by taking appro-

priate and definite intervention through primary prevention and controls or the T.B. client at the secondary level.

In our community, the prevalence of disease is more because of poverty, ignorance, superstitions and misconceptual ideas.

Really it is a challenge for health personnel in order to control the prevalence of disease with a secondary level of intervention.

Leprosy: We all know how the people will feel about Leprosy as a dreadful disease, as it has a social stigma. By knowing how the community treats, if any person is suffering with Leprosy, people postpone treatment as long as possible, for the sake of family first. They suffer by confinement on themselves when it is more obvious, for their loved ones, they leave them and suffer physically with proper shelter, diet and treatment these because of their ignorances. I think it is a contagious disease but as we know all types of leprosy are not contagious. Leprosy can be cured with prolonged treatment. As we said it is not so easy to handle with care the cases at the secondary level. If we can convince the community with health education then it will be possible to diagnose early and it is easy to control and then to eradicate leprosy from our community, with this we can prevent all the agony caused by Leprosy in our society.

STD and AIDS

If we think of pre-adolescence and adolescent group, the major problems that come to our mind are STD and

AIDS. The PHN along with the medicosocial worker have patience to empathically assess the risky clients. Those who are working in the community should be more alert to identify the cases with symptoms of AIDS related complex syndrome by knowing the life style of the people. So by knowing and showing concern, they can do justice in identification of clients and getting treatment for them.

Killer Diseases in Children

To decrease child mortality and morbidity rates with the six killer diseases, immunization is a powerful weapon. If PHNs are not sincere in their working life, the cold chain system is not maintained without giving in proper time. Even if any cases are reported also, they will not do outbreak services. The community people are also not cooperating in spite of knowing the importance of immunization schedule. It may be either because of their negligence or overconfidence it may be due to lack of other customs, misconceptions or traditions of people. So we have the inability to handle children's life with care and with more commitment that we can work hard in order to motivate the public as well as the health team members, to control the diseases so that children can have a normal healthy life.

Psychological Deviation

The PHN has to create awareness about emotional needs of human beings to the community and educate them about causes of mental illness, disease conditions and treatment. Rehabilitation activities, as far as possible, should be undertaken by showing concern, love, sympathy, patience and providing opportunities towards a normal life. For all these, 'family based' health services are necessary to identify

emotional problems and early symptoms of mental illness to help family members to cope with overwhelming stress and treat problems of individual and social maladjustment when required. To prepare individual and family members for psychiatric care, guidance and counselling services and help families with marital conflict, disturbed parent-child relationships and strained interpersonal relationships, the PHN must be prepared, well equipped and be resourceful.

Spiritual Deviation

India is religiously oriented. Indians have faith in God, whatever may be the religion. God is loving, active and involved in the world, can bring comfort and strength to a person overwhelmed with grief and wrestling with guilty feeling, loneliness or the mystery of suffering.

Illness may increase one's feelings of alienation from God and precipitate illness. Nursing intervention can radically enrich the care of the whole person and thus facilitate healing.

Spiritual care is the result of many influences, including our family background, our Nursing education, and

experience, the institutional policies where we work and the people we work with.

The Nursing process is an ongoing cycle of assessing, observing, interpreting, planning, implementing and evaluating.

The therapeutic use of self involves giving supportive presence to another human being. The elements are listening, empathy, resourcefulness, humility and commitment acquired through faith, education and practice.

Social Disorders

The individual is a member of the society. To have harmony with the society every society formulates certain norms and laws and order.

To deal with a socially deviated client, positive steps can be taken by an individual, family and community towards promoting mental and social well being. Community participation is more crucial, clinicals should be conducted free of cost involving teachers, community leaders, organisers and outreach workers. Only by these efforts we can give guidance, counselling and educating the individuals who are in need.

Mrs. Ackamma Alexander is Patron of Maharashtra Branch

Mrs. Ackamma Alexander, wife of the Hon'ble Governor of Maharashtra, Mr. P.C. Alexander, has kindly agreed to be the Patron of the Maharashtra State Branch, TNAI.

On behalf of the Nurses of Maharashtra, the President of the State Branch, Mr. Anand Bijapurkar and the Secretary, Ms. Gracy Mathai, have expressed their thanks to the State's first lady for her gesture and we hope that her patronage and advice would strengthen the Association.