

Excellence in Nursing Education Concepts, Strategies and Practices

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Concept

To understand the concept of Nursing education one has to understand the concept of Nursing as well as of education and a clear concept of Nursing education shall emerge out of it.

Nursing: Nursing means to look after, to take care, to help people sick or well, cope with their health needs. Nursing is recognising the health needs, understanding and meeting the needs. It includes prevention of illness, promotion of health, therapeutic care and rehabilitation. Hence it is a service to the individual, families and to the society.

Education: Education is a change of behaviour in a desired direction. Any education aims at all-round development of an individual's education besides making an individual vocationally self-dependent, also to mature him / her intellectually, culturally refined, socially efficient and spiritually advanced.

Nursing Education: Nursing Education is to bring changes in the behaviour of a Student Nurse, so as to prepare her to play her effective role as an individual, as a good responsible citizen and fulfill her role, functions and responsibilities of a professional Nurse.

Any one who successfully com-

pletes a diploma or degree programme in Nursing education is titled as Nurse and Midwife and has the permission to practise Nursing after getting herself registered with the Registration Council.

Strategies

Nursing education can be divided into three phases.

- A Pre-Nursing Education.
- B Nursing Education.
- C Post-Nursing Education.

A. Pre-Nursing Education: In order to attract young, intelligent girls for adopting Nursing as a career, the Nurses' Association should establish an agency which must spread information of Nursing to the prospective candidates. This agency should give wide publicity and guidance about Nursing education, Nursing services, working conditions of Nurses, job responsibilities of Nurses, career mobility, job avenues, etc. The best way shall be to introduce Nursing career guidance in High Schools or during vacation periods. A small booklet can be developed on 'Nursing as a Career' or 'Profile of a Nurse' and distributed among High School girls. These girls will have an opportunity and time to introspect, think and make a right decision. The choice is to be decided by a careful and intelligent planning so that the candidate shall have personal and professional sat-

isfaction and contribute usefully to the society and the profession.

B. Nursing Education: In order to provide quality Nursing education and to produce skilled and efficient Nurses, the Nurse educator shall take care of three important steps: Selection of the Candidate; Implementation of the Curriculum; and Evaluation.

C. Post-Nursing-Education: Post-Nursing Education is at a stage when a candidate has graduated and has been registered. She has been posted for clinical practice and she still needs to continue her education.

Post-Nursing Education shall consist of following important steps: Orientation, Supervision; In-Service Education; Evaluation; and Re-registration.

Besides these three main strategies the other two steps required for improving Nursing education shall be: Development of Teaching Material; and Conduct of Research.

Practices

If these are the strategies, how shall these be put into practice so that the final product comes out to be exactly the one which meets the philosophy of Nursing education as has been described before.

Selection of Candidates: Selection of candidates for admission into Nursing education is the first step, and one looks at it to be the

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most significant part of Nursing education. The foundation, the development, the future, the quality of Nursing practice, and the status shall depend on the kind of candidates selected for entry into Nursing education. Selection of the right kind of candidates is *sine-qua-non* for elevating the standards of Nursing Services. Candidates who have aptitude and attitude towards Nursing should only be selected for admission. We had been talking for years to keep a Psychologist as a member of the selection committee but this has never been put into practice. We say that Nursing education should be given in the institutions of higher learning. This means our education, and the faculty must also be comparable to those disciplines. All professional education systems like Medicine, Engineering, Law, Business Management and Banking have introduced an entry test not only at the initial level but for the post-graduate levels also. I am sorry to say that Nurses even in the highest positions, those who have decision making authority, are very resistant to change. If we have to advance like other professions we must not be left behind and must introduce Pre-Nursing Test for entry into the profession so that we have intelligent girls and boys with the right attitudes for Nursing who shall feel pride in being the member of the profession, and shall then strive hard to get for education and Nursing services their due status in the society.

Preparation of Candidates

The present system of Nursing education is preparing two types of basic Nurses, i.e., General Nurse

and Midwife either with a diploma or degree programme and an Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife who is prepared to work at the grass-roots level in the community.

But the new concept accepted internationally is that there should be two types of Nursing personnel, i.e., professional Nurse with a degree preparation and Auxiliary Nurse/Vocational Nurse. An Auxiliary Nurse is to assist or help the professional Nurse in the discharge of her duties.

These two types of Nurses should be available in the hospital as well as in the community. All schools of Nursing should be upgraded to the degree level in a phased manner. Post-Certificate B.Sc Nursing should be continued and strengthened for existing diploma Nurses to obtain higher education. Distant learning opportunity, though, has already started from this year by Indira Gandhi National Open University, Delhi and for B.Sc. Nursing course it is a welcome step, so that more and more Nurses along with their jobs can enhance their education. One University throughout the country cannot meet the needs of the entire Nursing community. Hence it is essential that at least one University in each State should follow the lead and start a programme of distant learning for Nurses.

After basic preparation at the university level, specialisation at Post-Graduate level shall be available where Nurses can choose the area of their choice to work. They can either be Nurse Clinician as an institutional Nurse or Community Health Nurse or can opt for Nursing education. Again, Nurses working in clinical area, specially those in specialised units like I.C.U.,

I.C.C.U, Dialysis and Neonatal units, etc., should be Nurse specialists holding qualification in specific clinical areas of Nursing. The existing Colleges of Nursing should be upgraded to National Institutes of Nursing Education. It is a matter of pride and pleasure that College of Nursing, P.G.I., Chandigarh is being upgraded and the foundation stone to this effect has been laid and the grant has been received from the Government of India in the Eighth Plan.

All Schools of Nursing attached to District Hospitals and Auxiliary Nurse Midwives' schools should be affiliated with Senior Secondary School Examination Boards. Till such time the administrative control of these Schools must lie with the Principal, School of Nursing, who can plan and implement the programme according to the needs of the students. The High Power Committee's report has clearly brought out that 70 to 80 per cent of Nursing Service is still being provided by the student Nurses. Students should be placed in the clinical area in reference to their learning needs and must never be used for service needs of the hospital. They should be assigned tasks which correspond to their level of preparation. All schools must have adequate staff, separate and adequate budget, teaching equipment, physical facilities, libraries, laboratories, etc.

Nursing education needs to be re-organised so that learning starts in the community process which helps students to understand the working of community life and nature of the social structure. Nursing education should emphasize on health and factors which contribute to healthful living. Educa-

tion needs to start from healthy family and move to disease and disability. Transition from disease-oriented to health-oriented education is to be initiated. Nurse educators must monitor continuously new developments in Technology. Self-instructional media programmed instruction and computer-based learning are to be used in Nursing education.

Nursing Teachers mainly concentrate on the completion of theoretical and practical hours of training for examination purposes. But I strongly feel that we shall have to give equal weightage to development of the students as individuals and as responsible citizens beside developing them as skilled Nurses. This is the only means of preparing good Nurses. Along with Nursing skills Nursing Teachers must develop the right attitudes, social and moral values, human relations, skills, and pass on to them ethics, etiquettes, mannerism and civic sense.

Evaluation

Evaluation has to be a continuous process. Students are to be assessed not only in the examination but on their performance all the year through. Along with technical skills, personal qualities of the student must also be evaluated. It is not only the students who are to be evaluated but the teaching faculty also needs to be continuously evaluated.

Post Nursing Education

New graduates need to have a well planned and organised orientation to the clinical area of their posting. They must be oriented to

the staff, equipment, working conditions and clients with whom they are to work. They also need guidance and supervision in achieving professional standards.

In service Education: No education leading to adequacy of knowledge and proficiency in skill can properly equip an individual for life-long practice. Continuing education is a vital and necessary component of Nursing education. Continuing education programmes should be made available at each institution, district, state, national and even international level to help Nurses for personal and professional growth and to assure competence of the practitioners. Every Nurse must have an opportunity to refresh her knowledge at least once in two years. Continuing education should not only be available to all but should be made mandatory at each step of promotion in all fields of Nursing.

Nurses on the job must be evaluated periodically in terms of knowledge and performance and in-service education needs to be planned on the basis of their needs.

At present registration authorities are registering Nurses and issuing permission for life-long practice. It is necessary that a system of renewal of recognition / registration every five years is introduced. It should be made mandatory that all Nurses must attend a short educational course and sit for a test as a pre-requisite to re-registration.

Besides these major strategies the two most important steps for improving Nursing education are development of educational material and conduct of research. No education can grow or develop without having proper resources.

Nursing Tutors must take an initiative to write and develop educational material like books, films and slides, etc. Trained Nurses' Association of India is establishing a Central Institute of Nursing Education which hopefully should keep this as an objective for the working of the Institute.

Again, education has to be reinforced with research. The quality of practice of any discipline and ultimately the future of health care depends on Nursing research to generate an organised body of Nursing knowledge. A cell of Nursing Research should be established at each institution and at State and Central levels to undertake research and its findings should be widely communicated to Nurses for implementation and follow-up action.

References

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