

Research in Nursing Education

Dr. (Mrs) Naina S. Potdar

There are many questions in the field of Nursing Education today. These questions can be considered by nurse administrators and teachers to find valid answers to upgrade the standard of Nursing Education. The ultimate goal of the Nursing profession is to establish a scientific base of knowledge fundamental to the practice so that the standard of patient care improves and promotes quality care with a higher degree of excellence in the hospitals and the community.

These questions can be dealt with by the application of research. The overall purpose of research for any profession is aimed at discovering the truth of the discipline. Nursing research focuses on Nursing interventions, procedures, techniques and improved methods of patient care. The Institute of Nursing Education imparts education in the field of Nursing. After the completion of Nursing training, nurses are placed to serve in hospitals or the community. They make decisions and solve problems each and every day in the process of caring.

Importance of Research

Research is needed as change in Nursing practice is required by

Dr. (Mrs) Naina S. Potdar, was formerly Principal, L.T. College of Nursing, S.N.D.T. University, Bombay.

the introduction of new medicines, equipments and treatments, related to care of people/patients. Research in Nursing Education is needed to discover new facts, to provide a factual descriptive picture of the situation, uncover problems and investigate the possible causes. Research in Nursing Education is the tool for evaluating changes and past achievements, an aid in showing the way for future progress.

Historical Background

Research in Nursing is as old as the profession itself. Florence Nightingale was described as a reformer, reactionary and researcher. Her research has influenced health care in general, and Nursing more specifically. She is most noted for her data collection and statistical analyses during the Crimean War. She identified the need to gather data on the environment to determine its influence on patients' health.

Major advances were made in Nursing Research during 1950s. Research became a higher priority with the strong support of such Nursing leaders as Henderson and Abdellah. Educational studies were conducted in the 1950s and 1960s that influenced Nursing Research. In 1953, an Institute of Research and Service in Nursing Education was established at Teach-

ers' College, Columbia University, which provided learning experiences in research for doctoral students.

Miss Margaretta Craig, Principal, College of Nursing, Delhi University, was determined to start Nursing Research activities in India from 1955. Dr. Edith M. Buchannan, Vice-Principal, College of Nursing, Delhi, through a WHO Fellowship, completed her doctorate in Education degree programme from Columbia University, New York, in 1953 and then she, as Principal of the above College, succeeded in establishing the long cherished Master of Nursing degree programme in October 1959. Today, this programme is offered in 11 institutions and the programme requires a research project to be completed by each candidate as a partial fulfilment towards the Master's Degree in Nursing.

Research Strategies

The research approach in the area of Nursing Education may be as follows: 1. Quasi-experimental research; 2. Ex-post-facto research; 3. Historical research; 4. Development research; 5. Correlational research; 6. Evaluative research; and 7. Action research.

The abovementioned strategies may be used to conduct researches in the area of Nursing Education and there are multi-

dimensional aspects that can be studied. These aspects determine ultimately preparations of nurse practitioners. The education of nurses has implications in the following areas:

1. **Students:** Selection of students; curriculum development; teaching/learning process; all round development of students/ socio-cultural impact; preparation and use of learning packages; evaluation and performance appraisal; and records and reports.

2. **Faculty:** Recruitment, selection and placement; staff development programme; performance appraisal; higher education and research; and motivation and morale.

3. **Environment Conducive to Effective Teaching:** Audio-visual aids; procurement and maintenance of equipment; setting up of laboratory; selection of clinical field, co-ordination

with various organisations for students' all round development; and institutional climate.

4. **Management of Institute of Nursing Education or Nursing Training Institutions:** Finance Management; Personnel Management; Materials Management; extended and expanded role of institutions; and quality and cost in Nursing Education.

5. **Evaluation Studies in the Area of Nursing Curriculum of Various Nursing Training Programmes:** There is an urgent need to prepare adequate nurse researchers to conduct research by using various strategies so that the standard of Nursing Education improves. The subject of Research Methodology is taught to Nursing students at degree and post-graduate levels and this in turn will prepare nurses to carry out research and increase the relevance to Nursing practice. Tomorrow's

Nursing Research will continue to lay emphasis on studies, the human experience of stress and coping, evaluations of Nursing interventions, the transfer of research findings into textbooks and practice, a focus on high-risk and underserved groups such as elderly and minorities and the creation of a body of scientific knowledge.

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