

An Approach to Systematic Nursing

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Introduction

The purpose of this article is to discuss changing concepts of Nursing and to outline briefly Systematic Nursing and the phases involved in implementing this approach. Systematic Nursing is a new concept which is a scientific and problem-solving approach in Nursing. 'Nursing Now', an article published in *The Nursing Journal of India*, (September, 1983 Vol. LXXIV, No. 9) made me think aloud and prepare this article for nurses in India.

Is the concept of Nursing in India changing? If so, this article will help one understand the changing concept a little better.

The Health Care System and Nursing in India

It seems that the health care system in India is fast changing and aiming at providing comprehensive health service to all people in the country. Samuel, J. (1983) states that because of the changing health delivery system, the role of the nurse is also changing. Nurses have assumed a variety of responsibilities. Recent advances in technology have resulted in specialised Nursing practices in intensive care units, coronary units, transplant care, community health services, and so on. Nurses are receiving advanced education in such specialities and nurse educators in India are planning to teach the Nursing process.

For these reasons nurse education in India is fast advancing. It is four decades now since India started a 'Bachelor's' programme for nurses and two decades since 'Master's' level programme was instituted. A number of nurses have gone through university education and acquired knowledge in biological and social sciences. Despite all these striking changes in nurse education, Nursing practice is still based on the traditional medical model and is task-oriented in many hospitals. It is not only gaining knowledge that is important but it is the ability and opportunity to apply that knowledge in the care of the patient that is so. Nursing has to take a new direction. In order to provide individualised patient care Nursing must be reorganised round the individual needs of the patient.

What is Nursing?

Many authors found it difficult to define Nursing because Nursing is so complex. Considering a few definitions will help us understand the concept better.

"Nursing is action. The term Nursing is considered as a verb, an action word, is defined in the dictionaries by the use of the noun, for example, to act as or be employed as a nurse. A nurse is defined as one trained to care for and wait upon the sick, injured or infirm under the direction of a physician". (Orem:1980, p. 14)

"Nursing is an encounter with a client and his family in which the nurse observes, supports, communicates, ministers, and teachers; she contributes to the maintenance of optimum health and provides care during illness until the client is able to assume responsibility for the fulfilment of his own basic human needs. When necessary she provides compassionate assistance with dying". (Yura & Walsh:1978).

King (1973) views Nursing as "a process of action, reaction, interaction, and transaction whereby nurses assist people of any age group, meet their basic needs in performing activities of daily living and cope with health and illness at some particular point in the life cycle".

Whether Nursing is caring for the patients and his family or an encounter with the patient the essence remains the same. Henderson (1966) has given a comprehensive definition: "The unique function of the nurse is to assist the individuals, sick or well, in performing those activities contributing to health or its recovery (or to a peaceful death) that he would perform unaided if he had the necessary strength, will or knowledge. And to do this in such a way as to help him gain independence as rapidly as possible."

This definition implies comprehensive care, self care and substitute care. The nurse substitutes for what the patient lacks to make him 'complete', 'whole' or 'independent'. Henderson further states that this aspect of her work, this part of her function, she initiates and controls, of this she is the master. "The nurse must in a sense get inside the skin of each of her patients in order to know what he needs."

Nursing: A Scientific Method

The definitions of Nursing given by different authors emphasised the caring aspect of Nursing. Watson (1979) states this caring aspect of Nursing as science of caring. The dictionaries give meanings for science as knowledge, knowledge ascertained by observation and experiment, critically tested, systematised and brought under general principles, a department or branch of such knowledge or study, a skilled craft, trained skills and so on. Even though the above meanings of science are applicable to Nursing, it is sad to note that Nursing has not been recognised as a science.

Nursing Care

Nursing care refers to those aspects of Nursing that are intrinsic to the actual nurse-patient/client process that produces therapeutic results in the person being served (Watson: 1979). Watson refers to this basic care of Nursing as comprising the philo-

sophy and science of caring. Curative factors aim at curing the disease of the patient and caring factors aim at the caring process that helps the person attain or maintain health or die a peaceful death. These caring factors are deeply human activities.

Caring implies that the nurse is concerned about the patient, his health, illness problems and his family and the help or assistance the nurse renders to the patient and his family to cope with the health and illness problems. The nurse helps the patient to find solution to his problems. Caring includes prevention of illness, promotion of health, maintenance of health and rehabilitation.

In order to do this, Nursing has to be brought under knowledge, knowledge ascertained by observing the patients, tested and systematised.

Systematic Nursing

What is Systematic Nursing? The term Systematic Nursing may sound new to many nurses in India. Let me explain what it means. Perhaps considering a few definitions will help us to understand this new concept better.

A systematic way of assessing the patient's needs, planning the care, implementing and evaluating the outcome of care given is described as Systematic Nursing. It is a scientific and problem-solving approach in Nursing. In this caring science our concern is the patient and his family, prevention of disease and promotion of health. Systematic Nursing is the process of Nursing or Nursing itself.

In the USA the explosion of discontent had stimulated a series of research projects which eventually lead to the application of scientific principles to the provision of Nursing care at an earlier stage than in UK. Application of scientific principles in Nursing practice produced the Nursing process which is a systematic method and problem-solving approach in Nursing. There is an increased awareness and interest in implementing Systematic Nursing in the UK and some research projects were undertaken. Usage of Nursing history sheet assessment, Nursing care plan and evaluation sheets was demonstrated with successful results.

Nursing process is a conscious and active thinking and decision making in which Nursing action is planned and implemented on the basis of the assessment of needs and the results of Nursing actions are evaluated". (Marriner: 1975)

Marriner further describes Nursing process as a systematic method of planning action or actions to reach a desired goal. It is a decision-making process. It includes both cognitive and activity components. The goal of planned Nursing care is to help the individual or the family reach a state of high level of wellness. The technical, behavioural, and intellectual skills of Nursing practice are based upon theories and principles from the physical and social sciences. All of these elements are utilised in the Nursing process and thus in planning care. The starting point of Nursing process is a conception of the human being

from which the standards and the fundamental principles of the Nursing care has to be determined.

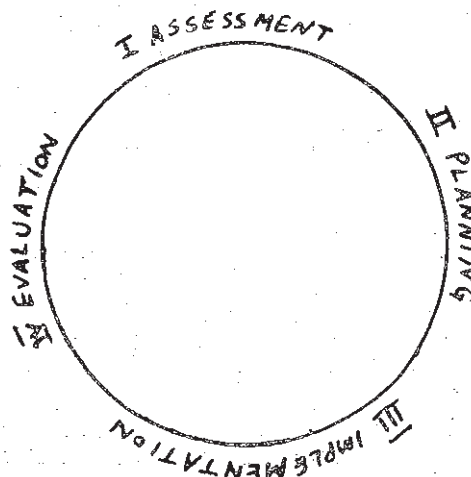
Technical skills are those skills of Nursing which range from simple to complex and from supportive to restorative. These skills must be used with intelligence and a high degree of skill and discrimination. Behavioural skills refer to skills that are needed for communication and interpersonal relationships. Intellectual skills refer to creative thinking, defining problems and deciding upon a course of action.

Long (1981) describes Nursing process as : 1. The patient is an individual and needs individual care. 2. The patient and those close to him need to participate and be consulted about the care. 3. Nursing staff need to communicate more with each other in giving care. Trained Staff, learners, agency nurse and Nursing auxiliary participate together in assessing the patient needs and planning care.

Long emphasises that in order to do this the nurse needs to rediscover the nature of Nursing which can be defined simply as helping the patient with ordinary things that temporarily or permanently he is unable to do for himself, both physical and psychological. The aim of Nursing process is to recognise the patient as a person, an individual, a total being with physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs, in his day-to-day living and the kind of care he needs in meeting or satisfying these needs, and the goals to be achieved by providing such care.

The Many Phases

The Nursing process does not suggest one exact route of providing patient care; the choice of routes vary. Various authors describe the process in various phases. Some describe six phases, some five and some four. However, they are similar rather than being different. The four commonly agreed phases are : (1) Assessment, (2) Planning, (3) Implementation and (4) Evaluation. One phase leads to the other and is an ongoing process.



Phase I : Assessment : Nursing assessment is a systematic process of collecting patient's data focusing on the total person. The assessment process requires observation, integration of interpersonal skills, knowledge from biological and social sciences, psychomotor actions, laboratory and diagnostic tests, information from other staff members and patient's relative and Nursing theories. Through this process patient's physiological, psychological, social and spiritual problems are identified, analysed and interpreted.

According to Yura & Walsh (1978) assessing is the act of reviewing a situation for the purpose of diagnosing the client's problems. This phase includes : (1) Collecting information (data) about the person. (2) Interpreting the data collected. (3) Identifying the needs of the patients for care. (4) Validating the identified needs. (5) Setting priorities for care.

A structured admission sheet, or an assessment form or a Nursing history sheet are made use of for the purpose of collecting data.

Phase II : Planning : "Planning is the determination of what can be done to assist the client. It involves setting goals, judging priorities and designing methods to resolve problems" (Yura & Walsh : 1978)

Various terms are used to describe planning : Nursing care plan, Nursing prescription and Nursing order. These are tools which help to identify the Nursing activity specific to an individual patient.

Kratz (1982) suggests four stages for planning care : (1) Determining priorities : Analysing the problems to decide which problems require priority attention. (2) Setting goals : This states what is to be achieved if the identified problems are to be alleviated. (3) Setting Nursing actions : This involves choosing methods and techniques which will enable to achieve the stated patient's goals. (4) Writing the care plan : The problems, goals and Nursing actions are recorded on the patient's Nursing care plan.

It is an ongoing process and needs to be reviewed from time to time.

Phase III : Implementation: Implementation is the actual carrying out of the care planned. Implementation is defined by WHO (*Nursing Process Work Book*: WHO/EURO/NURSG 76.1) as "carrying out interventions directed toward the accomplishment of specific objectives". The interventions comprise what the nurse does for, with and to a person in order to achieve objectives of care, including the documentation of specific Nursing intervention on the Nursing care plan.

Once the Nursing care plan is developed the implementation phase begins which is a very important step. Planned action may be instituted by the nurse/client/nurse or Nursing team/the client or his family. Implementation of Nursing process depends on intellectual interpersonal and technical skills of the nurse.

The Nursing care plan is an important tool to carry out the actual care planned according to the objectives.

Phase IV : Evaluation: Evaluation is defined as "a continuous process through which appraisal of effectiveness of the previous steps in meeting the patient's needs are provided" (Marriner: 1979).

It is measuring the effectiveness of care given to the patient against the objectives set in meeting the needs of the patient. This phase of Nursing process indicates which problems have been solved, which ones need to be assessed, replanned, implemented and evaluated. Evaluation is an ongoing process and provides feedback to give effective care to the patient. Effectiveness and efficiency of Nursing care are both considered as well as alternative approaches.

Systematic Nursing and Nursing Models

As Systematic Nursing provides a problem-oriented scientific approach to Nursing, a Nursing model provides a framework or pattern to follow. It gives a direction to act. Since many of these ideas are abstract these are presented in the form of a model. Different theorists have developed different conceptual models for practice. These are known as Nursing models.

The conceptual frameworks are based on the beliefs about man, goals of Nursing and the knowledge on which practice is based. Some examples of such models are: (1) The activities of living model—(Roper, Logan and Tierney) (2) The Self-Care Model—(Orem) (3) The Stress Adaptation Model (Saxton and Hyland) (4) Unified Model-Riehl and Roy (5) The Holistic model.

Each of these models can serve as a framework for assessment of each phase of Systematic Nursing thus giving direction and making it purposeful.

Summary

In order to provide comprehensive Nursing care or individualised patient care, the nurse has to identify the individual's physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs. She then has to prioritise the needs and plan care accordingly. The planned care has to be implemented and the outcome of the care has to be evaluated. The nurse-patient interaction plays an important role in the process of Nursing. It is a problem solving approach which is a systematic approach in Nursing. This process of assessing, planning, implementing and evaluating Nursing care is known as Systematic Nursing or Nursing Process. Documentation is implicit in all four phases. A Nursing model provides a framework or pattern to follow and gives a direction to act.

The author of this article is a Nursing research student at the University of Edinburgh. She has undertaken a research project on implementing Systematic Nursing in selected hospitals in India, namely, Christian Medical Centre, Pithapuram, and Narsapur Christian Hospital.

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