

Improving Hospital Image

By *Mrs. A. D. Malhotra

ACCORDING to Margret Lindsey a profession is more than a mass of competent individuals for a profession as a whole has the responsibility for the quality of its unique, definite, and essential social service and for the development and enforcement of standards in the continuous selection, preparation and performance of its members. Such responsibility can be assumed adequately only when a profession has some structure and organisation including machinery for policy formulation and enforcement in discipline of its individual and group members.¹

From this definition three characteristics emerge self-education, self-discipline and self-respect.

Self-Education is a never ending process for the upkeep of any profession. The members have to strive hard constantly to learn more and more about their profession in order to keep pace with the day to day advancements.

Self-Discipline is the process by which a profession regulates its activities and legislates its rules. Hence the professional organisations have become the channel for promoting legislation in initiating and maintaining adequate licensing laws. Its aim is usually to improve the image of its own group among other groups. Therefore, the value of self-discipline cannot be over emphasized for the purposeful existence of any profession.

Self-Respect is the most difficult feature to define being the least concrete and most abstract. Yet it is one of the important features for the satisfaction of individual members of the profession.

Besides these characteristics there are certain intangibles—attitudes, morals, ethics, integrity, pride, *esprit-de-corps*, honesty and perseverance. Nursing as such fulfills these criteria.

Nursing as a profession has grown under a bureaucratic struc-

ture. During the last two decades the role of the nurse has undergone tremendous changes due to social, economic and scientific development.

Professional nurses minister to the sick, assume responsibility for creating a physical, social and spiritual environment which will be conducive to recovery, and stress the prevention of illness and promotion of health by teaching and example. They render health service to the individual, the family and Community and co-ordinate their services with members of other health profession.²

In this context it is obvious that it is the individual who destroys or builds an image rather than the profession. The hospital is a unit in itself being composed of many parts and groups which together must strive to achieve its aim and that is to provide service to the public if it is to be successful.

The image of the hospital is built on the quality and quantity of service; it provides and the manner in which these services are rendered. The building of an image rests to a large extent on the manner in which these services are given.

The nurse can assist in improving the image of the hospital by acting in the role of a hostess in the house in welcoming honoured guests. The family house is the hospital. The family group includes the hospital employees of belonging to the health team and the patients the honoured guests.

We could, to some extent, draw a parallel between the functions of the professional nurse and that of the professional physician. The unique responsibility of the physician is to identify the medical problems, diagnose and plan and prescribe treatment. Similarly the unique function of the professional nurse may be conceived to be (1) the identification or diagnosing of the nursing problems and recogni-

tion of its inter-related aspects and (2) the deciding upon of a course of nursing action to be followed for the solution of the problems, in the light of the immediate and long-term objectives of nursing with regard to prevention of illness, direct care, rehabilitation and promotion of the highest standard of health possible for the individual.

The role of the nursing profession is to see that the nurse no longer carries "the tea and sympathy" image of years ago. She must be trained not only for the present but for the future. She will have to understand the society in the broadest possible sense at national and international levels. The nurse is expected to know more about human relations, management, administration, planning and coordination in the context of her own profession.

The nurses can help in the hospital by providing care to patients according to individual needs which are as follows:

Carry out the medical plan of care for each patient: Assist the medical staff in their activities relevant to patients; maintain a safe, clean, comfortable and quiet environment for patients; Teach patients for optimum recovery and health; Make sure that patients understand the instructions properly and Evaluate symptoms, reactions and progress of their patients continuously.

Keeping the above functions in mind, the nursing activities of nurses fall into five main categories:

(1) those that relate to the personal hygiene and physical care of the patient; (2) those that relate to diagnostic tests and therapeutic measures which she assists the physician or which she herself carries out under his direction; (3) those that have to do with keeping the patient's immediate environ-

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tion of the child. This will minimise their own anxiety and help the child to grow and mature in a manner comparable to that of his peers except for his disabled part.

Motor deprivation: A child may be deprived of mother's protection during infancy for various reasons like mother's death; long illness; long absence for some reason; or mother's rejection of the child. Separation of mother is significant during the second half of the first year or first half of the second year. "Any prolonged deprivation of young child may have grave and far reaching effects on his character and so on his future". Therefore, besides emphasising the importance of mother substitute in her absence, the stress must be laid on planned parenthood to safeguard the health of the family.

Chronic illness: There are many emotional, social and economic implications in the care of chronically ill patient who is being looked after in the family. The family and the patient need to understand the limitations and necessary restrictions towards its treatment and progress. Continued warmth and interest are necessary to the well-being of such a case. The patient and his family need to be helped in helping themselves in his nursing care and prevention of further complications.

Acute, fatal, Venereal diseases or Tuberculosis, all cause mental distress in the family and need appropriate emotional support; referring to the institution for its treatment and providing continuity of care in the family.

Keeping all the above situations in view, the role of public health nurse seems to be very vital in promotion of mental health and prevention of mental illness in the community. Here she gets an opportunity to visit each home and participate in creating an atmosphere of mutual trust, tolerance, security and understanding which is so essential for optimum mental health.

A public health nurse also helps the family in adopting a favourable

attitude towards stress situations to accept the reality and plan the future objectively within the available resources.

Nurses working in the community have to modify the beliefs of general public towards mental illness, its prevention, treatment, prognosis and rehabilitation. She lays emphasis on the fact that the well-being of human organism depends not only on freedom from pathological micro-organisms but on freedom from humiliation, terror and helplessness as well. She also informs the public about the mental health services available in the community like Child Guidance Clinics; Marriage and Family Counselling Bureaux; Rehabilitation Centres; Juvenile courts; Psychiatric out-patient departments, clinics and hospitals; Day centres and Homes for mentally retarded, etc.

Finally a public health nurse has a research role to observe and record the milieu in which emotional adjustment tend to occur in normal life situations. Addition of this knowledge in the field of young psychiatry will go a long way in prevention of mental illness in the community.

LIVE LONGER

New Delhi—Life expectancy has increased from 32 years to 52.6 years and the death rate has decreased to 14 from 27.4 per 1,000 of population since independence, according to an official press release.

The infant mortality rate now is estimated at 113 per 1,000 live births as against 133 about two decades ago.

The number of doctors has increased from 47,500 in 1947 to 1,05,000, of nurses from 7,000 to 66,000 and of midwives from 5,000 to 52,000.

As against 6669 hospitals and dispensaries in 1947 their number has increased to 14,580 and the number of beds has increased from 80,163 to 263,380.

The country also has 6,000 health visitors. The number of medical colleges has increased from 25 in 1947 to 95, increasing the admission capacity from 2,000 students to 11,800.

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ment in good conditions; (4) those that provide for the patients mental comfort and peace of mind; and (5) those that have to do with the patients rehabilitation.³

I am convinced that the professional nurses want to do nursing for which they should be given enough of freedom to practice nursing in the hospital and in the community. If there is coordination among the doctors and other members of the health team the public would understand the important role of the nurse. Some of the problems such as poor utilization of nursing personnel, non-nursing duties, treatments requiring preparation away from the bed-side etc. will have to be removed. The nursing profession should see that it keeps pace with the advances, faces its own problems, solve them in the light of today's situation and prepare for the future.

Miss Marion Murphy has said: "Only with a truly professional education can a nurse meet the society's needs and maintain its strength at a time when the general educational level of the population is rising constantly. The basic education for the professional nurse should be secured in a programme that provides for the intellectual, technical and cultural components of both the professional and liberal education⁴.

At present the nursing profession, above all things, requires organization. The nurses, above all other things, require to be united.

Reference

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2. *The Grand Council of International Council of Nurses, International Code of Nursing, Sao Paulo, Brazil, July 10th 1953.*
3. *American Hospital Association and National League of Nursing Education, Hospital Nursing Service Manual National League for Nursing, 10 Columbus Circle, New York, 1950 P. 18.*
4. *Murphy, Marion Director of the School of Public Health, University of Minnesota, in an address entitled "Preparation of students for nursing tomorrow"—1961).*