

A Male Nurse at Primary Health Centre

By

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THE PREVALENT concept is that the Public Health field is limited to the female nurses and as a result very few male nurses are trained in the Public Health field. This concept seems to be disappearing gradually, thanks to the progress in medical science.

The Public Health Nurse plays an important role in the health of the community. Public Health Nursing is integrated in the basic nursing course and at B. Sc. degree level.

In this progressing scientific world, can we, as male nurses, contribute our bit in Public Health? Can we work efficiently at Primary Health Centres? Are we acceptable to the community? From my limited experience I would answer these questions in the affirmative.

The tendency to isolate male nurses from the primary health centres stems from a wrong belief. The common belief is that the public health field is only concerned with the ante-natal or post-natal mothers and thus a male nurse will not be acceptable in M.C.H. But there are other areas like planning, health education, school health programme, etc. which are equally important where the male nurse can be effective.

Not only women, but the men also need to be educated on planned parenthood. A male nurse has easy access to the men in the community and can make use of his contact for motivating them to accept family planning methods. In this area a female nurse will not be effective. A male nurse may be well accepted by the male members of the community. Male nurses can help them to get operated

and also take follow-up action which is lacking today. He can be helpful in arranging vasectomy camps and can assist the Surgeon there.

Various clinics are conducted at Primary Health Centres, e.g., well-baby, ante-natal and leprosy clinics. The male nurse can organise these clinics, supervise the work of other nurses and help maintain effective public health nursing at the primary Health Centres. He also can visit the sub-centre periodically and guide and help the Auxiliary Nurse Midwives working there.

The male nurse can give health education to the people who attend the clinics. He can prepare audio-visual aids like puppets, suspense charts, flip books, flannel graphs, etc. He can set up exhibitions on various subjects periodically with the help of other nursing personnel and coordinate the work of the nursing team.

He can give comprehensive domiciliary nursing care in areas for which he is directly responsible. He may not receive good response from women who are usually at home but he can examine the children and men of all age groups and can guide or advise them. He can interpret the Doctor's orders to out-patients and give advice and guidance regarding associated nursing procedures.

He can very well plan School Health programme with the help of the health team and local teachers. It is my experience that I was very well accepted by the teachers whenever I had gone to a School for mass immunisation programme.

Government has implemented various health programmes like T.B. Control, National Smallpox

Eradication, National Malaria Eradication, Cancer Research etc. The male nurse can be an important person to help the people to receive the required services to reach the target or to make it a success by giving advice for thorough check-up, by giving guidance regarding materials to be adopted for avoiding spread of infection and by arranging various immunization programmes.

He could also undertake the responsibility for administration, supervision and education equally with female nurses. He can assist in the planning of the public health nursing services in the Centre. He can promote the proper use, care and maintenance of equipments and supplies for the clinic and domiciliary nursing services, establish effective lines of communication with District Public Health Nurse, all members of Health Team, members of Taluka and Village Panchayats.

The male nurse can reach any corner of the remote village and he can stay overnight anywhere which may not be possible or safe for a female nurse. He may be able to influence the village leaders like Sarpanch, Teachers and Religious leaders by maintaining regular contacts which would help his mission to provide improved nursing care to the community.

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