

Personality of the Psychiatric Male & Female Nurses—a comparative study

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There was a time in the development of nursing profession when nursing care was thought to be limited to the performance of comfort measures and restorative techniques such as giving bath, making the patient comfortable, and administering restorative treatments and medicines. Today in addition to her traditional role the nurse is expected to be a teacher of positive health, to participate in activities that prevent illness, to understand emotional aspects of health and disease, to recognize emotional needs, and to give understanding, support and guidance to persons in trouble. Helping the person to resume his role as an independent, self-directing, creative functioning individual is also a part of the nurse's professional responsibility.

A mentally ill patient requires help in coping with the daily life problems, helping the patients to accept themselves, their responsibilities, improve interpersonal relationship. These are very delicate and unique problems of the mental patients, which can be performed adequately only by that nurse who is prepared to make positive use of her own personality, who respects.

The patient considers human behaviour as meaningful and is able to convey warmth and interest. Here, the personality of the nurse has therapeutic value. In other words, we can summarise that an emotionally mature, intelligent, creative nurse can be of immense use in the mental hospital setting up the viewpoint of creating therapeutic environment, as a socializing agent, counselling, as a mother

substitute etc. While an immature, inadequate, anxious, insecure, illiterate, quarrelsome nurse will make the mental patients more disturbed, inhibited, and deteriorated.

The purpose of the present study was to study the personality of the male and female student nurses.

Material & Method

Twenty nurses, trainees in Diploma in Psychiatric Nursing (D.P.N.) at All India Institute of Mental Health, Bangalore-27, were selected for study. All were unmarried, within the age range of 20 years to 35 years and educated up to High School. Out of 20 nurses, 10 were male and 10 were female.

Murray's T.A.T. was administered to all the cases and Bellak (1945) method was followed for administration, scoring and interpretation.

Results & Discussion

Stories composed by the male nurses were comparatively smaller than that of the female nurses. Female nurses were very much particular in writing about minute details of some events or persons who come in their stories, while male nurses were not careful about minute details of some events or persons; but their stories were full of varieties of events and persons. They did not limit themselves to one event giving meaningless minute details like female nurses.

As a whole male nurses were very much creative and original in their style of life, that is, whenever, they faced some problem they liked to attack that from different angles. They were much more enthusiastic and optimistic for the solutions of the problem while female nurses were more conventional, routine like, dependent on their parents in attacking problems. Either they were indifferent or silent about the solutions of their life problems.

This may be an indication of uncertainty and lack of initiative on their part.

Male nurses were mostly interested in job, recreational and heterosexual problems while female nurses in their family affairs, and seeing phantasies about their married life.

Needs

Male nurses could easily come out with their sexual acts, feelings and fantasies. They expressed their interests for heterosexual relations, had wish to have sex relations with many females even after getting married.

Male nurses were hostile towards their environment. Many of them expressed feelings of guilt about their heterosexual relations. Needs for love and dependancy were very much in female nurses, while they were mostly inhibited. They were reluctant to sex provoking cards. Either they did not write anything or gave the socially approved answers as if no problems existed. This was taken as an indication of resistance or it may be due to lack of rapport also.

Attitude towards Parents

Male nurses were mostly critical towards their fathers and female nurses towards mothers. One of the parents either father or mother always appeared dominating and strict. As a reaction to this, responses of male nurses were revolutionary and revengeful, while female nurses were silent, introverted and kind towards both the parents and few were very much co-operative and friendly with the parents.

Anxiety

Anxiety was equally frequent and intense in both sexes. Anxiety in male nurses was mostly related with their future success, promotion in job and to get approval among

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their colleagues and superiors, while anxiety in female nurses was mainly related with their married life, fear from boys, concerning with their beauty, make-up, body build and dress etc.

Conflicts

The main conflicts among Male Nurses were found that they were very much anxious to get high marks in the examination and also that why a female nurse is so close to a professor, doctor or psychologist. To some extent such feeling was common in both the sexes. All male nurses were frank as compared to female nurses in revealing their conflicts. Male nurses were able to resolve their conflicts in a reasonably short duration, while female nurses were maintaining them.

Defence Mechanism

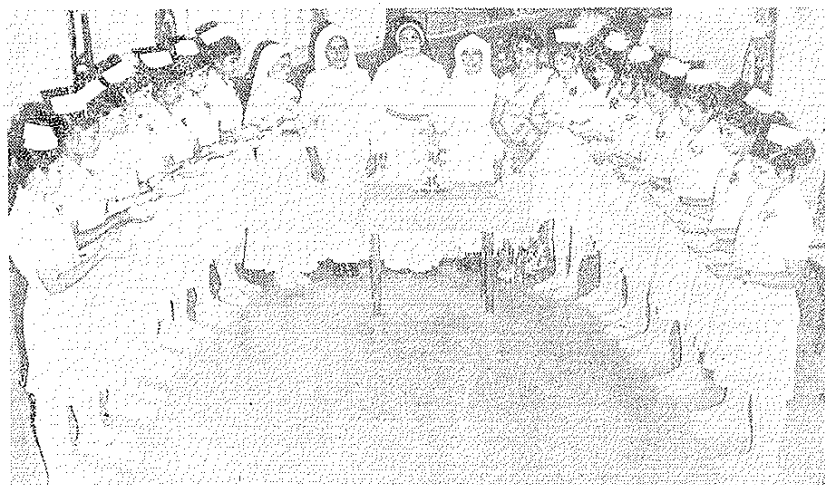
Defence Mechanism was normally used by both the male and female nurses. Rationalization, projection and reaction formation were common defences used by male nurses while introjection and repression in female nurses. Female nurses were conscious and cautious at the time of writing stories. It seems that female nurses were vigilant and male nurses were careless in this respect.

Summary and Conclusions

Results obtained by this study indicate significant differences among male and female nurses. There is a possibility that male nurses can be of much help for the psychiatrist and psychologist from the viewpoint of recreation, group therapy, occupational therapy, caring agitated and stuporous patients, as their personality characteristics are suitable for these purposes. Female nurses can be of better help in making the patients comfortable, administering medicines, and dealing with the emotional aspects. Can this sort of specialized nursing care by male and female nurses be useful for the better treatment and handling of the mental patients? probably a larger sample would be able to answer these questions.

Reference :

1. Bellak, L. (1954) "The T.A.T. and the C.A.T. in the clinical use". Grane and steralton N.Y.



At the capping ceremony in Immaculate Heart of Mary Hospital Bharananganam.

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