

Doorway to Quality Nursing Care

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NURSE is the only category of health professional working closely with the patient in her care round the clock. She is not only expected to make intelligent observations and assist the physician in his medical care, but also act as a manager of the ward unit.

Nursing profession labours under the stress of many pressing problems. The cost of patient care is very high for the average patient's economic status. Moreover he has come to expect a high standard of care even when he does not pay for it. He expects the nurse or the doctor to be available for help or consultation without any delay. The facilities that must be available to give quality care can be discussed under man, material and money. The kind of training nurses receive, the professional competence and their number increasingly determine the type of care given. Health care planners are becoming aware of the need for better preparation of nurses, and even the importance of in-service education. Ensuring the placement of right number of well prepared nurses to render service round the clock is an essential step to provide quality nursing care. In addition, there should be planned staff development programme to assist personnel in professional growth and development.

Supplies and equipments are a vital factor in the provision of quality Nursing care which contributes immensely to the efficiency of the department.

According to Dr. McGibony, equipments mean all items necessary for the functioning of all services of an institution including public health and related services. The term equipment is broad in scope and may be used to describe many items which in normal course of hospital operation would be chargeable to expense. They may be fixed or movable. Fixed equipments are not a part of the structure of the building, but attached to its walls or floors such as sterilizer or sink. Movable equipments include furniture, instruments, suction apparatus, etc. These are items which need to be replaced.

Supplies are expendable items or these articles which are used up and must be reordered periodically such as cotton, bandages, soaps, papers and so on. Supplies and equipments are highly contributing factors to the smooth running of a hospital ward which in turn reflects directly on the quality of Nursing care. Some of the modern requisites like dis-

posable I/V sets, cannulas, catheters, and ryles tubes are rather costly compared to the traditional ones we used to supply from the hospital. In order to reduce the hazards of infection and other complications it is important to change to the modern devices, which are costly and hence the patients may have to purchase the same. This will put the nurse in an uncomfortable position often, not being able to meet the demands in time in many emergencies due to delay in procuring them. Our public education system on our limitation is meagre making them ignorant of our difficulties. Even nurses are not very clear about it at times.

In spite of these difficulties the hospital administration must be prepared to provide the necessary materials in the *right* quality, *right* quantity, *right* specification, *right* place and *right* time. It will add to the patient satisfaction, job satisfaction of the workers and in turn raise the image of the institution.

In the hospital situation large number of personnel handle and use the hospital property. A great deal of co-ordination in respect of proper utilisation of materials is required. Proper controls are also important to avoid wastage, misuse and pilferage. Economy can be achieved by constant vigilance and by a continuous process of training of personnel who are directly and indirectly dealing with it to make them aware of the economical use of hospital properties and correct use of machineries.

Another approach towards this problem is to organise preventive maintenance programme, which extends the life of equipments and prevents costly breakdown and helps to keep the patient safe by keeping equipments in working order should any emergency arise.

In view of the facts mentioned above, it is clear that adequate facilities in the work situation are most essential if a nurse has to provide quality care to the patients under her care. Ensuring this is the responsibility of the hospital administration which expects her to fulfil her responsibilities well. But the sad plight in a large number of our hospitals is that a nurse has to put up with all these odds without having anyone to constructively look at her problems. It is time for nurses to join hands and unitedly ask for better facilities to give Nursing care. Let the patients and the public also know that we are struggling for their care. Given better facilities nurses will try their best to provide optimum Nursing care.

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