

Perspectives on Industrial Nursing

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HUMAN life has changed considerably after the Industrial Revolution and the two world wars. Not only human life has changed but also the concepts related to life and living have undergone diametrically opposite transformations. As one can recall the Charles Darwin Theory asserts that only the strong will survive, and the weak seedling will wither away. Whereas now is the time of disability, limitation and rehabilitation. We now stress on restoring the handicapped to normalcy. This pervasive change and transformation has affected the field of medicine and Nursing also.

Background

In the Mediaeval period, Nursing was associated and identified with the Church. Religion was the force to cater to people who needed help, whether from sickness, poverty or old age. The pre-Nightingale period witnessed young women of good character and upraising up to the Deaconesses. Moral tone was the dominant aspect, rather than practical hospital training.

With Nightingale, the white flower of Nursing garden, foundations of modern system of Nursing training were laid. Practical hospital Nursing training rather than moral or religious tone came to the fore.

Industrialisation

Nursing with industrialisation, human life underwent basic changes. Medicine and technology reacted more sharply than ever before. It was a reaction of complement between the two: industrial medicine had its birth, at this midstream only. Industrial Nursing is its corollary.

What it Signifies

The advent of Industrial Nursing signifies an important aspect of modern science. It underlined the fact, that hereafter any science can be dealt and understood by the natural effort of different specialities within the branch and also outside it.

Prior to the industrialisation a man can proclaim that he has manufactured the wheel, that he has produced a pot. Industrialisation ushered in an era, when no single man declared that he has produced even the head of a pin alone in his own hands. He can only say that was only one millionth of a person who has partaken in it. This information reflected on medicine and Nursing also. Either a single physi-

cian or a single nurse has taken care of patient wholly. But hereafter it will be a collective and co-ordinated effort of different specialities in various branches of medicine and safety. Similarly, it is not a single nurse who has taken care of the individual fully. It is a co-ordinated effort of differing Nursing facilities putting their effort into the single patient.

Before that different aspects of a man were dealt with by a single person. But thereafter each and every aspect would be viewed by different persons in its different dimensions. In this background, Industrial Nursing is a turning point in human development and understanding. It is said that "The object in training Nurses is to provide an adequate service to tend the sick and to help in the preservation and promotion of the health of the community in general".

The latter object of Nursing got fulfilled only with the emergence of Industrial Nursing as a specialised and distinguished branch of Nursing.

Role and Position of Industrial Nursing

The Industrial Nurse serves as an assistant to the physician in the plant and as his representative when he is away from the plant. To most of the employees she is often the only visible evidence of in-plant health and medical services.

The guiding principles and procedures for industrial nurses are as under:

Qualification

At the outset itself one can realise that Industrial Nursing has to be qualified additionally apart from the professional training. A nurse should have expertise in handling minor injuries, first-aid procedures and emergency resuscitation activities. When it is demanded she should be able to perform these things individually, she can not be just a docile disciple of an industrial physician. She should be one with initiative abilities. She should qualify herself to work as an effective member of the industrial health team. This is only a basic requisite to call herself an Industrial Nurse.

Functions

1. Maintaining industrial health service activities and programmes.
2. Nursing care for workers in In-plant Health Services at the time of accidents and occupational illnesses.
3. Participating in industrial welfare activities.
4. Counselling for discarded beings like alcoholics.

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Activities of IMC

1. Surveillance of working of health, pre-employment, periodical medical examinations, and health surveys. 2. Monitoring of working condition—providing industrial hygiene and toxicology. 3. Health education—increasing level of awareness and the general level of occupational health. 4. First-Aid training. 5. Standing Medical Board to solve the dispute arising out of medical fitness, industrial accidents, compensation, etc.

Ongoing Programme in IMC

Health Survey of 20,000 Employees : A thorough medical check-up of 18,500 employees was done during the year 1984-85. Suitable treatments were given to inflicted employees and proper instruction and pamphlets given regarding the diet, drug, exercise, etc. The survey will be done once in 6 months for those employees who are working in hazard-areas, like X-ray Department, Operation Theatre, food handlers, welders, etc.

Noise-Survey : Noise has become an important stress factor. Wide-ranging disorders are produced due to exposure to noise. The noisy industrial environment is the prime cause for noise induced hearing loss among workers. To provide a safety environment for the maintenance of the better health of employees in noisy area, we have started the audiogram survey of the those employees who are working in Thermal Power Station-I, where the machines' noise will be more. We screened 350 employees, executives, non-executives and the programme continues. Affected cases are referred to ENT specialist for giving treatment.

Dust Survey : Dust level from the industrial hygiene point of view is investigated by Centre for Applied Research and Development. The particles below 0.5 microne and less are responsible for health hazards. A health survey has been done for all mining employees. Health survey has not revealed any serious disease like Pneumoconiosis, Silicosis, etc.

Industrial Hazard Survey : To reduce the number of accidents in the industrial area, especially in the mines, a study is being done with the help of the

plant people. A committee consists of mines officers and medical staff constituted to study the cause of accidents. Safety measures were taken by them to prevent the accidents in future.

Health Survey of Working Women : The aim of the survey is to reduce the infant mortality rate due to lack of breast feeding and care of the children to improve the health condition of working women and early detection of cancer cells. So far we screened 400 employees out of a total strength of 1000. 4-5 women employees are examined daily. Simultaneously we are conducting a survey to study about their working environment, social life, family problems. For a case study in future, every women is asked to fill up the proforma, 340 ladies underwent the papsmear test, D & C done for doubtful cases in ladies and some did not reveal any cancer disease but treatment was given for mild infections.

Specific Surveys : A health survey for rehabilitating the chronic alcoholics in our corporation has been done and 45 candidates were thoroughly studied. They were from all categories including office staffs, technicians, operators, industrial workers, etc.

The result of the survey reveals that 60% of the persons screened were suffering from alcoholic neuritis and 35% from Hypertension. It is noted that 91% of them acquired these from their friends.

A planned programme was suggested to reduce this anti-social habit which includes psychiatric treatment, neurotic therapy and help from the paramedical staff to guide them properly.

Health Education for School Children

First-Aid classes are being conducted not only for employees but also for school children. 950 employees and school children were given first aid training certificates issued during 1984-85. This is to make them fit whenever the emergency arises.

Dental Survey : Every year, we are conducting dental survey for school children and prizes are given to those who keep good dental care.

For conducting all these studies occupational health nurse is performing an important role. She has to prepare and submit the report of these studies to the Head of the Department for necessary action.

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and victims of drug abuses.

5. Effective participation in sustenance of health records.

6. Active acquaintance and familiarity with the industrial plant environment and its hazards through periodic industrial visits.

7. Assisting the industrial physician with the various in plant and field activities.

8. Acquaintance and knowledge about workman-related industrial laws and folders to be kept as a reference in rehabilitative procedures and industrial accidents.

9. Delivering the key role in the Health education

programmes.

10. Should initiate and organise in-plant emergency activities in the absence of industrial physician

11. Key link in the industrial relations.

Perspective on Occasions

By being the only representative of Industrial Health Team, her performance and approach will initiate healthy industrial relations at the plant level. In the normal circumstances also, she is the one delivering Industrial Health Services to the worker.

Bloom to Blossom is the story of Industrial Nursing.