

Modern Trends in Orthopedic Nursing

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THE word Orthopedics is derived from two Greek words. *Ortho* meaning straight or free from deformity, *Pedias* meaning Child. Orthopedics is a branch of Medical Science which deals with straightening the deformed child. It has also been extended to include the prevention and restoration of the function of the musculoskeletal system in adults. Medical Science cannot always cure the physically handicapped individuals but has always been finding out new and better ways to help to lead a well adjusted and productive life.

The treatment of bones, muscles and ligaments has been practised for many centuries. Pre-historic man used some kind of splints and there is a record of evidence that early Egyptians used ingenious splints in the treatment of fractures.

Orthopedics gradually became well defined and was practiced by a number of physicians as a speciality. John Hunter (1728 to 1793), an Englishman, contributed to the advancement of understanding of fractures and other musculoskeletal injuries. He believed that most damaged muscles can be nursed back to some degree of functional efficiency.

Advancement

The end of 18th Century marked the beginning of modern Orthopedics. Tremendous advances were made in Asepsis, Antiseptics, X-ray and Bacteriology which encouraged many hospitals and clinics to open. Orthopedics as a speciality expanded rapidly. Treatment of deformities and fractures were managed by using various kinds of splints, casts and braces. Surgical procedures were rare but were becoming more and more frequent. Hugh Owen Thomas (1834-1891), an English Surgeon, after whose name the Thomas splint is famous, treated chronic diseases of

joints, fractures and dislocations very effectively. He used the Thomas splint in World War I and is credited with reducing the mortality rate from 80% to 20% in treating the compound fracture of femur. His nephew, Robert Jones, absorbed his teachings and became a great orthopedic surgeon.

Agnus Hunt (1867—1948), referred to as Florence Nightingale of Orthopedic Nursing, had great concern for the physically handicapped. She herself experienced a crippling handicap at the age of 11 due to recurring tuberculosis of hip joint. Her strong influence fostered considerable advance in preventive treatment, and organised after-care system. She taught and published her writings on orthopedic nursing and became the pioneer of orthopedic nursing. To honour her the Robert Jones and Agnus Hunt Orthopedic hospital was established in Oswestry (England). Orthopedic nursing received a great heritage from her. She used to say that the proper treatment of orthopedic patient lies not only in the care of his body but in the creation of an atmosphere of hope, happiness, security and homeliness.

Modern Concept

Orthopedics, the science of prevention, correction and rehabilitation of deformities, has made fantastic progress in the last decade. New fields have opened in the area of Surgery, in the use of artificial aids and in the concept of rehabilitation. Modern Orthopedic Hospital is an institution where all needs of the patient are satisfactorily met. Patient's physical ailment is treated by experts in Orthopedic Surgery and nursing. Physiotherapist helps to keep muscles and joints in good condition by various types of physiotherapy. Occupational therapist

keeps the patient occupied and rehabilitate him to a suitable job. School teachers continue to educate the children. A workshop is maintained where walking patient can go and spend their time usefully. In advanced countries every patient receives sickness benefit so that his family does not suffer financial difficulty.

Nursing is ministering to basic human needs. It is science and art of helping the people who are sick and needy even though the techniques used may differ in different situations and in different society. Orthopedic nursing is a speciality but the basic principles of all phases of nursing care are definitely inter-related and therefore, should be integrated in basic programme with the purpose of educating better prepared and more competent nurses.

Orthopedic Nursing is the integration of the underlying elements of basic nursing with broader understanding of procedures and equipment used to prevent and correct deformities. Proficiency in orthopedic nursing comes from education, disciplined experience and research.

Orthopedic patient is an individual with all the basic needs of any human being, plus those caused by orthopedic condition. This condition may mean crippling, dependancy, long term hospitalization, separation from home and many other adjustments. Orthopedic patients often require special nursing skill, understanding and care. The advances in orthopedic treatment necessitate special understanding and competent nursing skills. Orthopedic nurse should be aware of the desirable and undesirable effects of bed rest.

In the past Orthopedic patients were treated in hospitals for many weeks or longer periods. With modern advances in orthopedic treatment the hospitalization of patient is considerably reduced. More importance is given for fresh air and sunshine. Every bed in the Orthopedic ward should have wheels so that they could be

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