



NURSING IN INDUSTRY

By

ACHYAMMA JOHN

Professor of P.H. Nursing, Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore

THOUGH nursing in Industry is fairly old in other countries, it is only in its infancy, rather it is only being conceived in this country.

Through the Five Year Plans we are trying to industrialise the country as fast as possible to increase the national production, to increase the employment opportunity, to increase the income per capita so that we can bring wealth, health and happiness to the nation. We shall be able to achieve our goal in the fullest sense only if the workers are kept on the job for longer* period happy physically, mentally and socially. The industrialists are realizing the need of building up a happy and healthy working community in order to get the maximum production. In this country as in the west employers are getting more and more health conscious. Industrial medicine is gaining more and more importance but we have failed to recognise and accept perhaps one of the most important roles played in the health service of an industry by the industrial nurse. Today she has proved to be a valuable link between the most vital departments of an industry created for the well being of the workers—namely the personnel, welfare and the health services.

Before dealing with the functions of a modern industrial nurse I would like to give you a short history of her origin and how she came into being. England was the first to give the lead and it was in 1878 when the firm of Messrs. Calman Ltd. of Norwich appointed a Trained Nurse in the factory, that the industrial nurse came into her own. The name of this first

Industrial nurse was Miss Philipa Flowerday. She assisted the doctor at the factory and visited the employees in their own homes who were away from work on account of illness.

The scope of industrial nursing has grown tremendously since the time of Miss Philipa Flowerday. The Industrial Nurse is no longer a dresser in the ambulance room of an industry. First Aid treatment is only one phase among her many duties and responsibilities. Then what are her duties?

1. The general efficiency of the ambulance room and any other first aid arrangements in the factory.

The value of having a qualified person to attend to minor injuries and dressings should not be overlooked. Prolonged absence from work may be avoided by early and correct treatment of minor injuries. Faulty technique of the first dressing often results in septic wounds thereby greatly increasing the loss of days as well as money, and in some cases there may be permanent loss of the use of working fingers. It may be said that the present day dresser who runs the ambulance room in many an industry is cheaper, but it must be remembered that little knowledge is dangerous and the ignorance of a man hurriedly trained to wrap bandages often leads to catastrophe. The doctor who sits in the ambulance room cannot take the place of a nurse either in the plant or in the ambulance room. A nurse while attending to the minor dressings can discover some useful information about the worker and his family, and be able to often sympathise and advise the worker and get him the help where necessary. Thus the nurse not only remains as a nurse but soon begins

to be looked upon by the workmen as their friend. The uniform of a nurse in itself helps in gaining the confidence of the workmen and the officers of the plant alike. The uniform should carry with it the status which permits the industrial nurse to approach the departmental heads in the plant, whenever there are problems to be discussed.

2. The industrial nurse assists the medical officer in all the medical examinations namely:

- (a) the pre-employment examinations
- (b) employees joining after illness
- (c) employees exposed to industrial diseases
- (d) periodical medical examinations.

These examinations give the nurse ample opportunity for health teaching and advice in hygiene, rest and diet.

3. She has to keep in touch with the absentee, sick or injured workers. This is an important function of the nurse. Our workmen mostly due to ignorance are indifferent about attending the clinics on the assigned days. They attend the clinic, when they feel like. The result is that the original dressing becomes dirty and the wound gets infected. He has to be absent from work much longer than needed. To the management it means extra expense besides loss of production. Statistics in factories in other countries have shown that where an efficient follow up system was instituted, the loss of working days was reduced to less than half. Modern record keeping would help the nurse to know her patients for the day in a short time. She then contacts those who have not attended the clinic. In a small factory she does this herself or she

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has her own welfare workers who would do this for her.

4. She is responsible for record keeping. She must have a fairly good knowledge in record keeping. A daily summary is of great value to her as well as to management, as she must know what is happening, to be able to run her department efficiently and progressively. These records will be of help to the factory to decide on compensation and other assistance. She should have a good knowledge about the factory act and the policies of the factory to write the record intelligently.

She has to visit the canteen and make such recommendations as need be regarding the diets of workers and food hygiene etc. She could arrange for special diets for workmen suffering from diabetes, gastric ulcer or any such disease that requires special diet.

Where women are employed, the nurse will have to supervise the crèche and nurseries. The women workers will have their own peculiar problems, which they are reluctant to reveal to a man, especially in India, but to a nurse they would open their minds most willingly and she could guide, and advise them everyday while she is about her normal duties.

The industrial nurse is expected to co-operate with the personnel and welfare departments. The personnel and welfare departments like the medical are concerned with

the worker. They cannot function efficiently in water-tight compartments. Good co-operation is essential because these departments have a joint concern for many problems. For example, to begin with, the placement of the worker, to find the job to suit the worker, transference of jobs for medical reasons, rehabilitation, sick absence and a whole net-work of amenities that go with it. The industrial nurse or physician alone cannot alleviate these conditions that are closely knitted with welfare and personnel. With close interdepartmental co-operation much of this mental ill health would disappear. In no branch is team work more necessary than in the industrial field.

To get the co-operation and good will of the worker, his family also should be taken care of. The nurse will have ample opportunity to carry out a generalized Public Health Nursing service in the Industrial community. A family welfare service also is needed to give total care, or comprehensive care to the worker.

The number of nurses employed depend to a great extent on the type of industry and the number of workers. For the maintenance of a complete health service in an industry it is recommended that there should be 1 nurse for up to 300 employees, 2 or more nurses up to 600 employees, 3 or more nurses up to 1000 employees, and 1 nurse per every additional 2000

employees. The number of nurses employed would vary in heavy industries and those with more hazards would require a larger number of nurses, while lighter industries and those which do not have serious occupational hazards would need a smaller number. Additional nurses may be needed to supply service for second and third shifts. This number will be reduced by the number of technical and non-professional workers employed in the medical department; but we should not sacrifice the qualified person for the sake of cheap labour. Qualification of a nurse to work in industry: Olden days we used to say that the nurses employed in industry should have Public Health background. Today's nurses are prepared to take up first level positions in public health field. So a graduate of the basic programme can be employed in industry to work under supervision. Industrial nursing is a job with heavy responsibilities as they have to come in contact with accidents often. So additional preparation in industry is needed to take supervisory responsibility. If a nurse is working alone in an industry, she should have additional educational qualification related to industrial nursing or experience in Industrial Medical Service under proper supervision. A qualified nurse in the Industrial Medical Service will always be an asset in the long run for the concern.

(With ack. to Journal of Industrial Medicine)

General Secretary's Itinerary

Members of Calcutta and Orissa State Branch will be pleased to know of my forthcoming visit to their places. It shall be my endeavour to meet as many members (both TNAI, HVL, M. & A. N. M. A. and SNA) as possible. My programme is given below :

7.5.67	Dep.	Delhi
9.5.67	Arr.	Calcutta
10.5.67	Dep.	Calcutta
11.5.67	Arr.	Balasore
11.5.67	Dep.	Balasore
11.5.67	Arr.	Baipada
13.5.67	Dep.	Baipada
13.5.67	Arr.	Cuttack
15.5.67	Dep.	Cuttack
15.5.67	Arr.	Bhubaneshwar
17.5.67	Dep.	Bhubaneshwar
17.5.67	Arr.	Puri
18.5.67	Dep.	Puri

18.5.67	Arr.	Berhampur
19.5.67	Dep.	Berhampur
19.5.67	Arr.	Burla
21.5.67	Dep.	Burla
21.5.67	Arr.	Berhampur
22.5.67	Dep.	Berhampur
22.5.67	Arr.	Udayagiri
24.5.67	Dep.	Udayagiri
25.5.67	Arr.	Rourkela
27.5.67	Dep.	Rourkela
27.5.67	Arr.	Sambalpur
28.5.67	Dep.	Sambalpur
28.5.67	Arr.	Bolangir
29.5.67	Dep.	Bolangir
30.5.67	Arr.	Howrah
31.5.67	Dep.	Howrah for New Delhi.

I. Dorabji
General Secretary