

NURSING DIAGNOSIS

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NURSING today is more complex and dynamic than the state of nursing which existed a few decades ago. The concept of scientific nursing is focused on meeting the total needs of patients such as physical, emotional, social, economical and other aspects which lead to the broader term comprehensive nursing. To render such a kind of total care to patients, a nurse should know what is 'Nursing Diagnosis'.

One might be surprised to hear this term 'Nursing Diagnosis' as this is not prescribed by the physician in the actual ward situations; but the nurse can make a nursing diagnosis in order to give better care to the patients.

What is Nursing Diagnosis

It is defined as 'A careful investigation of the facts to determine the nature of a nursing problem'. In order to render total nursing care, the process of nursing diagnosis would be very helpful and it is essential in a developing society. It covers patient care problems not specifically analysed and prescribed for by the physician. What is meant by the term 'problem'? A problem is a felt difficulty experienced by the patient. And the nurse should help the patient to get rid off the difficulty experienced by nursing functions. Patients are confronted with numerous problems in the wards and we, nurses, are trying to find out the problems and meeting their needs. Therefore, to render good nursing care and to improve the present conditions of nursing care in our country, the process of Nursing Diagnosis is inevitable.

How to make nursing diagnosis

The nurse makes nursing diagnosis by gathering, recording and

evaluating information relating to the total nursing situation. This results in better care of the patients, provides improved understanding by the patient of the care rendered and also leads to a more effective nurse-physician relationship.

What are the Facts in Diagnosis

The facts which come under diagnosis are: (1) Observation, (2) Communication and (3) Experience.

1. **Observation.** We, nurses, should be very capable in observing everything. On observing the patients in every angle and in an intelligent way various facts can be identified and noticed for our purpose of better nursing care. Such a simple function goes a long way in meeting the total needs of the patients. If we lack in this aspect various complications are likely to arise and we will be failing to render total care. In this connection I would like to draw attention to the comment of our great leader—Florence Nightingale—on observation: "The most important practical lesson that can be given to nurses is to teach them what to observe—what symptoms indicate improvement, what the reverse which are of importance, which are of none, which are the evidence of neglect and which kind of neglect."

2. **Communication.** A nurse communicates with the patient either by verbal method or by non-verbal method. This aspect plays a major role in the actual nursing situations when rendering total care of patients. The nurse should be very tactful in communicating any information to patients. The gentle look, the cheerful appearance and the smiling features of a good nurse indicates the non-verbal communication effectively. But the kind

words and conversing with the patients in connection with their problems by giving constructive explanations and relieving their worries denotes the verbal communication.

3. **Experience.** Again, the various experiences met by the nurses in meeting the needs and solving their problems add to the factor for nursing diagnosis.

To make the nursing diagnosis, the above mentioned factors are very essential and should be possessed by the professional nurse. One author says that "to assemble the data, to make use of the relevant and to discard the irrelevant and to pass final judgement or make a diagnosis often requires mental ability of the highest order." Therefore in giving nursing care, we must be conscious of the above factors so that a better decision can be made to solve the problems in nursing to achieve better nursing care.

I would like to emphasise the method of nursing diagnosis in the field of nursing when we are rendering care to patients in the hospital wards. But it requires application of knowledge in a meaningful way. The judgements and decisions made reflect the degree to which the nurse is able to apply her knowledge. I feel that the routine-procedure-centred nurses should be stimulated and are taught the above aspect of modern nursing. To meet the present need in this changing society we require nurses with vision and judgement to tackle the problems in an intelligent way in the actual nursing situations, and thereby improve the nursing care to a greater extent for the preservation of life and betterment of the health and welfare of the people.