

Education for Nurses

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THE ultimate goal of all programmes in Nursing Education is the prevention of disease, the improvement of patient care and the maintenance of positive health. Keeping this goal in mind nurse educators are constantly seeking to explore and re-evaluate the various areas and contents of the nursing school curriculum. By constant appraisal it is hoped to see what changes in the curriculum would more adequately prepare the nurse to meet the changing needs of the patient and the society she serves. According to present indications and as medical science and knowledge becomes more complex patients' needs also become more complex and varied. In order to cater to these changing needs the nurse requires an educational preparation which is both realistic and sound; one with a combination of liberal general education and professional preparation.

With this in view an attempt has been made to move some of the newer programmes in nursing into the University setting. Also existing Diploma programmes have been enriched with newer courses and more closely guided clinical experiences. The indication for a broader and more liberal educational background has not always been fully accepted or understood. There are still those who question the need for nurses to spend more time than has been spent previously in the class room. The educational needs of student nurse must change if the nurse is to provide the type of care required of her in this modern age. What the nursing school needs most is the freedom to grow and

expand till the student is prepared to meet more fully the total needs of the patient.

Total nursing care, keeping in mind the patient as an individual, a member of a family and as a member of society, can only be planned for by the nurse if she has had sufficient theoretical knowledge prior to clinical practice. Nurses with a more liberal and scientific educational background are better able to identify, solve and contribute to the patients' needs in a shorter period of time, than the nurse who must be dependent on an on-the-job type of training. Such a method of training is both wasteful of time and money. This type of training also does not regard the individual student's learning requirements and the student learns only if and when the opportunity presents itself.

Some have feared that higher education or advanced preparation moves the nurse away from the bedside. Nursing, like all other emerging professions needs to have research workers and administrators to provide for leadership and guidance till professional nursing is based on a firmer basis and till it is able to find its own with the other professions. However, it is the nurse with this newer type of liberal educational preparation and experience who is responsible for planning the nursing school curricula which to a large extent determines the kind of nursing care given. A sound educational programme based on sound educational principles will prepare a nurse who is able to include the curative, pre-

ventive and rehabilitative aspects of nursing in her care. All these aspects must be considered if the patient is to return home as a useful member of society.

Since nursing is an essential service rendered to the public, those she serves must assume a reasonable responsibility for her education. Schools of Nursing like other educational institutions should be supported by Public Funds. Also, the members of every community have a right to know about and be interested in the School of Nursing which serves them, for nursing education to day needs the support and continued interest of those she serves, if nursing is to provide the type of care required by them.

The community has a great role in the recruitment and encouragement of suitable candidates to the School of Nursing. In spite of the popular belief that only those young women who are unable to qualify for other academic programmes enter nursing schools there could be guidance and counselling in high schools and colleges in helping young women to choose nursing as career. The standard of patient care can only be substantially raised if those who give the care are carefully chosen, allowed the freedom to pursue a professional education with freedom to think and reason and the opportunity to give nursing care in an environment conducive to learning.

Bibliography :

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