

A Brief Report

International Seminar "Learning to Investigate Nursing Problems"

by T. Khan, R.N.; M.Sc.

Special Officer-in-charge, College of Nursing, Hyderabad

THE main objective of the Seminar was to provide those nurses who are at present engaged in research, or who are likely to take up research in the future, an opportunity to gain some knowledge of research methods, and to consider together with specialists and other experienced personnel, how problems can be investigated by using scientific steps, so that improvements can be brought about in nursing.

It was also hoped that the Seminar would not only be beneficial to the individual participant who might assist in research or conduct research independently, but, if the participant carried research and made worth-while contributions and recommendation for improvement of nursing, the Seminar would be of help to the nursing profession of the respective countries.

Keeping these main objectives in view, the International Seminar on 'Learning to Investigate Nursing Problems' was sponsored by the Florence Nightingale International Foundation, which is associated with the International Council of Nurses. The finances were provided by the FNIF and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Thirty four Nurses participated in the Seminar, who were selected by the National Nursing Associations of eighteen countries.

The Seminar was held in Delhi from February 14—28, 1960. Dr. Clara Hardin, a sociologist and an anthropologist and the executive Director of the American Nursing Foundation, was the Chief Consultant for the Seminar. In addition, Dr. Rena Boyle from U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare, representing *Nursing*, Prof. J.H.T. Brotherston, Edinburgh,

University of Scotland representing *Public Health*, Dr. K.C. Seal, Senior Deputy Director, Labour Bureau India, representing *Statistics*, constituted the International team of consultants. The staff of the Florence Nightingale Education Division of the ICN of which Miss Ellen Broe is the Director was responsible for organizing the Seminar.



Miss T. Khan

The Seminar consisted of a series of lecture sessions followed by discussions and group work done under the guidance of the consultants and their assistants, on self chosen problems proceeding through the steps involved in systematic investigation.

Research is defined as finding answers to meaningful questions, through the application of the Scientific procedure¹. Dr. Hardin in her lecture emphasised the fact that no progress in the profession of nursing can be made without research. In her introductory lecture she described the various steps that

might be followed in systematic investigation. She said that the first step to be followed would be to identify the problem and phrase questions. Next the objectives and the purpose of the study should be stated clearly. The third step would be to review pertinent literature and note the clues for the study. Next the data for the study should be collected. Either one or a number of tools and techniques may be used for collection of data. Once the data is collected, the next very important step would be to organize and analyze the data, and come to the conclusion. Lastly there is the very important task of writing the report and putting forward recommendations which might help in solving the problem that has been studied.

Dr. Hardin also stated in her lecture, that there are problems in nursing as in any other professions and occupations. "Research is but one way to approach the solution of problems. Some problems are not necessarily researchable or amenable to research techniques, and can be approached in another way—by group discussion, by direct application of well known or well established administrative procedures. Fact finding is an important aspect of research; facts should be systematically gathered and presented in an orderly way."² She further stated that "We need to explore a multitude of possible causes underlying the problem, we then turn to research for answers. Gathering evidence, determining what is relevant, deciding that which is irrelevant or inconclusive, refusing to draw conclusion on basis of insufficient evidence, are all part of scientific approach to investigating the problem."³

Dr. Brotherston in his lectures

stated that only a few nurses may be able to carry out research, but "research mindedness should be the attitude of all." "Prejudices, stereotype thinking and rule of thumb action are a dangerous limitation to the search for new knowledge and the improvement of method of applying existing knowledge."⁴ He further stated that "since the nurse is usually the best suited person to understand and study her own problems, this means educating research workers, in the nursing profession."⁵ He emphasized the fact that in order to encourage research in nursing it is necessary to develop the inquiring attitude of the under-graduate student so that she is better equipped to pursue research at the post-graduate level.

Dr. Boyle discussed the very important question of *Why, How and by Whom* nursing problems to be studied. She further stated that the profession of nursing faced many problems, and nurses recognized that some of these problems might be researchable, and so the help of other disciplines was enlisted in solving these problems. "We tried various ways of attracting educators, social scientists, industrial engineers and statisticians to look at nursing and to assist us in the solution of the problems. We have now recognized that nurses themselves must come to grip with the problems of nursing and that the vital problem of nursing cannot be solved by non-nurses alone."⁷ Some of the areas of research in nursing, she said were "the community and one of its agency, the hospital—and since both community and hospital must be supplied with workers, a third division would become the school of nursing."⁸

She said the educator is inclined to be concerned with who enters nursing, with the curriculum planned for students, their scholastic achievements, and prediction of success.

The social scientist is eager to study the personality, relationship and attitude of nurses towards the nurses.

The statistician has to comment on the ratio of patients and

nurses, students and instructors, whether the number of hospitals and other agencies meet the health requirements of the people, are sufficient in number or not.

The lectures given by the four consultants were extremely interesting and thought provoking. Much was covered during these few days. The discussions that followed each lecture helped the participants in clearing their doubts, and thus gaining a better understanding of the subject. We are thankful indeed to the organizers of the Seminar for enlisting the help of prominent specialists in nursing and allied professions as consultants for the Seminar. The most important and interesting aspects of the Seminar were the group sessions. A small number of participants were assigned to one of the four small groups, each group worked under the direction of a Consultant and her assistant. The group at each session selected a reporter who recorded the highlights of the group discussion, and brought these to the main group at open forum, for discussion.

The group work mainly consisted of discussions on self-chosen problems. The problems submitted by the participants were grouped and classified. The Consultants with their assistants helped the participants to distinguish between those problems that are amenable to systematic research, and those that are not. Work was also done on identifying the problems. Phrasing questions that the study may attempt to answer. Stating the purpose and objectives of the study. Selecting and preparing suitable tools for collection of data. The participants were very ably guided by the Consultants in the steps towards the solution of their problems. Individual attention was bestowed on each participant, and attempts made to help the participant understand the steps of scientific investigations, and some of the problems, a research worker may encounter in her endeavour.

It was interesting to note that problems in nursing existed in all the countries represented, they may, however, be of different magnitude.

Depending upon the circumstances, different steps may have to be adopted for solving the problems.

I would here mention a few problems that were discussed by the Indian participants for study in India.

PROBLEMS

1. How best can the Head Nurse help in the clinical teaching of student nurses?

2. To find out some of the reasons, why the village mothers prefer help during their confinements from barber midwives, rather than from the trained personnel employed by the Government.

3. To determine some of the reasons why student nurses do not practice nursing procedures, as they are taught in the classroom.

4. What criteria should be set up for selection of student nurses?

5. What learning experiences are available in the Outpatient Department of a Hospital for the students of nursing?

If I once again review the objectives of the Seminar, I feel that we did learn the scientific steps involved in a research project, but the other objective of the Seminar would not be fulfilled unless and until, the participant engages herself in research in her respective country, and puts forward worthwhile recommendations for improvement of the nursing profession. Important work lies ahead in trying to implement whatever we have learnt. I feel that, even if one good study is conducted by any one of us who participated on behalf of the Indian nurses, I would certainly say that the Seminar had served a useful purpose.

My acknowledgement is due to the fellow members of the TNAI for selecting me to participate in the International Seminar. It certainly has provided a valuable learning experience.

References

1. Jahoda, Marie, Deutsch, Morton, Cook, S.W.
"Research Methods in Social Relations Part I". New York: The Dryden Press. 1951. P.2.

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An Appeal

With faith and perseverance in God

Dr. M. C. Wasta

IN DEO FIDE ET PERSEVERANTIA... it was with this very faith and perseverance that the Nowrosjee Wadia Maternity Hospital at Bombay has reached its eminent position as being amongst the finest institutions of its kind in the East.

38 years ago, midwifery was in the hands of the *dhais*. Purdha was also strictly observed, and superstition prevented a woman from seeking proper medical aid. As a result, thousands of women died during child birth or by infection which followed.

It was in this atmosphere that in a hired flat at Suparibaug Road, a small hospital, having six beds, was opened. A leading gynaecologist of the time, Dr. Mangaldas V. Mehta, became its guiding light. Miss A. Magee was the matron, and, that dedicated soul, the late Dr. B.R. Patharkar, was the resi-

dent doctor.

With the facilities provided, one would have expected the hospital to be overflowing on the day of its opening, but it took a couple of years of effort; going to people's homes, talking with families, lecturing on street corners, before a trickle of patients started coming to the hospital. A magnificent donation by Sir Ness Wadia in remembrance of his father, built what one sees to-day—The Nowrosjee Wadia Maternity Hospital at Parel. An imposing building with large airy wards, long corridors, and beautifully laid-out gardens.

From six beds, there are now one hundred and seventy beds. A separate out-patient department, employing the latest equipment, provides the mothers of Bombay with up-to-date facilities. There are now six units with eminent obstetricians and gynaecologists of

Bombay in charge. How well these people do their work, is seen by the fact that more than 10,000 babies, cuddled in their mothers' arms, pass out through the gates of this institution every year.

It is no wonder that 'Wadia-Qualified' nurses are looked up to as the finest in their profession. A Wadia-trained nurse not only conducts between 50 to 100 deliveries but also helps in major and minor operations. Before she completes her training a nurse witnesses many Caesarean Sections, force deliveries and many other operations which she will never be able to see at smaller hospitals. The Wadia Maternity Hospital has a reputation amongst the public, for providing the best treatment in an emergency. At the present moment there are 59 student midwives under training who enjoy free boarding and lodging, and get a stipend of Rs. 30/- plus uniform allowance of Rs. 15/- per month. Along with practical training, all the theoretical aspects of midwifery are taught to the nurses by the Matron, Sister Tutor, and the Resident and Honorary Medical Staff. It is indeed a proud claim that not one nurse has failed to qualify in the last twelve years.

Would you like to become a member of its staff? You can join this institution if you are a general trained nurse with an S.S.C. or matriculate certificate. Besides the training, you will get the advantage of a clean, neat room, good food and facilities for indoor and outdoor games. There is, moreover, a large library with the latest books. The training course lasts only six months.

In case you have any enquiries to make, write to the Matron, Nowrosjee Wadia Maternity Hospital, Parel, Bombay-12, for further details.



The New Student is welcomed on arrival.