

Hospital Administration in our Teaching Programme

By Sister M. Bertrand R.N.R.M.

Traditionally, we in Catholic Hospitals have prided ourselves, and with reason, on the quality of our patient care, and the loving kindness with which we treat them. But devotion and kindness are not sufficient. We must be technically qualified. This is in keeping with the express wishes of the Holy Father. It then becomes our duty to supply our hospitals with a complete and well-qualified staff. In this paper I shall confine myself to the problem of providing a better qualified nursing staff.

To begin at the beginning—we must raise the standards of our nursing schools—higher entrance requirements, improved curriculum, better training, more time for study. The Indian Nursing Council, the advisory body on nursing in India, urges that this be done. In addition to providing the student with good theoretical and practical training, we must concentrate on preparing her to accept leadership and responsibility.

These talents must be developed. Extra-curricular activities provide rich opportunities for doing this. Such techniques as Parliamentary Procedure, introducing a speaker and conducting a meeting can be learned at monthly SNA and CNG meetings. Through belonging to committees, students learn group co-operation. The SNA exhibit in connection with the annual TNAI conference furnishes a learning situation.

Our teaching methods should be planned to motivate the student to give of herself to co-operate to the fullest with her teacher and others. She should be encouraged to ask questions and to express herself in class. She must be helped to use her mind. If she is taught an effective way to study, it will increase

her power to work independently and provide her with the ability to acquire knowledge as she goes along, especially when she shall be on her own in the future.

Perhaps we could modify our methods of teaching. Instead of using mainly the Lecture and Demonstration methods, we could try when it is feasible, the Discussion method. Students take an active part in this way, and incidentally, this will develop in them poise and self-confidence in expressing themselves.

In Professional Adjustment class, the students become acquainted with the nursing literature. In Bihar, the senior examination includes a question on Professional Adjustments. The students are expected to know the recent changes in nursing legislation, nursing and health organizations, and other developments in this field.

Classes in ward management and teaching might be introduced during the senior year. The students could be given experience in teaching classes to patients in the clinic or on the wards. Ward management experience can be introduced by letting her plan the student's work schedule for the week. At intervals she could be relieved of her daily assignments of patients and work as an assistant to the Ward Sister. This would acquaint her with the latter's function and help to prepare her for her future work.

Most lay head nurses are chosen for their positions because they have a record of good bedside nursing and some potential for leadership. But few such nurses have knowledge of administrative skills.

Before assuming full responsibility, they should do general duty for a time. Those who show promise can be developed further by preparing them to assume supervisory positions through participation in a programme of staff education. This programme might include the following:

1. Formal study at a college or university
2. Reading and private study
3. An orientation programme
4. Staff meetings
5. An In-service Educational programme

Young graduates who have the qualifications, and show an interest in further studies, should be encouraged. The Post-Graduate Sister Tutor's Course or the Course in Hospital Administration given at the College of Nursing in Delhi is available to them. Also, they may apply for scholarships abroad.

A graduate nurse must realise the importance of continuing the practice of reading Nursing magazines and of keeping up-to-date with recent medical advances. A well-stocked library should be made available. To stimulate the practice of reading current literature, the graduate could be given the responsibility of planning and conducting the task of supervising student procedures and signing their procedure books. This would be an incentive for maintaining good techniques. Under her direction a bulletin board on the ward might display literature on new and current medicines.

Among educational programmes for staff nurses, an orientation or induction programme serves an immediate need for the new graduate trained in a different hospital. She must be made to feel at home. Personnel policies, rules and regulations that affect her should be explained. Her first few weeks on duty should be spent in getting acquainted with the routine and especially with the department to which she is assigned. It is

important also that she be helped to understand the people of the locality and, if necessary, be given lessons in their language.

Regular and planned staff meetings offer an opportunity for group thinking and group planning. Through these meetings an *esprit de corps* can be developed. The members feel their importance as a part of the whole. At this time problems relating to the hospital or to specific departments can be discussed, procedures and policies revised. The members should be encouraged to attend other local nursing meetings, e.g., branch meetings of the TNAI or CNG.

The staff may keep abreast of the progress in the medical field by participation in an In-service programme which might include lectures, panel discussions, clinical conferences, workshops and refresher courses, material which suits their needs should be included. If well-planned and systematically executed, these methods can contribute much.

The following principles should be followed in arranging such a programme:

1. All should take part in the planning and execution of the meeting. Members should contact the speakers and inform them of the needs of the group. They should be responsible for the actual meetings—greeting and introducing the speakers, having the necessary equipment at hand, etc.
2. The programme should be planned for an entire year to provide for logical sequence. A well-organised programme published at the beginning of the year, complete with date, time and place of meeting, allows everyone to plan to attend.
3. The time should be fixed so that the greatest number of personnel can be present.
4. Time should be allowed for questions and discussion. The more informal these sessions are, the more beneficial they are likely to be. Much can be learned from an exchange of ideas and

experiences, and discussion should be encouraged.

The Superintendent of Nurses or an Instructor with training in supervision could, by means of individual conferences or lectures to the group, help prepare her graduates for assuming charge of a ward. A plan could be made to include all the functions with which the young graduate must become acquainted, concentrating on those in which she is weakest.

As regards Administrative functions, the hospital expects the head nurse or ward sister to make rounds and to inspect her department regularly. She is responsible for maintaining all aspects of the physical environment. Requisitions for repairs and adequate supplies pass through her hands. She is responsible for the care of all the furniture and supplies used by her personnel, and she must keep inventories of all such equipment. Faithfulness in this point will help develop in her that sense of belonging to the organization mentioned earlier, and this in turn will call forth in her a respect and appreciation for hospital property. She should see that waste, breakage and destruction are reduced to a minimum. A report on these items must be given regularly. This point needs to be emphasized, as techniques cannot be followed if necessary equipment is lacking.

The graduate should plan the schedules so that the work load is evenly distributed and the patients receive good care. This implies that the one in charge check the performance of her students. Students in turn must be made to realize that the

orders of a graduate nurse are to be obeyed. Here we might add, that the graduate nurse herself must demand the respect that her position requires.

Supervisory functions require that the one in charge be clearly oriented to her function of helping the worker, not doing the task for her. The position of supervisor exists because the group requires help in order to perform its duties effectively. She must be able to stimulate and lead people willingly.

In regard to the teaching function, it seems that this has become one of the chief duties of the one in charge. The laws of learning emphasize that knowledge must be fixed in action. Nursing is learned primarily at the bedside of the patient, and all classroom instruction that precedes it is a preparation for the ward instruction. The ward sister must have an expert knowledge of her clinical speciality and know how to impart this to others so that they may learn profitably. This makes some knowledge of teaching techniques almost a necessity in order to take advantage of opportunities for utilizing a clinical case and thereby correlate theory with practice.

The future of nursing in India depends on the schools of nursing. Our greatest contribution to it stems from our position as educators. It is of the utmost importance that we realise this tremendous privilege which is ours—that of developing in our nurses professional competency as well as instilling in them a spirit of devotion and dedication to the sick which springs from true Christian charity.

Notice to Members

The present address of the Head Office of the Trained
Nurses Association of India is:

32 ALIPUR ROAD,
DELHI-8.