

PUBLIC HEALTH

Integration of Public Health in the Basic Nursing Curriculum

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Introduction.

Nurse educators have talked about integration of public health in the basic curriculum for years but we see little evidence of the practical application of the principles involved. This may be due to lack of facilities, but it is most probably due to our own lack of understanding of what *integration* and *public health* involve and a lack of the *know-how* to put the principles to work. Miss Clifford-Jones, Kumari Lakshmi Devi and I thought that we would all get more down-to-earth, practical experience from this short time together by first defining, in terms of nursing education and nursing service, *public health* and *integration* and leave a major part of the scheduled time for discussion.

As *teamwork* is the *keynote* of *total patient care* so it is the *key* to the integration of the social and health aspects of nursing in the curriculum. Teamwork of patient and family-student, ward sister—sister tutor—the doctor and other persons concerned with patient care is needed as a first step in integration. All professional staff concerned with patient care must understand preventive medicine and nursing before they can serve on the team, integrate and thus serve the patient best.

We are especially glad to have ward sisters and sister tutors together. A major factor in teamwork of the whole group begins with teamwork between the ward sisters and the sister tutors. When the ward sisters and

sister tutors work together on the basic plan for integration with emphasis on improving nursing service to patients as the major objective, the whole program begins on a sound

This article was the subject presented to the meeting of the Sister Tutors and Ward Sisters during the 1952 Annual Conference held in Delhi.

structural basis. The success of the program depends on the ward sister and her ability and spirit of service in this broad application of nursing. Apparent opposition or lack of interest may be a defence mechanism probably due to lack of understanding of objectives. Very few of us have had any experience in this broader field of nursing. An attempt will be made in this report, of the T. N. A. I. Conference Meeting on this subject, to review the key points of integration of public health in the Basic Curriculum. This topic is divided into several parts as follows:

- (i) Definition of terms : nursing, public health, basic curriculum and integration.
- (ii) Objectives of integration.
- (iii) What and how to integrate ?

Definitions. It is acknowledged that definitions are limiting but they are essential here as we need a common understanding of terms as a base-line for developing an application of the principles,

What is Nursing ?

"Nursing in its broadest sense, may be defined as an art and a science which involves the whole patient, body, mind and spirit; promotes his spiritual, mental and physical health by teaching and example; stresses health education and health preservation, as well as administration to the sick; involves the care of the patients' environment, social and spiritual as well as physical; and gives health service to the family and community as well as to the individual."

What is Public Health ?

Health has been defined by the World Health Organization to mean "Not merely the absence of disease, but state of complete physical, mental and social well-being". This means that public health is concerned with all factors that effect the mental, physical and spiritual well-being of the individual. Public health is organized to deal with the specific aspects of the health problems of the individual and his environment; to help the individual, within the framework of his and his family's resources, to deal with his own problems and to help him utilize educational, employment, recreational and other resources within his environment. Public health organization deals with two major aspects of health, namely, Preventive and Therapeutic. The *Preventive* aspect deals with sanitation; statistics; communicable disease control; maternal and child health; school health; tuberculosis; venereal disease; cancer; heart disease; research; epidemiology; environmental sanitation, medical and nursing service in the school, in the home, clinic and community. *Therapeutic* aspect of public health

may include general hospitalization but usually includes care of tuberculosis, leprosy, mentally ill and acute communicable disease conditions in dispensary and hospital.

What is integration ?

Integration is the fusing into one of various types of the whole, namely; the physical, mental, social and spiritual welfare of the individual.

What is the basic curriculum ?

"The basic curriculum in nursing is the general plan that the nursing schools set up to guide the learning experiences of its students". Every experience that helps students learning to promote their growth may be considered a part of the curriculum.

Objectives of Integration.

To provide better nursing care to the patient by developing in the student nurse :

Appreciation of the patient as an individual, belonging to a family, and living within a community.

To increase her knowledge of factors which contribute to Positive Health and her ability to impart this knowledge to the patient in a simple and practical form.

To make her aware of hospital and community services which are available for the guidance of the patient and his family, in sickness and in health.

The following key point breakdown of integration is suggested for study and practice in the class-room and at the bedside. It may be used as a guide to help evaluate patient care and other studies.

Some Nursing Principles to be integrated.

1. Maintain personally sound, mental and physical health.

Suggested method for integration

Begin with the student herself as soon as she is accepted into the school. Help her establish health habits with a conscious purpose of building and maintaining sound physical, mental and spiritual health by :

1. Personal hygiene—body, clothes, hair, nails etc.

2. Help her calculate the kind and amount of food she needs in relation to her build and her activities.
 3. Have her study the kind and amount and cost of food she takes for specified periods—analyse the protein, carbohydrate, vitamin and mineral content and relate it to her needs.
 4. Arrange and encourage her to attend and participate in the religious devotionals of her own choice.
 5. Arrange and encourage her to discuss her progress in nursing with you.
 6. Help her arrange and encourage recreational activities.
 7. Encourage her to participate in the student nurse organization.
 8. Arrange and encourage participation in cultural pursuits.
 9. Arrange yearly physical examination, Immunization etc.
 10. Provide and/or continuously work for a healthy environment.
 11. Utilize the democratic process to help the student to choose wisely.
2. Respect the patient as an individual, a member of the family and community.
- Basic service on individual needs.
1. Give undivided, unhurried, interested courteous attention and care to the patient and family at all times.
 2. Utilize the problem approach method of service so as to delineate the individual needs of each patient.
 3. Find out what he likes and what he dislikes as far as possible.
 4. Follow his culture pattern regarding baths, elimination, etc.
 5. Treat the family as guests. Encourage a responsible member of the family to stay with the acutely ill patient as advisable. Explain and discuss the hospital rules and regulations to them and show them how they can help the patient and the ward personnel by adhering to the rules and regulations.
 6. Encourage the family to secure preventive medical care to protect themselves and the community against the spread of communicable diseases.
3. Develop in the student a consciousness and awareness of the patient's social and positive health needs and guide her in the
1. Utilize the family health study and/or patient care study as a tool for learning the total needs of the patient.
 2. Teach at the bedside as much as possible and make practical application of the principles involved in the social and public health aspect of nursing.

development of skills needed to give intelligent thoughtful service.

4. Utilize Public Health and Social agency Resources.

5. Acknowledge the P. H. Director as the Health Authority for the area.

6. Arrange for continuity of patient care following hospitalization.

3. Plan the curriculum to include correlated practice in the out-patient or clinic department and ward services, for example: Assign the student to work in the maternity clinic and the maternity ward at the same time. Here she can work with the patient during the prenatal period and then serve the same patients in the delivery room and ward at the time of delivery.

4. Arrange for the student to visit the home of one or more prenatal patients during this period and another visit postpartal to help gain an appreciation of the patients point of view and to help teach health principles in a realistic manner.

5. Arrange the medical and surgical curriculum in the same way.

1. Invite key members of the staff of public health and social services to participate in individual care conferences for patients known to the service.

2. Arrange for student to read the case records of one or more patients who may have received help through social service.

3. Arrange for the student to visit with the public health nurse, the tuberculosis nurse and with the social worker.

4. Arrange for the student to participate in the maternal and child health centre in the urban and in the rural area.

5. Use key personnel engaged in community agencies work for example: Member of the Red Cross Tuberculosis Association and Health Departments for selected lectures.

6. Arrange a place of service in the Public Health Service where qualified nurses are available.

1. Visit the P. H. Department and meet the various members of the staff.

2. Utilize the Health Department annual report as a point of reference for information about health problems in the area, state and nation.

3. Utilize the Bore Report about the P. H. program and the Five Year Plan as an official reference to source material. Read daily papers. Keep an active bulletin board of health clippings, legislation etc.

1. Initiate and/or participate in the development of a system whereby public health nurse and health visitors may be informed about the patients hospitalization, the after care orders, epidemiology etc. A "To and Fro" record showing identification, diagnosis, home conditions, what has been done and recommendations for continued care has been found most effective.

- This record may be initiated by the field or hospital worker but preferably by a committee representing the P. H. field agencies and hospital nursing services.
2. Demonstrate to the patient and to a member of the family those procedures that will be continued at home.
 3. Talk with the patients as much and as often as possible to find out what health habits are practised; build on the good practice and explain scientific reasons for change; maintain a genuine interest and understanding of the patient's point of view.
 4. Encourage and plan for the patient to participate in various ward activities to gain strength and confidence before discharge.
7. Utilize the problem approach in teaching.
1. Introduce course subject by defining the problem in the area and assign the task to a student group. Example: Tuberculosis—What is the problem in India? In the staff; In the Home; In the Hospital?
 2. Have student find out by studying reports and records from State Health Department what is being done about the problem. Example: Program of control under each jurisdiction.
 3. Help student analyse these findings and guide them in thinking through plans for filling in the gaps between what is being done, and what needs to be done.
 Example: Problem: *Mothers give all newborn babies castor oil on the second day after birth and frequently thereafter.*
First—Determine the extent of this practice and why the mother, father and grandfather feel it is essential.
Second—How does this practice effect the physiology and nutrition of the child.
Third—What is being done to correct the habit.
Fourth—Bring pediatric and obstetrical doctors and nursing supervisors into consultation for report and analysis of the findings. Draft a plan of action and include specific time for evaluating the plan.
8. Teach and practise sound health habits.
1. Appoint some member of the staff as student health supervisor.
 2. Have each student keep her own health record of weight; sickness records; immunization record; school relationship records; report of conferences with supervisor.
 3. Keep records of quality of diet served to the students, correlate this with student expenditure

for foods and correlate with sickness incidence and present to the administration for consideration and correction.

9. Staff Education.

1. Staff education is the *first step* in integration.
2. Utilize the democratic process and have the staff plan ways and means of integrating Public Health in the nurses curriculum.

Integration of Public Health in the basic curriculum is not easy but it is essential to adequate nursing service for the hospital patient and his family and to the full growth and development of the student nurse. Our patient and families, the doctors, other colleagues and the people in our communities expect this kind and quality of professional nursing service. You cannot do the whole job at once. We suggest that you choose one aspect of integration and work gradually but persistently for other experiences at the bedside, in the clinics, in the community and in the school.

Summary: A suggested plan of integration of public health in the basic curriculum include the following:

1. Organization within the hospital and school of nursing through:

- (a) Co-operative learning of the principles of public health in *Staff education* program that will lead into co-operative planning and team work.
- (b) Planned student health program that will give the student responsibility for her own positive health.

2. Co-operation with the established Public Health Service in the

community that will permit the student to:

- (a) Observe the programs of sanitation, food control, housing and other environmental factors that affect the health of the individual and family.
- (b) Participate in the home care of the sick, home and active health instruction schemes.
- (c) Practise adaptation of basic nursing skill to home, school and factory situation.
- (d) Invite public health personnel to participate in class instructions.

3. Help each student nurse to be aware of the teaching opportunities:

- (a) At the bedside for the patient and family.
- (b) In the clinics before the patient sees the doctor and after he sees the doctor to help him understand how to carry out the orders.
- (c) In the homes to meet the needs of the patient.

4. Develop *teaching skills* as thoroughly as *other nursing skills*.



World Health Day

April 7.