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# PUBLIC HEALTH

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## The First Public Health Course

By Evelyn Davis

The Trained Nurses Association of India has always worked for progress in nursing education and have welcomed and supported every effort and advancement that would bring about better and improved national health.

The Association expressed much satisfaction when the Government of India decided that a post-graduate course in Public Health be developed at the College of Nursing. As the T.N.A.I. have been emphatic in their urge that Public Health should be incorporated in all basic nursing curriculum this post-graduate course, that will prepare teachers in this wider field of nursing, had their ardent support and good wishes.



Miss Evelyn Davis

Through the co-operation of the World Health Organisation, a Public Health Nursing Instructor was assigned to the College of Nursing to assist in developing a course which would include promotion of health, prevention of disease as well as service to the sick.

In September and October of 1952 fifteen new smiling faces were seen around the College of Nursing. Their teachers like any teachers or administrators when faced with fifteen students from ten different States scattered over a vast and changing country like India, felt a great responsibility.

The first period was not an easy one. Each student required assistance according to their individual capacities and needs. Each has grown and developed but it took many weeks for the hospital nurse to understand and develop a vision into the world of prevention and promotion and all the varied activities necessary to attain success in this new Public Health Nursing Field.

Miss Evelyn Davis, WHO Public Health Nurse who was assigned to the College of Nursing, Delhi in 1952, to assist with the first post-graduate course in Public Health, has now been assigned to work with the All-India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health for a similar purpose.

The developing of this pioneer programme in Public Health was an arduous task but according to Miss Davis, a very worthwhile one which she feels sure will bear fruit if the new graduates in Public Health are provided with the ways and means for the development of satisfactory programmes in the various States.

It was a pleasure to watch this learning experience and a growing interest and enthusiasm.

On January 12 these future Public Health Nurses left their classrooms, part time, for their new adventure in the urban fields of Public Health Activities. They observed and worked in a Maternal & Child Health Centre, the Tuberculosis and Venereal Disease Centres, and in eight various Industrial Centres.

They began to think and plan on their own; frequently asking their instructor "but, why?" They also realized that one cannot learn all about Public Health Nursing in a class-room nor is it a profession for nurses wishing a desk job, or who do not have a sincere desire to serve and to teach.

Yes, there were three final examinations preceded by sleepless nights and furrowed brows. But it was not really as difficult as they had imagined.

Later, *au revoir* was said to friends in the city and real adventure began on the first of April—ten weeks of village life and Public Health Nursing experience there. This really was a new World for most of the students; not like any hospital, town or city they had ever lived in.

There were no electric lights or water taps and they had to adjust to the dust, and the many house-keeping problems as well as a new routine, and professional responsibilities under the guidance of the staff of the Unit in the village.

Since this group had already learned to enjoy group life they quickly assumed their responsibilities and settled down to the serious work of learning by contact, observation and experience.

Growth and development is never stationary, so they continued to learn, to grow and develop in the Public Health Nursing Field.

Each student voiced her appreciation of this experience and admitted a new interest in rural Public Health Nursing work. Some said, "I can begin working in one of the community project areas right away." Others said, "These months have made me a better nurse regardless of where I shall work."

Public Health Nursing has taken its first step. Its continued progress and the successful work of these first post-certificate Public Health Nurses depends on the wise use of their special talents by their individual States and the sincere encouragement and professional guidance they get from the



The First Public Health Post-graduates of India—1953.

Public Health Workers already in the field.

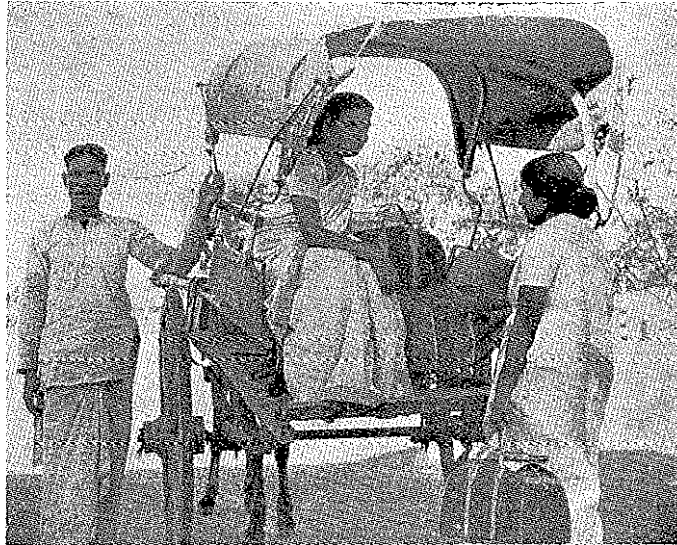
We need a great family of Public Health Nurses in India to aid in the rapid development and broadening of nursing activities as part of our Government's Five-Year Plan. Public Health Nurses should be the spokes in the wheel of the Community Project Health Programmes. They would be an aid to the health officers in developing all phases of Public Health Work in the villages.

But dreams without action is of no use. Help in the continued growth and development of Public Health Nursing in India is vital to the establishment of a good Public Health Programme wherever it is started.

We all are looking forward to a day when there will be Public Health Nurses in every Public Health and Hospital programme whether it be urban or rural; in Schools and Industries; and as one of the main instructors in all basic and post certificate courses for Administrators, Teachers and Student Nurses.

The forty-two weeks passed; studies, tests, field experience and real fun has intermingled to make a balanced school life. Farewell parties were held, group pictures taken, final conferences finished, and good-byes were said as trains carried them on their homeward journey.

The instructor always feels sad as



A tonga provides transport for a rural visit.

she faces an empty class-room, but her thoughts will travel to those students starting their new work in various parts of India. It has been a pleasure to have a small part in this first course in Public Health Nursing.

The Trained Nurses Association of India and the many men and women of vision who have given of their time, interest and knowledge in the birth and development of this first course of its kind in India can feel justly proud of this, the first group of Public Health graduates.

To any graduate nurse interested in joining this new group of pioneer Public Health Nurses, may I encourage you to do so soon. Information can be obtained from your Association as well as your State Health Department.

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vital capacity (thoracoplasty, pleural effusion etc.). Oxygen is an essential adjunct in the support of the patient with thyrotoxicosis particularly in the post-operative period. It is also extremely beneficial as a supportive measure in the patient with eclampsia. Patients who are toxic from infection, etc., are benefited by oxygen therapy. It is in these patients that restlessness

is most evident and most easily controlled by oxygen therapy.

Oxygen therapy can be considered an important adjunct to management of sick patients. It is a form of therapy offering many benefits and causing no harm. The benefits will be best demonstrated when oxygen is given early and in adequate concentrations for a sufficient length of time.