Monitoring and evaluation has always been a challenging task. Problems of evaluation in nursing practice are rather more due to complex nature of nursing practice where skill acquisition as well as proper attitude are important to achieve nursing excellence. In view of this, a variety of tools are needed to evaluate nursing performance. Haar & Hicks (1976) outlined some of the principle obstacles to effective performance appraisal viz. resistance on the part of evaluators due to their time consuming nature, lack of understanding about the purposes and procedures of appraisal, lack of skills in appraisal techniques, evaluator bias and rating errors, lack of communication about appraisal reports to employees, failure to police the appraisal procedure effectively, etc. The researcher felt convinced of the need to develop a comprehensive performance appraisal proforma for staff nurses on the basis of the opinions of nurses in the earlier phase of her study.

Thus, the objectives of the study were to develop a comprehensive appraisal proforma for Staff Nurses and determine its acceptability from Experts, Nurse Managers and Staff Nurses. The study was based on the assumption that the performance of staff nurses can be evaluated by using such a proforma. An exploratory survey approach was adopted. The sample subjects comprised of two groups - 60 Nurse Managers working at different administrative levels and 40 Staff Nurses working in different Medical surgical departments of selected hospitals of Delhi. The sampling technique used was Purposive sampling for the Nurse Managers and simple random sampling for staff Nurses. To develop a comprehensive proforma for Staff nurses, the researcher developed three tools.

For content validation, these tools were given to 11 experts, who worked at different administrative levels comprising nurse administrators from the professional nursing organisations, renowned hospitals of Delhi, nursing educational institutions, and practicing nurses as well as non-nursing experts who had the expertise in the field of performance appraisal. These three tools were:

(a) A structured opinionnaire to determine opinion of subjects about the desired evaluation strategies for performance appraisal of Nurses. (Content validity = 89.9%, Cronbach alpha coefficient=0.86).

(b) A structure opinionnaire for Experts to identify the criteria for developing a comprehensive tool for performance evaluation of Nurses. (Content validity = 91.6%, Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient = 0.859).

(c) A structured opinionnaire to determine the acceptability of the proforma designed by the Researcher from Experts and the subjects. (Content validity = 95.45%, Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient=0.86).

Based on intense literature review, opinions and suggestions sought from 11 Experts and sample subjects, the researcher designed and developed a comprehensive proforma for appraisal of Staff Nurses. The major steps followed were based on conceptual framework which was primarily adapted from Haar's Systems Model for performance appraisal and the steps of development of performance assessment instruments as given by WHO (1980).

The proforma developed by the Researcher has two sections:

Section I - Evaluation guide for Nurse managers for Performance appraisal of staff nurses.

Section II - Performance Appraisal Proforma for staff nurses.

Section I comprises Instruction / Evaluation Guide which has the following contents: Purpose of the Evaluation Guide, Objectives of Appraisal proforma, Category of staff to be evaluated, Job description of Staff Nurses, Category of appraiser (evaluator),
Frequency of Appraisal, Instructions for using the proforma, How to use the proforma-evaluation method, Criteria, Scoring and Interpretation procedure, Grading policy & Guidelines for effective Performance Appraisal.

Section II comprises Performance Appraisal proforma for staff nurses, which is divided into five forms, i.e. Form A, B, C, D, E.

Form A is designed as Self Appraisal Form which is further subdivided into two parts: Part 1 - Personal Data of Appraiser; and Part 2 - Self Appraisal of Appraiser.

Form B is designated as Reporting Officer's Report which is further subdivided into two parts: Part 1 - Comments of the Reporting Officer on Self-Appraisal of Appraiser; and Part 2 - Performance Appraisal Report of Appraiser.

This report comprises the evaluation of staff nurses based on certain characteristics that were broadly grouped under following categories - Patient care skills, Professional competence, Personnel management skills, Human relation skills, Maintenance of safe environment for patient and personnel, Management of supplies and equipments, Management of emergencies, Teaching skills, Recording and reporting skills, Accountability and dependability, Personal qualities and Self development skills. Provision of evaluating both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of performance of staff nurses was ensured in terms of 5-point scale (Excellent/Very good/Good/Fair/Poor) and 4-point scale for frequency (Always/Some times/Rarely/Never), respectively.

Form C is designed as Conference Report, which is further subdivided into two parts: Part 1 - Conference Report by Reporting Officer; and Part 2 - Feedback Report by Appraisee.

Form D is designated as Follow up Performance Appraisal Report.

Form E is designated as Reviewing Officer's Report.

The proforma was given for content validity to same 11 experts (mean content validity agreement = 93.3%). Frequency and percentages, mean, median, mode and standard deviation were computed for analysing characteristics of sample subjects and ascertaining the acceptability of the proforma developed by the researcher.

Characteristics of the sample subjects
Age wise distribution of subjects showed that 90 percent of the Nurse Managers were above 30 years of age whereas only 50 percent of the Staff Nurses were above 30 years of age.

Position status of subjects indicated that 71.6 percent of Nurse managers were working as Ward sisters, 18.3 percent as Assistant Nursing Superintendent, 6.66 percent as Deputy Nursing Superintendent and 3.3 percent as Nursing Superintendent.

Professional qualification status highlights that majority of subjects (93.3%) of Nurse Managers and 97.5% of Staff Nurses) had qualified Diploma in General Nursing and Midwifery.

In relation to the duration of experience of subjects, 78.3 percent of Nurse Managers had experience of more than 10 years. Majority of Staff Nurses had experience of less than 10 years. 58.3 percent of Nurse Managers and 50 percent of Staff Nurses had indicated that they were oriented at the time of joining the hospital.

As regards attending any training programme on Performance appraisal, 95 percent of the Nurse managers reported that they have not attended any such training programme.

Findings of the Study
The acceptability scores of Experts and part of the sample subjects i.e. Nurse managers (15) and staff nurses (10) for the developed proforma, as determined by the acceptability opinionnaire, were found to be 92.87 percent, 86.45 percent and 92.45 percent, respectively. Thus, majority of them agreed that the proforma is comprehensive to assess the performance of Staff Nurses and hence expressed their favourable opinion towards the proforma developed by the researcher for performance appraisal of staff nurses to a great extent. They also recommended not only for an experimental study to assess its practicability and also recommended for conducting a training programme for Nurse Managers to use the developed proforma effectively.

The major limitation of the present study was that the time constraint did not allow the researcher to try out and test the reliability and practicability of the performance appraisal proforma. Also, the acceptability of the proforma developed by the researcher could be determined only from
few and not all the subjects due to time constraints.

The study therefore implies that the nurse administrators, at all administrative levels must ensure regular, frequent and objective evaluation of nurses’ performance through utilisation of effective appraisal system, effective supervision and providing opportunities for feedback about evaluation. Regular short training programmes, workshops, etc. should be organised to keep the nurse managers abreast of newer tools and techniques of evaluation; professional organisations should give a more serious consideration to ‘performance appraisal’ in making personnel decisions viz., promotions, salary increase, etc. thereby increasing the responsibility and accountability of nurse managers towards performance appraisal of nurses. They must also strive to identify experts in the field to direct their efforts for development of effective appraisal system so as to ensure improvement in nurses’ performance thereby moving towards achieving nursing excellence.

The researcher recommends a long-term study to determine the effect of performance appraisal on nurses’ performance and the factors that influence performance appraisal system. The criteria selected today will need to be reviewed periodically to meet the needs of our fast changing health care system. Therefore, the investigator suggests that the proforma should be reviewed after a period of time and modifications be made on the basis of reviewed criteria in the light of changing role of the nurses.

References


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**Announcement**

TNAl Workshop on “Role of Nurses in Management of Operation Theatre”

15 - 22 April 2009 at TNAl Headquarters, New Delhi-110016.

A National Workshop on “Role of Nurses in Management of Operation Theatre” will be held from 15 - 22 April 2009. The overall purpose of the workshop is to update the knowledge of nurses in the management of operation theatres in view of technological advancement in the field of surgery.

Request for registration will be considered on a first-cum-first served basis as there are only limited seats (40). All costs for attending the Workshop will be borne by the sponsoring authorities (Institutions/Governments) or by concerned individuals as the case may be.

**Total participation fee**

(1) Participants those who require accommodation (fee package for Registration, Boarding and lodging for 8 days including Sunday) - Rs. 13,000.00

(2) Participants (those who do not require accommodation (fee package for Registration, lunch and refreshment) for 7 days - Rs. 6,400.00

For Registration forms, write to : The Coordinator (CEP), TNAl Headquarters, L-17, Florence Nightingale Lane, Green Park, New Delhi - 110016, Phone 26566665, 2696873, Telefax (011) 26555304, E-mail: tna@ndfvsnl.net.in and tna2003@yahoo.com along with the request for registration form. Kindly enclose a self addressed envelop (9”x4”) with a postage stamp of Rs. 5/- affixed.

Last date for receiving filled registration form is 13 April 2009. However, seats can be booked tentatively by phone/fax/telegram/Email.

Please note that in case of any cancellation, an amount of Rs. 500/- as registration fee will not be refunded. No outstation cheque will be accepted.

Mrs. Nanthini Subbiah
Dy. Secretary-General & Coordinator, CEP, TNAl