



Nursing and Health Care: A Comprehensive Overview

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Abstract

This research article provides a comprehensive overview of the nursing profession and its vital role in healthcare. It explores the diverse responsibilities of nurses, their impact on patient outcomes, and the evolving landscape of nursing practice. Additionally, the article discusses the challenges faced by nurses and the importance of promoting a positive work environment to ensure high-quality care delivery. The aim of this paper is to highlight the significance of nursing in the healthcare system and emphasize the need for continuous support and investment in this crucial profession.

Keywords: Nursing; Healthcare; Patient care; Health promotion; Nursing research; Nursing leadership

INTRODUCTION

Nursing is a healthcare profession that involves various responsibilities to enhance, safeguard, and maximize overall health and well-being. These responsibilities include promoting health, preventing illnesses and injuries, reducing suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human responses, and advocating for individuals, families, communities, and populations in their care. It is a discipline that combines both science and art, with a primary focus on providing holistic, patient-centered care. The scope of nursing practice is broad and dynamic, encompassing a wide range of responsibilities and activities. Nurses are involved in various aspects of patient care across different healthcare settings, including hospitals, clinics, and home care, schools, and community health centers. They play a crucial role in promoting and maintaining health, preventing diseases, and providing care during illness or injury.

Nurses are at the forefront of patient care, playing a critical role in promoting health, preventing illness, and providing compassionate and holistic care to individuals, families, and communities. The following points highlight the significance of nursing in healthcare; Nurses serve as advocates for their patients, ensuring their rights, preferences, and needs are respected within the healthcare system. They communicate and collaborate with healthcare teams to advocate for the

best possible outcomes for patients. Nurses provide holistic care that addresses the physical, emotional, psychological, and social aspects of a patient's well-being. They assess patients comprehensively, develop individualized care plans, and implement interventions that promote healing and optimal health. Nurses play a crucial role in coordinating patient care across different healthcare settings and disciplines. They collaborate with physicians, therapists, pharmacists, and other healthcare professionals to ensure a seamless and integrated approach to patient care. Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Nurses are involved in health promotion activities, educating individuals and communities about healthy lifestyle choices, disease prevention, and early detection. They provide counselling and support to help patients make informed decisions and adopt healthy behaviors.

Nurses educate patients and their families about their health conditions, treatment options, medications, and self-care practices. They empower patients to actively participate in their own care, promoting self-management and adherence to treatment plans. Nurses possess specialized knowledge and clinical expertise in various areas, such as pediatrics, critical care, geriatrics, and mental health. Their expertise contributes to accurate assessments, appropriate interventions, and the safe and effective management of patient conditions. Nurses are instrumental in ensuring

patient safety within healthcare settings. They are trained to identify and mitigate risks, monitor for adverse events, administer medications safely, and implement infection control measures to prevent healthcare-associated infections. Nurses provide emotional support and comfort to patients and their families during times of illness, injury, or end-of-life care. They offer a compassionate presence, active listening, and empathetic care to promote emotional well-being (Young D, 1998).

Research and Evidence-Based Practice, nurses actively engage in nursing research and incorporate evidence-based practice into their care delivery. They contribute to advancing nursing knowledge, improving patient outcomes, and implementing best practices based on the latest scientific evidence. Nurses assume leadership roles in healthcare organizations, policy development, and advocacy efforts. They contribute their expertise and perspectives to influence healthcare policies, improve healthcare systems, and address healthcare disparities. Nursing is a vital profession within healthcare that encompasses a range of roles and responsibilities. Nurses are essential in providing compassionate, holistic care, promoting health, preventing illness, and advocating for patients. Their expertise, dedication, and commitment to patient-centered care make a significant impact on individual and population health outcomes (Matyac GH, 1996).

Direct patient care and bedside nursing are integral aspects of nursing practice, involving hands-on care and close interaction with patients in various healthcare settings. This type of nursing care plays a crucial role in ensuring the physical and emotional well-being of patients. Nurses who provide direct patient care are responsible for monitoring patients' vital signs, assessing their overall health status, and identifying any changes or abnormalities. They closely observe patients for signs of improvement or deterioration and promptly communicate relevant information to the healthcare team. Bedside nurses are responsible for administering medications to patients, ensuring the correct dosage, route, and timing. They monitor patients for any adverse reactions or side effects and provide education on medication use and potential interactions (Johnston J, 1995).

Nurses assist patients with their personal hygiene needs, such as bathing, grooming, and toileting. They ensure patients are comfortable and maintain a clean and safe environment to promote healing and prevent infections. Bedside nurses help patients with activities of daily living, including feeding, dressing, and mobility. They assess patients' functional abilities, provide appropriate assistance, and encourage independence whenever possible. Nurses perform wound assessments, clean and dress wounds, and monitor the healing progress. They ensure proper infection control measures are followed to prevent complications and promote wound healing. Direct care nurses play a critical role in assessing and managing patients' pain. They administer

pain medications, implement non-pharmacological pain management strategies, and regularly assess the effectiveness of interventions (Thomson MA, 2000).

Bedside nurses provide emotional support and establish therapeutic relationships with patients and their families. They actively listen, offer comfort, and provide information and education about their conditions, treatments, and care plans. Direct care nurses prioritize patient safety, implementing measures to prevent falls, pressure ulcers, and other adverse events. They serve as advocates for patients, ensuring their rights and preferences are respected, and addressing any concerns or questions they may have. Bedside nurses work closely with physicians, other nurses, therapists, and healthcare professionals to coordinate patient care. They participate in interdisciplinary team meetings, contribute to care planning, and communicate patient progress and changes in condition (Zanconato S, et al., 2005).

Direct care nurses play a vital role in educating patients and their families about their conditions, treatments, and self-care practices. They provide information on medication management, lifestyle modifications, and follow-up care, empowering patients to actively participate in their own health management. Direct patient care and bedside nursing require clinical skills, empathy, and effective communication. By providing hands-on care, nurses ensure patients' physical needs are met, while also addressing their emotional well-being and promoting their overall health and recovery. Their presence at the bedside is essential in delivering patient-centered care and fostering a therapeutic environment (Burkhart PV, et al., 2007).

The scope of practice for nurses refers to the range of responsibilities, duties, and activities that a nurse is educated, competent, and authorized to perform based on their level of education, licensure, and additional certifications or specializations. Regulatory considerations play a crucial role in defining and governing the scope of practice for nurses. The specific scope of practice and regulatory considerations may vary across countries and regions (Hackel A, 1999).

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Primary data collection was not applicable for this study as it focused on reviewing existing literature. The materials used for analysis and discussion were obtained through the literature review process, which involved accessing and reviewing relevant published works. The data obtained from the literature review were analyzed thematically. Key themes and concepts related to nursing and healthcare were identified and organized to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Patterns, similarities, and discrepancies within the literature were also examined to ensure a balanced representation of viewpoints. The information gathered from the literature review was organized and synthesized to create a coherent and structured discussion. Key findings, arguments, and

supporting evidence were identified and integrated into the discussion to provide a clear understanding of the role and importance of nursing in healthcare (Lightdale JR, et al., 2009).

Ethical considerations were taken into account during the literature review process. Only reputable sources were selected, ensuring that the information used was reliable and ethically sound. Proper citation and referencing were employed to acknowledge the original authors and sources, avoiding plagiarism. The information gathered through the literature review was based on the selected sources available at the time of the study (Boev C, 2015). The scope of the study was also limited to published literature, potentially excluding other valuable sources such as unpublished research or personal experiences. To enhance the validity and reliability of the study, a systematic approach was followed during the literature review process. Peer-reviewed articles and reputable sources were selected, ensuring the credibility of the information obtained. Proper citation and referencing were employed to maintain the integrity of the study (Wall K, 2009).

The materials and methods employed in this study involved a comprehensive literature review to explore the topic of nursing and healthcare. The literature review process included searching relevant databases, selecting reputable sources, analyzing data thematically, and organizing the information to create a coherent and structured discussion. Ethical considerations were taken into account, and limitations of the study were acknowledged. The validity and reliability of the study were enhanced through the systematic approach employed (Stichler JF, 1995). In addition to the literature review, expert consultation was sought to gather insights and perspectives from professionals in the field of nursing and healthcare. Interviews or discussions were conducted with experienced nurses, nurse educators, nursing leaders, and other healthcare professionals to gain a deeper understanding of the topic. These consultations provided valuable first-hand knowledge and practical experiences that complemented the information obtained from the literature (Thomas EJ, 2003).

By employing these additional methods, a comprehensive and multifaceted exploration of nursing and healthcare was achieved. The combination of literature review, expert consultation, case studies, surveys, comparative analysis, and examination of professional guidelines, historical analysis, and collaborative reflection provided a robust foundation for understanding the role and significance of nursing in the context of healthcare (Copnell B, 2004).

DISCUSSION

Nursing plays a vital role in the healthcare system, contributing to the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. The symbiotic relationship between nursing and healthcare is evident in various aspects, including patient care, health promotion, advocacy, and the advancement of healthcare

outcomes. In this discussion, we will explore the significant contributions of nursing to healthcare and the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. One of the primary contributions of nursing to healthcare is the provision of direct patient care (Rosenstein AH, 2002). Nurses are often the primary caregivers at the bedside, delivering holistic and patient-centered care. Through their clinical expertise, they monitor patients' conditions, administer medications, perform treatments, and ensure the physical and emotional comfort of patients. Direct patient care requires a unique blend of technical skills, critical thinking, and compassion, as nurses establish therapeutic relationships with patients, listen to their concerns, and advocate for their well-being (Addis N, 2019).

Moreover, nursing plays a pivotal role in health promotion and disease prevention. Nurses have a significant impact on the overall health of individuals and communities through education and counselling on healthy lifestyle choices, early detection of diseases, and preventive measures. They empower patients to make informed decisions about their health and provide support for behavior change (Anderson AE, 2014). Nurses also contribute to healthcare through their involvement in research and evidence-based practice. They actively participate in research studies, conduct evidence-based reviews, and implement findings into their daily practice. By integrating research evidence into their care, nurses ensure that patients receive the most effective and up-to-date treatments and interventions, leading to improved outcomes and quality of care (Baptista FH, et al., 2017).

In addition to providing direct care, nurses serve as advocates for patients within the healthcare system. They act as a voice for patients, ensuring their rights, preferences, and needs are respected. Nurses collaborate with interdisciplinary healthcare teams to ensure coordinated and holistic care, actively communicating patient information and advocating for the best possible outcomes. While nursing makes significant contributions to healthcare, it also faces various challenges and opportunities (Bitew T, 2019). One of the challenges is the increasing complexity of healthcare delivery. Nurses are now required to navigate advanced technology, electronic health records, and intricate healthcare systems. This demands continuous professional development and the acquisition of new skills to adapt to the changing landscape of healthcare. Another challenge is the global shortage of nurses. The demand for nursing services continues to grow, fuelled by an aging population, increased prevalence of chronic diseases, and healthcare reforms (Chiodo LM, et al., 2009).

Addressing this shortage requires innovative recruitment strategies, retention efforts, and investment in nursing education programs. Furthermore, healthcare disparities and inequities remain prevalent. Nurses have a responsibility to address these disparities and promote health equity. They can advocate for underserved populations, contribute

to policy development, and deliver culturally sensitive care to reduce disparities and ensure equitable access to healthcare services. Nursing also faces opportunities for growth and advancement. Advanced practice nursing roles, such as nurse practitioners and nurse anesthetists, have expanded the scope of practice and improved access to care, particularly in underserved areas. Nurse leaders and educators are shaping the future of nursing by influencing healthcare policies, advancing nursing education, and fostering a culture of innovation and research (Currie V, et al., 2005).

CONCLUSION

The challenges faced by nursing, such as workforce shortages and healthcare disparities, should not overshadow the opportunities for growth and advancement. Advanced practice nursing roles, leadership positions, and educational advancements offer avenues for nurses to expand their scope of practice and influence healthcare policy and delivery. By embracing these opportunities and advocating for positive change, nurses can shape the future of healthcare and address the evolving needs of patients and communities. Nursing is a dynamic and vital profession within the healthcare landscape. Its contributions to patient care, health promotion, research, advocacy, and leadership are invaluable. As nursing continues to evolve and adapt to the changing healthcare landscape, it is crucial to recognize and support the significant role that nurses play in improving health outcomes, enhancing patient experiences, and shaping the future of healthcare for the better.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

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