

EDUCATION

Nursing in Iraq: Personal Perspective

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In ancient times the patient care services were provided through folk practices by some people who had some knowledge of the basic human needs in the event that any one suffered from some health disorders. Once life began to develop and become more complicated, the need arose to find someone who would serve and take care of the patient, in addition to the physician whose main role became focused on diagnosing the disease and prescribing the necessary treatment.

The profession of nursing came into existence, which has become associated with the medical profession to carry out its instructions, its directives and follow-up in respect of the patient's condition, however, this role required sound scientific and practical foundations for nursing services to rise to the level of profession, so it was necessary to have:

- * The necessary knowledge related to human health in all its aspects (physical, psychological and mental, social, , cognitive, developmental, and spiritual) and good knowledge of other sciences such as anatomy, physiology, chemistry, microbiology, pharmacology, nutrition and diet therapy, as well as knowledge of the life stages that an individual be (fetus, a newborn, a child in all age stages, an adult and then an elderly person) male or female, and the different life roles.
- * Practices based on scientific foundations aim to provide the best care for the patient according to the disease condition, which range in levels from novice, practitioner, up to experience.
- * Attitude or conviction towards the profession, which is not less important than its predecessors, therefore, unless there is a good conviction toward the profession and a strong positive attitude towards it, the profession cannot develop.

As long as persisting of these three elements in nursing profession, self-confidence will be emerged – that is missed among almost nurses – which considers the cornerstone in the creation of good nurse-patient therapeutic relationship and the nursing services will be considered satisfied, from another side, the adequacy and efficient nursing services are measured through two elements: Period of hospitalization and Occurrence of complications. In another meaning, the shorter period of

hospitalization with weak chance of occurrence of complications among patients, this reflects the qualified nursing services and vice versa.

Nursing considers an important profession for an individual, family and community, its services are three levels:

***Primary Prevention** focusing on prevention of the disease through different roles; applying procedures, advisements, education and counseling, as vaccination, environmental pollution, proper nutrition 'quantity and quality', daily activities and enrollment in the activities of primary health care aspects and so on.

***Secondary Prevention** focusing on early diagnosis or determination of signs and symptoms caused by any health disorder, administer the proper and ordered drugs suitable to the problem, and intervene or implement the care and apply the important procedures or advices directed to alleviate or care the problem and to prevent its adverse consequences.

***Tertiary Prevention** focusing on enhancement the remaining capabilities of the patient after recovery from the acute or chronic phase of the disease such as therapeutic and rehabilitation exercises and psychological and nutritional advices in case of diabetes mellitus and cardiac diseases and so on.

All of these roles that the nurse performs in terms of serving the patient "sick or well", his family and society, are recognized and considered necessary for the continuity of life, whereas, the nursing profession faces many difficulties and hardships that it encounters and affects it strongly in most societies - if not all of them whether develop or developing countries- as:

- * The inferiority view toward the nursing staff by most workers in the medical or health field.
- * The superiority view directed from the physician towards the nursing staff.
- * Stigma or underestimation directed by the community toward nursing staff.
- * Huge duties and obligations that disproportionate the few rights they get, for example, the nature of daily work and night shifts in exchange for cash income.
- * Absence or inactivation of legislations and laws that preserve the rights of nursing staff in proportion to the nature of the work they do.
- * Absence or inactivation of Job Description, at most of time, that makes all nursing staff work in the same or unsuitable place despite their different nursing scientific levels.
- * Non-reliance of the nursing profession on evidence and results of scientific research and Evidence based practice.

- * Blind imitation in the application of nursing practices carried out by colleagues despite the competence and experience of higher nursing educational levels.
- * The effects of crises the society faces on the nature of the nursing services provided and the emergence of people who are not professionals to practice nursing.
- * The lack or insufficiency of health institutions, especially hospitals, in proportion to the needs of the patient and society.
- * Weak conviction or attitude of most nursing staff toward the nursing profession.
- * The involvement of large number of personnel in other professions in the practice of the nursing profession, despite or without the knowledge of the higher authorities.
- * Shortage of specialized educational faculties members, in addition to the weak scientific and practical levels of many of them despite to its levels.
- * Scarcity or absence of nursing specializations commensurate with the community's need and the disease profile or accidents it is exposed.
- * Lack of keeping pace with scientific development in the field of health and nursing in developed countries.
- * Lack of desire among many nursing staff for self-development to serve the nursing profession.

Therefore, in-depth and effective work must be done to raise the level of the profession and its personnel through:

- * Defining roles, creating and applying an effective job description in accordance to the levels or nursing certificate from the business.
- * Enhance and improve the professional inter-relationships among the health and medical staff based on self-respect and appreciation of others.
- * The incentives and wages that the nursing staff deserve must be in accordance to the work they perform.
- * Encourage enrollment in obtaining higher educational certificates in nursing.
- * Benefit from and encourage the scientific research in the field of health and the nature of nursing services provided to the patient.
- * Benefit from the knowledge and apply the correct practices possessed by the higher nursing certificates and not blindly imitation the others.
- * Increase, expand and develop nursing educational institutions and prevent others from other professions to practice nursing work.
- * Provide the required health institutions and work to increase their efficiency by providing the necessary equipment and supplies.

- * Direct the various media to clarify the nature of the nursing profession, its roles, and importance.
- * Create an awareness programs directed to increase society's acceptance of the nursing profession, as well as to enhance nurses' attitude and conviction toward their profession.
- * Match the curriculums of nursing studies with the nature of diseases and accidents the society exposed.
- * Develop the nursing faculties members through their participation in conferences, courses and workshops related to nursing inside and outside the country.
- * Encourage and motivate the nursing staff through rewards, prizes and continuous honors as an appreciation to their tremendous efforts in serving the patient.
- * Obligate nursing faculties members in educational institutions to engage in practicing the profession in health institutions continuously.