

Quality Assurance and Challenges in Nursing Education

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Abstract:

After the Alma Atta conference held in Russia in 1978 AD Nepal government accepted the Primary Health Care concept to provide health services accordingly and integrated in nursing curricula. Nursing profession is a need based care which involve directly to human life. To identify the problems, plan nursing care and to give appropriate care are the role and responsibilities of a competent nurse. Competency and quality are interlinked qualities of a good nurse. Quality assurance comprises administrative and procedural activities implemented in a quality system so that requirements and goals for a product, service or activity will be fulfilled. So to produce a good competent care giver nurse, should be competency based core activities must be taught and practiced during the training period of the course.

Keys: Quality assurance, Nursing, profession, competency.

Background Introduction:

In Nepal formally nursing education was started in 2013 BS (1956 AD) with the purpose of providing bed side nursing care. The country was facing high maternal mortality, under five children mortality, communicable diseases and high death and birth rate, so there was a great need of middle level health workers who provide basic health services to prevent from diseases, care for the sick people. On those reasons Nepal government developed a policy to produce more health manpower including nursing and posted all over the hospitals.

According to the American nursing association Nursing is defined as “the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, communities, and populations”.

In emergence of new diseases, socio-economic, environmental and living standard related to health problems, World Health Organization and United Nations International Children Education Fund jointly hold a conference and adopted a concept of “Primary Health care” in 1978 in Alma Atta of USSR with the slogan of “Health for all by year 2000 AD, which was to provide health care to the people with collaboration with use of an appropriate technology and cost effective health care in participation of the people. Nepal government also adopted policy of Primary Health care, after the attending the conference and integrated in the national health plan. To give the health services there was a need of different level of health manpower among them nursing was one. The major challenges in that period was to reduce high maternal, infant, under five’s mortalities, high birth and death rate and high fertility. So the health worker especially the nurse must have competency in knowledge, skill and attitude to meet the need of the people with quality assurance.

Nursing is a profession that is related directly to human life and human health. The nurse should have sharp and prompt decision making skills and knowledge to assess health needs of the people must with competency to provide nursing care. A standard of care must be maintained and must be safe to the patient and herself too. So the quality of nursing care should be monitored by the concerning agencies like Nepal nursing council, training institutes and consumers.

Quality assurance:

According to University Grant Commission Nepal, “quality assurance is the activity of providing evidence needed to establish quality in work and the activities that require good quality are being performed effectively. All those planned or systematic actions necessary to provide enough confidence that a product or service will satisfy the given requirements for and responsibilities of a competent nurse.

Similarly according to the quality engineering (journal), “assurance comprises administrative and procedural activities implemented in a quality system so that requirements and goals for a product, service or activity will be fulfilled”. It is the systematic measurement, comparison with a standard, monitoring of processes and an associated feedback loop that confers error prevention. This can be contrasted with quality control, which is focused on process output.

Role of the nurse is drastically changed in present context where nurses need to take challenges and work independently. In this situation she/he must have competency in knowledge, skill and attitude. These competencies must be taught, learn and practice during her/his training period which protects her/his self from legal obligations and prevent harm to the patient.

Quality assurance and Challenges:

Boom of nursing colleges;

According to Nursing Council, in the country more than 250 colleges are producing different level nursing manpower. There are already about 50 thousand nurses registered in Nepal Nursing

Council and about 7000 nurses (different categories) are graduating yearly from different training colleges and institutes, Nepal nursing council. Government hospitals, Primary Health Care centers, private hospitals and other institutes have limited number posts created and vacant. In future there will be less chances of employment and increases unemployment. Production and consumption mismatch will lead frustration among the nurses. To ensure on these matter Concerning authorities (NNC and Nepal government) need to strictly monitor the colleges.

Globalization;

World has been viewed as single village and globalization of health services took place. There is demand of trained manpower in foreign countries and nurses are the one who are getting job out of the country. The country may lose the trained manpower. The country may advantage of some technical support and exchange of expert with other neighbor countries also. However the country has advantage to increase the remittance of economy and other side. So the government should develop the policies to retain the manpower in the country and serve the people by the qualified nursing personnel.

Matching education with the Practice

Nursing is the key component of the healthcare team and system, the nursing profession must keep pace with changes in the healthcare system to insure the continued delivery of high quality, safe, and effective patient-centered care. To stay current, new nurses must be educated and equipped with relevant and appropriate competencies, knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In order to plan for the future, it is first necessary to assess requirements for the workforce, based on expectations of the work environment, and develop the education required for nurses to fill those roles. To equip all necessary knowledge and skill there must be the appropriate institutes like hospitals with all facilities of maternity service, general wards, children, adult and old aged, operating theatre and especial care units, where nursing students get chance to practice and then will be competent to provide quality nursing care with safety.

Facing dramatic changes.

Following the improvement in standard of living, provision of health services there is large number of an aging population, growing diversity, the global health care system, bio-medical advances, and new areas of knowledge on genetics, and environmental health will reshape how to provide care in the future. To address these changes, nurses will require more knowledge non-intensive care units of a hospital now require nurses with higher acuity levels in ICUs (The American Health Care Association).

Besides that there are new diseases emerging in different areas of world which need a quick response and health worker, nurses are prone to infect and care need to be provided for affected ones. New knowledge need to be updated timely to meet new problems.

Faculty Development

Quality education depends on well-prepared faculty members. Faculty development and faculty vacancies are critical challenges in nursing education. The nursing shortage poses a significant threat to healthcare delivery in the future. Present number of nursing colleges running in the country, which are having faculty shortage in specialty in different areas. In this situation students may lack in competency that demanded by the public. The nursing profession's responsibility to shape and guide any process for assuring nurse with competence. Assurance of competence is the shared responsibility of the profession, individual nurses, professional organizations, credentialing and certification entities, regulatory agencies, employers, and other key stakeholders." (American Nurses Association).

In addition to that increasing number of faculty members, those educators need the training to enable them to incorporate evidence-based teaching practices more effectively and teach nursing students the skills that will be required in the 21st century's healthcare environment. Nursing schools require faculty who are experts in nursing education

and who must possess the knowledge to serve in an advanced practice role. Furthermore, deans of schools of nursing are needed to complement these experts and act to create systems that value and reward expertise in nursing education

Conclusion:

To expect the quality nursing care which is the fundamental right of people is depend on the environment of exposure given during the period as required in curriculum, which will make a nurse competent to deliver the service.

So the responsibility of state and concerned agencies is to develop a strict policy of manpower production and regular monitoring. The training institutes need to be well equipped with faculty members, class room materials and proper exposure areas for clinical experience to the students during as required in curriculum.

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