

The Significant Issues in the Nursing Profession

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Abstract:

The nursing profession comes with a lot of commitments and passion. Nurses can encounter a few major issues during their profession, which can cause them to face some intricate scenarios. Some of the major issues in the profession that were discussed in this paper were, staffing shortages that can cause long hours, workplace violence, and transforming the way nurses' practice: so that they will can practice with the full extent of their education and training. As nurses' care for their patients, there are times that the nurses may face some backlash or have some challenges within the workplace. From the many problems that the profession comes with, it can cause more problems for the nurse and the patient. One of the major responsibilities for a nurse is patient centered care. However, at times these challenges may prevent the nurse to provide the full extent of practice that they were trained and educated for, which can cause a decrease in the health care system.

Keywords: staffing, workplace violence, transformation

Issue #1: Staffing Shortages

One of the major issues that a nurse may encounter is the long hours due to staffing shortage. When there are less staff, the nurses can end up working long hours and can result in various consequences. The nurses working long hours can become overwhelmed because they end up with more responsibilities, increased patient to nurse ratio, fatigue, less breaks, and more. When nurses are overwhelmed, it can cause the nurse to possibly compromise the patient's care and can decrease patient outcome. It not only becomes dangerous for the patient, but for the nurse as well. "A Sentinel Event Alert issued by The Joint Commission (TJC) (2011) found that numerous studies had provided evidence that 'fatigue increases the risk of adverse events, compromises patient safety, and increases risk to personal safety and well-being'" (Ulrich, 2018, p.1). Instead of helping the nurse to improve their practice, it can put them at risk of compromising a patient's plan of care. "Appropriate nurse staffing is critical to ensure safe and effective care for patients" (Blouin and Podjasek, 2019, pg 221). Regardless of profession, no individual should be overwhelmed with responsibilities more than usual.

Due to staffing shortage, it can cause nurses to work long hours. The nurses can become fatigue and can cause them to eventually quit their job. Nurses can also end up having to be at work so often, that many of them find themselves to have a poor work-life balance, "staff are quitting because they are fed up with spending too much time at work and not enough with their families," (Campbell, 2019). Always being at work can result in the nurse becoming fatigue and eventually leading them to burn out. This issue can affect the nurses mood, causing them to possibly have disagreements or disputes between their coworkers. "When inappropriate staffing becomes frequent, the remaining RNs become fatigued, discouraged, and disillusioned." (Blouin and Podjasek, 2019, pg 221), causing nurses to work against each other rather than working

together. The profession an individual chooses, should be able to accommodate with basic human rights to their workers. They should be able have a balance between their work and personal life.

Issue #2: Workplace Violence

Another issue in the nursing profession today is workplace violence. Nurses spend a lot of time working in direct care with their patients and unfortunately some of them become victims. Workplace violence is not just coworkers being violent to one another, but also the patient to nurse. This aggressive behavior or violence can be from a patient, family members, and staff. As a nurse, patient centered care is a very significant goal in their profession because they know the most about their patients compared to anyone else. However, when there is an increase of workplace violence, it can result in fear and neglect. This fear can affect the nurse by the quality of care they put for their future patients. "Patient violence can result in nurses experiencing fear, frustration, lack of trust in hospital administrators, and decreased job satisfaction. Furthermore, nurses may become disenchanted with the nursing profession" (Casey, 2019, pg 9). Workplace violence may not always be physical, but comes in different forms of abuse as well. "Ranging from offensive language, verbal abuse, and bullying or mobbing, to sexual or racial harassment and threats of physical assault (Wassell, 2009)" (Al-Omari, Al-Modallal, Al-Awabdeh, Hamaideh, & Khait, 2019, pg 58). When the abuse is often happening amongst nurses, it leads these employees and their coworkers to turn a blind eye and start to normalize these incidents.

Unfortunately, many nurses may have the belief that patient violence comes with the job and can choose not to report these incidents. "Many injured nurses have said they have been told they should accept this reality and move on." (Flynn, 2019, pg 26). The increase of work place

violence, it “negatively affects the emotional and psychological well-being of the employed nurses.” (Al-Omari, Al-Modallal, Al-Awabdeh, Hamaideh, & Khait, 2019, pg 58). The increase of work place violence can cause “shortage of nurses, that threatens patient care, increases legal liabilities, and escalates workers’ compensation claims (Gillespie, Gates, Kowalenko, Bresler, & Succop, 2014)” (Casey, 2019, pg 9). The shortage of nurses can result back into the first major issue that was discussed earlier. In order to prevent this issue, the nurses should get extra training or education on how to deal with patients with aggressive behaviors. “Nurses need knowledge and confidence to be effective in identifying, communicating, and intervening in aggressive behavior.” (Casey, 2019, pg 10). This issue can cause a domino effect on each other, therefore to prevent workplace violence can also help resolve other issues as well.

Issue #3: Transformation of Nurses’ Practice

Another major issue that should be discussed is the transformation of nurses’ practice, found from “The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health” (2011). The IOM report stated Key Message (#1), “Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training” (*Future of nursing*, 2011, pg 85). This is pivotal in the health care system because when a nurse is able to practice to their full extent, it can help improve the desired patient care. “A transformed health care system is required to achieve this goal. Transforming the health care system will in turn require a fundamental rethinking of the roles of many health professionals, including nurses.” (*Future of nursing*, 2011, pg 85). Having an improved system can result in, “improvement in quality, access, and value, and many more are yet to conceived” (*Future of nursing*, 2011, pg 85). Nurses play a crucial role in patient centered care, therefore, they are a major factor when transforming the health care system. Due to certain barriers, it can prevent nurses to be able to practice with the full extent of their education, training, competencies, and

working in interprofessional collaboration. “Many of these barriers have developed as a result of structural flaws in the U.S. health care system; others reflect limitations of the present work environment or the capacity and demographic makeup of the nursing workforce itself.” (*Future of nursing*, 2011, pg 96). In order to transform the nursing practice, it would have to start with eliminating the factors that may prevent the nurses’ from practicing with the full extent of their ability.

The decline in change can cause a difficulty in transformation. Some health care professionals may find it difficult to come in terms with change. However, with the recent development within the population means there should be a change in the health care system. “Require that the system undergo a fundamental shift to provide patient-centered care; deliver more primary as opposed to specialty care; deliver more care in the community rather than the acute care setting; provide seamless care; enable all health professionals to practice to the full extent of their education, training, and competencies; and foster interprofessional collaboration.” (*Future of nursing*, 2011, pg 86-87). By achieving the change, it will result in improved patient center care, satisfaction, and outcome. “With every passing decade, nursing has become an increasingly integral part of health care services, so that a future without large numbers of nurses is impossible to envision.” (*Future of nursing*, 2011, pg 87). As nurses in the past have innovated drastic changes in the health care system, they should use that position to evolve and be the guide for the future health care system.

For the transformation to be successfully achieved, it may require extra educational programs or new methods in the system to enhance the nurses’ ability in their workplace. “Nurses need to generate new ideas to be able to give back to their patient in terms of good care that expresses quality, safety and better outcomes.” (Oreofe, Oyenike, 2018, pg 1319). This is

significant, because it can help increase patient outcomes within the health care system.

“Through this model of care, nurses and pharmacists have become skilled users of health information technology to strengthen the primary care–based, patient-centered medical home.” (*Future of nursing*, 2011, pg 94). As nurses have such a significant role in the health care system, this will guide other health care professionals to transform as a whole, when treating their patients. “A unified and supported innovative idea that supports clients oriented service and bring about evidenced in practice rendered to the patient and speaks the language of nursing in the voice of nursing is the standardized nursing language that is generally acceptable worldwide.” (Oreofe, Oyenike, 2018, pg 1321). Having consistent educational programs can help nurses to stay educated, so they can come up with innovative ideas for the future of the health care system. “Nurses have great potential to lead innovative strategies to improve the health care system.” (*Future of nursing*, 2011, pg 95). Without transformation in the health care system, it can either cause a decrease in patient outcomes or insufficient care.

Conclusion:

These three issues are some of the major concerns in the nursing profession today. For there to be transformation in the nurses’ practice in the health care system, it would require other factors to be prevented to improve nurses’ practice and so nurses will be able to practice in the full extent of their knowledge. When there is work place violence that can cause nursing shortages, which will result in long working hours, and can impact the nurses’ practice, and eventually effecting the safety for both the nurse and patient. The nursing shortages that causes long working hours or work place violence can result in nurses to neglect their jobs, which will evidently cause a decrease in patient care or outcomes. The result of nurses neglecting their jobs and decrease in patient outcomes, can make it more difficult for transformation to occur within

the health care system. It can cause delays in transformations because these are some basic conflicts that are currently taking place in the nursing profession. As nurses play a crucial role in transforming the health care system, there needs to be solutions and more educational programs within the foundation of the nursing profession in order to transform the health care system. Many professions may come with difficulties and challenging situations, however to have a change within the whole health care system, it requires more than one easy solution. In conclusion, it is apparent that in order to have transformation in the health care system, there needs to be various resolutions for the significant issues that are currently taking place.

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