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Introduction

To get oriented to understand steps to meet environmental challenges and changes with reference to nursing.

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Concept of Changing Environment

Hospital is an institution for the delivery of health care in the modern world offers considerable benefits to the individual and society. Individual point of view, the sick and injured person has an accessibility of centralized medical knowledge and technology on as to render treatment much more thorough and efficiently which mean to say that large number of professionally and technically skilled people apply their knowledge and skill with the help of sophisticated difference and appliance to produce or provide qualitative care to the patient. In view of the stand point of society, hospitalization protects the family from many of the disruptive effects of caring from the diseased person in the home and operates as means of guiding the sick and injured into medically supervised institution where their problems are less distractive or complicated for the society.[1]

Concept of hospital existing in India from

ancient time. During the time of Buddha (6th century), there were number of hospitals to look after crippled and the poor. During the 16th century the use of allopathic system of medicine started in India. In 19th century, the first medical school for organized medical training was started in Calcutta followed by one more in Madras.[2]

In late 19th Century, the school for nursing that had began in Madras around 1870 started with training of women for improving nursing care in military hospital. In this period, the nursing services were being established in hospital. In beginning 20th century, some more nursing training centers were started in India. Most of these were started in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras; the nursing services were concerned with patient care services in the hospital.

The Nurse's concern of safe staffing and the interaction between environments has direct influence on changing concept of health care delivery system as well as emerging health problems in the society.

Nurses are always a member of health team. Safe or adequate nurse staffing is influenced by other health care providers. Health care delivery includes a variety of roles and positions. Which are changing in today's concept. It is important to establish the guidelines for certain roles & determine their effectiveness which varies from country to country.

Nursing and Environmental Safety

According to Oxford dictionary "Environment" refers to surrounding condition in which person, animals or plants lives or operates. "Environment" refers to all living - nonliving, material or non material things around nurses and patient in

specific unit of hospitals, which also includes social and economical condition.[3]

According to Oxford dictionary "Safety" refers to condition of being safe.[3] Nursing is a vital aspect of health care and needs to be properly organized. A nurse is in frequent contact with the patients and hence her role in restoring health and confidence of the patients is of utmost importance. The quality of nursing care and the management of the nursing staff reflect an image of the hospital /nursing homes.

This means an appropriate number of staff with a suitable mix of skill levels is available at all times to ensure that patient care needs are met and that hazards free conditions are maintained. Nurse continue to work overtime or work without adequate back up and are therefore prone to greater absenteeism & poor health which results in weakening of health system.

As estimated that, the best defense mechanism exposure to health and safety risks for nurses working in different clinical areas is the current knowledge of existing hazards and effective preventive strategies. However innovation in equipment and procedure occurs almost daily this is not a simple task. Therefore, the nurses should have the knowledge of health hazards on her own and on patients; also she has to know about preventive strategies for improving the quality care given to the patients. Potential health and safety hazards in hospitals have been the focus of increased attention in recent years and in hospital environments. Therefore there is a greater variety and concentration of these problems in each clinical set up.

To maintain the quality care in the work area it is necessary to find out the gaps in the knowledge or awareness among nurses and to improve the knowledge accordingly.

Regardless of environmental influences, the patient is the focus of concern as the personnel seen to maintain the safe environment that will help critically ill patient in his progress towards recovery.

As per the California Nursing Association declared in 2nd Nov 2005 [4]

The patient safety movement is important

because it focuses on a variety of care indicators such as; falls, drugs errors, inappropriate surgeries that increase morbidity and mortality of patients. The authors note that experts estimate thousands of people/year die from medical errors occurring in hospitals that is more than the death from motor vehicle accidents, various Cancers or AIDS.

Following recommendation is proposed to reduce medical errors:

- Leadership and knowledge for patient safety
- Errors reporting system
- Protection for nurses reporting adverse events and staffing issues
- Setting performance standards and expectations for patient safety
- Creating safety systems in health care organizations

As per Canadian Nurses Association Nov 2005 [5]

Employers work Environment/Organization should includes as follow:

1. Work environment provide adequate equipment for staff to provide sufficient patient care.
2. Does the work environment have an appropriate physical plant in that staff can carry out their work?
3. Is there clear and influential nursing leadership at the highest levels of decision making?
4. Do Nurses receive adequate compensation for their work?

How to Make Successful Change

Change is important and necessity for the management. It is the key for both the staff and their managers to understand exactly why change is happening and how it will take place.

The word change can trigger filings of uncertainty, it may center around job security as well as concern regarding work load increase and impact on patients care. Most people tend to feel insecure, overwhelmed and as a result will resist that change to greater or lesser extent.

How you as a manager plan, communicate and

deliver change will affect its overall success. Helping your team to understand the answers to the many why? What? When? How? and Who? Questions will pay significant dividend. Answering to these questions gives you confidence and clarity in the decision making. It helps in building the plan of communication strategy with your team.[6]

Challenges facing human resource managers in recruiting and retaining of nurses can be discussed below:

1. Qualified skilled nurses are in shortage as environment of increasing demand and decreasing supply
2. Nursing shortages is even more severe in high acuity areas that required highly skilled and experienced nurses
3. The Nursing work force is aging and few nurses are entering in the profession to replace those are retiring or leaving
4. Nurses report dissatisfaction with many aspects of work environment including staffing levels , heavy work loads , use of overtime , lack of sufficient supportive staff and inadequate wages
5. Nursing leaders however state that shortage of nurses due to negative image of nursing, job dissatisfaction, downsizing , restructuring and turn over of nurses has increased.
6. Changing demographic structure , cost containment strategies and alternative career opportunity have major obstacle to enter in nursing

Managing Changing Environment

It has innovative concepts and lending to the need of the time.[7]

1) Ethical issues and Professional Code in Nursing Practice

The Code of Professional conduct for nurses is critical for building professionalism and accountability. Ethical considerations are vital in any area dealing with human beings because they represent values, rights and relationships. The nurse must have professional competence,

responsibility and accountability with moral obligations. Nurse is obliged to provide services even if it is in conflict with her/his personal beliefs and values.

2) Health Premises and Security Issues to Promote Patient Safety

Patient safety is an emerging field in health care that has indirectly or directly affected all stake holders of health care delivery system in the last decade the term patient safety encompasses all aspects affecting the safety of the patients in hospital, this is not new concept it emerges from Hippocrates and Nightingale era stating that, “do no harm”[7]

Patient safety is of paramount importance in changing environmental aspects for all health care professional as including nurses. Today there is need to note the taxonomy of patient safety (about 21 points) and knowing the patient safety solution (about 9 points) as per WHO. WHO along with the joint commission internationally set up the WHO collaborating center on patient safety which came out with the “Nine patient safety solutions” in April 2007.[7] WHO has given importance to these topics as they have been shown to be the most common problems associated with the medical management of a patient and are amenable to rectification. Every institution should frame its own list incorporating patient safety related issues for its environment and setting.

3) Impact of Communication in Preventing Medico Legal Cases

Communicating with the patient is both science and art. Art in the sense of presenting yourself and science as far as precision is concerned. Nurses are in position to practice it since it is the need of the time. Eventually medical science and its practitioners are also put under Consumers Protection Act, Nursing being a major part of health care delivery system needs to understand and focus the legal complexities to various medical and surgical specializations. Nurse has to be informed herself that when any medical negligence happens a nurse also becomes party to the negligence of patient care.

As nursing has evolved professionally so has the nurses liability is increased. To minimize legal issues in nursing nurses have to assume authority, responsibility and accountability for their professional practice therefore nurses should have basic knowledge of the legal aspects of nursing practice.

4) *Issues Arising Out of Professionalism, Harassment and Abuse at Work*

Nurses are professional health workers. Professional worker is a person who confirms to a level of practice that is expert and ethical after completing an authorized educational programme. They are expected to observe professional etiquettes such as being an attentive listeners, keen observer, nor judgmental, empathetic, confident, assertive, disciplined, prompt and efficient.

In spite of having expected positive qualities of professionalism there are evidences of harassment and abuse at work place.

Harassment is any conduct based on age, disability, health status, sex, race, color, language, religion, national or social origin that is unreciprocated or unwanted which affects the dignity of the men and women at workplace.

Nurses should be treated consistently with dignity and respect wherever they work. The work place should be free from undue stress, anxiety, fear or intimidation.

5) *Proactive Strategies and Preventive Measures to Reduce Legal Threats*

Nursing is profession which is practiced in the society involving people. In every society there are some common as well as statutory laws for protection of the rights of people. Therefore for safe nursing practice one has to understand the law and legal responsibilities to protect the rights of clients as well as to protect nurses from liabilities. Law is code, which regulates human conduct, capable being enforced and binding to all, so as to bring order in society. Thus nurse has a personal and ethical responsibility to be aware of state licensing laws, statutory laws, common laws as well as professional code of ethics for nurses and changes there on occurring. Hence

every nurse has to have proactive strategies to understand preventive measures to reduce legal threats essentially of legal responsibility in which they are obliged to obey the law in nursing practice.

Steps to Meet Environmental Challenges and Change

a) *Eight Steps Process for Leading Change by Proff. Kotter will Help Organizations Succeed in an ever Changing World.*[8]

Step I: Establish sense of urgency, Examine competence and Identify crises.

Step II: Creating the guiding coalition, Assemble group with empowerment,

Encourage for team work

Step III: Developing a change vision; create a vision to help to direct change,

Develop strategies

Step IV: Communicate vision to all team Use every vehicle of possible

Communication, Teach new behaviors by guiding directions.

Step V: Empowering broad based Action, Remove obstacles to change

Change structure or system affecting vision,

Encourage the risk taking non traditional ideas, actions and activities

Step VI: Generating short term wins, Plan for visible performance improvements

Create those improvements, Give recognition to employees.

Step VII: Considering gains and produce more changes, Analyze and Check,

Evaluate yield and Lost, Continue momentum.

Step VIII: Anchoring new approached in the culture, Ensure the change stitches

by creating the history and weaving it into fabrics of organization.

b) *How to Deal with Change?*[6,9]

Step-I: Plan

- *To Find Out:* Why change? What are you

trying to achieve?

What is the impact on your direction?

What does the change mean for you and your team?

- *To Find Out:*What are the key aspects?
What has to be done?
How much ready you are for change?
Who else to be involved & not to be involved?
- *To Find Out:*When will it happen?
How are you going to tell?
How they will react?
- *To Find Out:*Who is involved?
Who is affected?
Who do you need to engage outside of the team?
- *To Find Out:*Have you planned appropriately?
Do you have all the information?
√ Do you have all the answers?
√ Can you communicate the plan?

Step II: Communicate with Team Members:

- Be clear about changes and impact
- Explain it will be done differently
- Make time for staff and resolve issues quickly

Step III: Deliver and Execute the Change

- Implementing the plan will take longer than you think
- Monitor and review progress
- Look for unexpected side effect and
- Act immediately if necessary, Keep your team motivated.

Short Term Initiative to Increase Supply of Nurses – Strategies:

1. Sign on – Bonuses, agency use, Government assistance, recruitment higher salaries, non nursing health care employees

2. Relationship marketing between schools to attract teenager to choose nursing as carrier by counselor

Conclusion

Managing changing environment and related issues and dilemmas requires specialized knowledge and skills as also a proper frame of attitude. Medical and nursing ethics is derived from values in health care. It directly and indirectly relates with patient rights, informed consent, confidentiality, competence, advance directives, negligence and many others. All this is concern with the obligations of the doctors, nurses and other professionals in the hospital and society.

It is necessary to be knowledgeable about the legal provisions under the consumer protection acts. There are number of guidelines prescribed by various authorities and statutory bodies which includes State and Central Government act, the International Codes for Nurses, Institutional Rules and Regulations, Standing orders etc.

“Mistakes are a fact of life, It is the response to errors and Learning from the same that matters and counts”

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