

Controversies related to Nursing Education

With more than 3 million nurses, nursing represents the largest portion of healthcare workforce (Committee on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Initiative on the Future of Nursing, at the Institute of Medicine, 2011). The role and need of nurses in healthcare delivery has increased more than ever before. However, nurses have been struggling to get recognized, respected and gain power ever since the beginning. In this paper, I'll explain those factors thoroughly and explain a current social, economic and political factor that might influence changes in nursing education and practice.

Nursing profession and practice transformed to this shape today from a very primitive level. Women were providing care to the sick family members or other members of the society. They were often trained by physicians to assist them with menial tasks. Industrial revolution in 1800s' displaced women from womanly job within houses to the factory jobs. Woman's with skills to care for sick family members were offered first formal practical nursing course and private nursing works. However, World War I and the era of Great Depression led to staggering unemployment, not only for nurses. Break out of World War II increased the need of public health programs, related to poverty, famine and illness. At the moment of hardships during War of Crimea to post-World War II, nurses showed their ability, flexibility and importance in a more professional way (Judd & Davis, 2010). Though still considered a person to do lower level filthy jobs, nurses started to get little but significant recognition. Various Training schools, sponsored mostly by philanthropic woman were started. Even highly respected woman during Victorian era (1837-1901) started going to nurses training school with testimonials from priests, ministers and other respected members of the society. However, women were forced to barter nursing skills and care to hospitals and home as a learning process while sponsors collected wealth and retained

scholarships. Nonetheless, increased need of healthcare workforce and realization of self-identity led to the establishment of formal nursing with quality education and training.

Nursing has been controlled over by outside forces in most part of the history. Their skills and labors were often undervalued no matter how impactful they were. Dominance and perception of female nurse as a subordinate care giver was basically the result of patriarchal and male dominance prevalent at that time. The economic condition of contemporary society and money-grubbing nature of sponsors of nursing training accompanied by inadequate representation of nurses by groups such as professional nursing association, collective bargaining agents and professional failure to engage and fully align with feminist movement in the past also contributed to relative powerlessness of nursing (Huston, 2014).

As of today, due to continuous education and training, nurses have raised capability and awareness within for attainment of power and prestige. Nurses are getting involved in organizations like American Association of Critical-care Nursing(AACN), American Nurses Association(ANA) which provide knowledge, support and resources to ensure quality care for patients and families while protecting and advocating for nurses. However, this inadequate representation of nurses by groups and small funding makes harder for lobbyist to represent nursing in political setting and legislation (Huston, 2014). Huston (2014) also expresses that nurses' characteristic honesty and standing on principle while speaking out what they believe in is not always the best strategy and suggests nurses to recognize the power of politics to achieve professional goals and need of patients. There are other sociological factors that have influence on nursing education and practices which is obvious to shape the future of nursing. On one hand, there is steady rise in population over ages 65 and more of this population living with chronic illnesses (CDC, 2017) and Health Care Reform has made provision for comprehensive health services along

with essential benefits, which means there will be more demand of health care professionals, specially nurses (Levitt, 2017). On others, increasing trend of downsizing and replacing RNs' with Unlicensed Assistive Personnel for cost containment has not only created shortage of nurses, but also put health care consumers at risk (Huston, 2014). Technological advancement, however has made access to healthcare information and treatment options easy. Public are more aware of qualities and qualification it takes to be a nurse and their contribution amidst the stereotypical image of nurses as handmaiden to physician, sex bombshell, an angel of mercy while the male nurses as gay, effeminate and sexual predators. Huston (2014) claims that with the nursing striving for evidence-based practice, and involving more in field of research, nurses have begun to be identified as intelligent and nursing care as scientifically rational. At the face of this positive response from public, nurses often find the new nurses not competent enough for their job. Jones & West (2014) claims gap between education and service and feeling unsupported in their new role to be the reason and suggests transition to practice programs to fill the gap. Researchers have found horizontal violence and lack of support from within as an intriguing factor that influence present and future of nursing. Often times new graduates and novice nurses but not limited to, become a victim of workplace violence. They feel unsupported by leaders while leaders find them in dilemma while making decision, filling shift vacancy on short notice for unanticipated call-ins. It often leads to job-dissatisfaction, burn out and conflict between team members which not only impact nursing practice but also patients' outcome (Sportsman, 2015).

Nursing has reached today's phase fighting the politics of power, gender and economic hardship and still faces them in one way or another. Socio-economic, political, health policy of the country and individual health organizations has impact on the shape nursing has taken or will take in future. On top of this, individual nurses' and their leaders' qualities and qualification and

collaboration within team and interdisciplinary teams defines how nursing strives to make this profession a respected, recognized and a powerful profession amidst the adversity.

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