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THE NURSING PROCEDURE MANUAL - AN AID IN NURSING

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The nature and scope of nursing service in a hospital is determined by the hospital purposes, activities, organization, and administrative policies. Hospital purposes are derived from the needs of the community and change with the rise of new needs. The modern trend in nursing in giving adequate patient care is to treat the patients' total needs i.e. the mental, emotional and social as well as physical needs.

The nursing activities in a hospital, as a result of its purpose have great effect on the care of the sick, the prevention of disease and the promotion of health in the hospital and the community.

"Nursing Service includes the direct care of the patients and those activities that are associated with this care such as keeping records, going rounds with physicians, requisitioning equipment and supplies etc." (1)

Speaking of nursing service, we immediately think of the patient, the hospital and the nursing service personnel. We must also think seriously of the student and her professional training in preparing her to give the best of nursing care.

The Nursing Procedure Manual is a necessary aid in nursing services as it forms the basic guide for the direct care of the patient as a whole. Nursing procedures are usually taught to students during the first months of their training in the course of Introduction to Nursing. This course forms the foundation for all other courses in the nursing field. During this period the student makes her first contact with nursing, and the impressions and attitudes she gains are likely to be lasting. Her subsequent nursing experiences are very much affected by this course. (2) Therefore it is necessary to provide the best and the soundest foundation in nursing care of the patient, to the student who is to become the future professional nurse responsible for different fields of nursing services.

### Objectives of Nursing Education

1) To develop attitudes and habits in the student for the maintenance of her personal physical and mental health, and to develop the basic knowledge of how to teach others healthful living.

2) To help the student understand the important basic principles related to nursing arts and to apply her knowledge of sciences by integrating her class work theory into practice.

3) To help the student to develop the ability to master the techniques and skills in nursing and to carefully observe and accurately record her observations

4) To help the student develop an appreciation of her position as a member of the health team and her part in preserving and promoting health.

Burton writes:

"The process of learning is doing, reacting, undergoing and experiencing. The products of learning are of several principal types, integrated behavior pattern and values or ideals, meanings, facts, achieved abilities, and skills".<sup>(3)</sup>

### Development of the Manual

"The development of curriculum is a cooperative undertaking. Not one teacher can include in her teaching all the knowledge the student needs, provide all the learning activities which the student needs to acquire the desired skills or perceive all the problems that must be solved in the development of a curriculum"<sup>(4)</sup>. This applies equally to the development of the procedure manual.

It should be prepared by personnel responsible for nursing service as well as by those who are responsible for and assist with the students' education and training. This will include the director of nursing education, the nursing arts instructor, the clinical instructors, the director of nursing services and the head nurses on the wards where the student will practice. The head nurse should assist in developing the manual because she is directly responsible for maintaining the standards of care for patients, and so has great influence on the standards of practice of the student nurse. The manual should also be approved by the doctors of the hospital as they are responsible for medications and other treatments to be used.

Good relationship, understanding and co-operation between school faculty personnel and hospital nursing service personnel is necessary for planning and executing a sound and effective clinical educational programme for the student and consequently the provision of better nursing service.

### Content

The Manual should be planned according to the purpose of the hospital, the available facilities and equipment, the needs of the community and the needs and level of understanding of the student. The manual should contain procedures related to the following:-

- 1) Health conservation - beginning with the student herself
- 2) The provision of a suitable environment to secure physical and mental comfort for the patient
- 3) Methods and special techniques for giving personal care
- 4) How to prepare for, and assist the physician in special procedures
- 5) The development of habits, attitudes and ideals

In establishing the procedure consideration should be shown for family and community social customs, beliefs and services.

### Form

- 1) The procedure should be written in clear simple language so that it can be easily understood
- 2) The basic principles in nursing arts should be written in enough detail to give the information required for proper performance without duplication
- 3) Procedures should be related to each other in arrangement
- 4) One should start with the simple procedures that are common to all hospital services advancing towards the more complicated ones and finally the special ones of the different services.

### Its Use

The nursing service personnel should be very well acquainted with the manual. It should be available in the different nursing sections and in the nursing office, within reach of all those who give nursing care to the patient.

The manual should be introduced to the newly employed supervisors, head nurses and staff nurses during their orientation period, so that they will follow it in their practice and in the supervision of others. It is common to find in a certain hospital, that the majority of the nursing personnel have their training in different hospitals and have learnt different techniques and different procedure content. Although they might all be correct in the practice of their procedures still, this is liable to create a lot of misunderstanding among the nursing personnel themselves or between nursing personnel and medical staff and may cause discomfort and confusion to the patient. The nursing procedure manual

in such a situation can be used as a tool for creating a kind of uniformity of nursing service within the hospital. It also serves a purpose in in-service training and helps to guide others.

To ensure safe and more effective nursing care, "the experiences of students should be closely supervised, adequately sampled, and sufficient time permitted for developing skills and for developing the theory underlying sound practice" (5). Besides the student, this applies to all personnel who give nursing care. For example, in 1954, as a clinical instructor I was responsible for supervising and teaching five of our students in a surgical hospital. The school of nursing was independent of the hospital. The hospital had eighty beds, free of charge, always filled. It had very poor facilities, equipment, and was poorly staffed. It was a very busy hospital with hundreds of names on the waiting list for admission. Often patients were discharged before they were cured, extra beds were put on the floor, or two patients were put in one bed. The nursing staff were chiefly young women that had no previous training at all. This in addition to very poor nursing administration and the tremendous demand for patient care and service made it very difficult indeed almost impossible to train and instruct the students properly. This problem was solved by taking in agreement with the matron and chief surgeon, full responsibility of a ward with ten beds to be used as a demonstration section where the students received concentrated, direct, and continuous supervision. They were given enough time to do their assignments properly and opportunities to have different experiences. We followed the nursing procedure manual prepared by the nursing school. After one month better results in nursing care were observed by both the medical and nursing staff. The student was kept from four to six weeks in this ward before she was assigned to work in other wards. In this way our influence was extended into other parts of the hospital. The experiment was very successful and consequently nursing care improved very much in all the wards. The manual was adopted throughout the hospital.

#### Evaluation and Changes

Meeting new situations and solving them is an essential part of any skilled profession. New learning experiences should be provided to develop the individuals.

Evaluation and modifications of the procedures should be done from time to time. Some suggested points to be considered:

- 1) The evaluation of the results of applying nursing care as prescribed in the manual, if it is satisfactory or not
- 2) If it continues to meet the objectives of the manual

3) Changes and additions should be made with the advancement of medical and nursing science

4) Changes should not be made too often because this will be confusing for the nursing staff and for the students if present.

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