Nursing and Midwifery in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: Challenges and Prospects

Technical Meetings

62\textsuperscript{nd} Session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean

5-8 OCTOBER 2015, Kuwait
Improving health system performance: Role of Nurses and Midwives

They are at the **frontline of service** delivery and can bridge the gap between access and coverage.
Review of nursing and midwifery in the EMR: the context

• WHO has historically invested in nursing and midwifery since its establishment

• One of the first regions to develop:
  – Regional nursing strategy
  – Standards for pre-service nursing education including prototype curricula
# Review of Nursing and Midwifery in the EMR

## Approach
- Online survey
- Desk review
- Country profiles analysis
- Consensus reached during the Regional forum on the future of nursing in the EMR held in Jordan and the Expert Group Meeting held in Geneva

## Areas Assessed
- Governance
- Workforce
- Practice and services
- Access and quality of education

**Others**
- Capacity
- Research

---

![World Health Organization](https://www.who.int)
Nursing and Midwifery in the EMR: Quick facts

- Over 60% of the health workforce
- 70%-80% healthcare needs covered
- Nearly 20 million worldwide, less than 1 million in EMR
Density of Nurses and Midwives: Trend analysis
Outcome of the review process: key challenges in nursing and midwifery
16 of 22 countries have fewer than 15 nurses per 10,000 population

6 of the 16 countries have fewer than 10 nurses per 10,000 population

Non-nationals in group 1 countries

*An estimated 23 health workers per 10,000 population are needed to provide essential health services
Governance: Regulation

40% regularly monitoring and evaluating standards

- Regular evaluation and monitoring
- None
Education

- 41% diploma
- 21% practical
- 26% BSN
- 11% MSc/PhD
Workforce: perception of nursing profession

- 59% average
- 18% high
- 6% very low
- 0% very high
Workforce: Job satisfaction

47% satisfaction not on the rise due to working conditions
1. Governance

- Weak leadership and management
- Outdated and/or contradictory regulation
- Gap in information about financing of nursing
- Weak and fragmented nursing information systems, with limited availability of sound evidence for decision-making
- Poor coordination between the various relevant sectors within the country
- Lack of clarity for the position of nursing leadership in the organizational structure of MOH
2. Workforce: active phase

- **Shortages** linked to:
  - Poor working conditions
  - Low levels of authority
  - Inadequate number of budgeted position

- **Inequitable distribution** of nursing and midwifery services particularly urban/rural and at all levels of care delivery

- **Migration** of the best qualified within and outside the region
3. Practice and Services

• Unclear policies governing practice and service development

• The profession suffers from absence of a:
  - Career structure & professional progression
  - Clinical advancement
  - Nursing and midwifery care models

• Limited collaborative and multidisciplinary practice

• Inadequate or absent patient safety culture

• Unclear role definition particularly in regard to non-nursing responsibilities and duties
4. Access to Quality Education

- Inadequate *investment* and low priority given to nursing education
- Poor *infrastructure*
- Inadequate preparation of deans/school directors in *educational leadership*
- Few functioning *accreditation/quality monitoring system*
- *Teacher shortages* and lack of preparation for the educator's role
Opportunities

• **Better prepared** nurses and growth in entry level BSN nursing programmes
• Completion of **secondary school education** as a requirement for entry into nursing education in most countries
• Formulation of national strategic plans for nursing/midwifery in few countries
• Establishment of few **nursing councils**
• Implementation of the **leadership for change training** programme in 9 countries in collaboration with International Council of Nurses
Strategic Priorities and Framework for Action: result of the Regional nursing forum and expert group meeting
## 1. Governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Direction</th>
<th>Selected Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **SD 1:** Nurses and midwives will play a major role in the governance of nursing and midwifery services to meet the national health priorities | - Evaluate current governance structure of nursing at the national, subnational and institutional levels  
- Verify and make necessary changes to the job description of the Chief nursing and midwifery (or country’s most senior nurse) against WHO recommendations on the role of the Chief Nurse  
- Conduct studies on the contribution and return on investment of nursing to health care & financing of nursing |
| **SD 2:** Nurses and midwives are regulated through legal bodies, such a council or board, which are mandated to assume responsibility for professional regulation through implementing sustainable, and robust regulatory policies and practices | - Evaluate current status of nursing/midwifery regulation  
- Establish/strengthen national nursing and midwifery council/board, either on its own or with other health professions regulatory bodies |
2. Workforce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Direction</th>
<th>Selected Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **SD3:** Human resources policy and nursing and midwifery workforce planning focus on maintaining adequate levels, distribution and an appropriate skill-mix to meet national health priorities | ▪ Review the current status of nursing workforce planning national nursing and midwifery workforce planning mechanisms  
▪ Cost & approve the nursing workforce plan with 10 year projections  
▪ Explore way to increase flexibility into working practices and deployment of nurses and midwives  
▪ Ensure availability of support staff  
▪ Develop recruitment strategies and a 5 year plan targeting both traditional and non-traditional sources |
### 3. Practice and Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Direction</th>
<th>Selected Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **SD 4:** Nurses and midwives practice to the full extent of their education and scopes and standards of practice to ensure safe and quality health and nursing services for all populations | - Review & evaluate current patterns of nursing practice, identify gaps & develop a model of nursing and midwifery care and practice standards that is capable of responding to changing health priorities  
- Use regional framework for specialist practice to identify & define new roles (extended, specialist & advanced)  
- Set up national programmes for the specialist and advanced practice  
- Establish and approve standards for nursing & midwifery services |
## 4. Access to Quality Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Direction</th>
<th>Selected Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **SD 5**: Increase resource allocation to improve access to quality nursing and midwifery education | ▪ Review level of investment in nursing and midwifery education in the past three years  
▪ Establishment of essential national curriculum requirements for nursing and midwifery  
▪ Develop a costed national plan to scale production & quality of nurses and midwives  
▪ Develop national standards for education based on the WHO regional guide  
▪ Build the capacity of persons holding the educator role and those engaged in educational planning, management and leadership  
▪ Establish accreditation system for nursing and midwifery education |
Why Invest in Nursing and Midwifery?

- 70-80% of essential health care is provided by nurses and midwives.
- On the frontline 24 hours a day 7 days a week.
- A profession respected by individuals, families and communities.
- Urgent need to examine the cost of care and generate evidence on the contribution of nursing and midwifery.
Urgent Action by Countries

• Establish a *multisectoral forum* led by MOH to guide strengthening of nursing and midwifery at the *national level*

• Develop a *national plan* based on the regional action framework for *transforming* nursing and midwifery
Reinforcing nursing and midwifery will continue to be a priority for WHO in 2015 and over the coming biennium.
Thank you