

Inadequate Education as a Reason of Nursing Shortage

Name

Institution

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According to Chan, Tam, Lung, Wong, and Chau (2012), nursing shortage has been a growing problem in the United States since the 1930s, when the increased hospital attendance was observed. The authors explain that nursing shortage prompts some hospitals to reduce the number of beds or hire temporary nurses, which is expensive and leads to provision of less optimal care to the patients.

The issue is not as much caused by the lack of nursing students as by the fact that the existing nurses are not interested or motivated enough to educate new generations of nursing specialists. Although more students enrol in nursing schools, faculty shortage remains a significant problem (*The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice*, 2008). Shortsightedness concerning retention and recruitment of qualified nurses with the purpose of transferring skills and knowledge contributes significantly to the nursing shortage. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the impact of inadequate education on the nursing shortage, with consideration of other factors, such as retirement rate among nurses, outdated misconceptions concerning the nursing profession, and underfunding.

History of Nursing Shortage

In the 1930s, there were changes in the hospital construction process, increased hospital attendance, more technologically sophisticated requirements for patient care, and reduction in the number of work hours (MacLean et al., 2014). By the mid-decade, there were reports on the nursing shortage in the acute care sector. Unprepared to deal with this issue, hospital administrations reacted to the problem slowly (Chan et al., 2012). Some blamed the nurses for creating the shortage claiming that they were unable to deal with their profession and refused to

work. By the time the United States was entering World War II, it was evident that the country was facing a critical problem (MacLean et al., 2014).

When the U.S joined World War II, there was a need for the nurses to serve in the armed forces. When the war ended, many nurses opted to join the military, which formed 25% of the nurses in the country, and an immediate response was needed to deal with this shortage (Chan et al., 2012). As a solution, educational system taught the students about the rudiments of the nursing profession, highlighting the fact that they delivered most of the patient care (Cox, Willis, & Coustasse, 2014). This strategy was challenging to the hospitals, as the nursing school took several years to complete, upon which the nurses still had to be trained in the hospitals. This led to poor working conditions for nurses, such as long hours and low salaries. Additionally, the fact that nursing was a tiresome job and was not financially rewarding enough stopped many from pursuing this profession.

The issue of nursing shortage reappeared in the 1990s in the United States, Asia and Africa. During this time, some of the nursing positions were cut because of the managed care demands that curtailed both the private and public sector in terms of insurance reimbursement rates in most hospitals (MacLean et al., 2014). Most of the decision-makers in the hospitals did not have a good understanding of the issue of nursing, and they implemented plans that increased the workloads of individual registered nurses. According to MacLean et al. (2014), by the year 2005, half a million of the nurses registered in the U.S. chose not to work as nurses.

Views regarding the Issue

People have different opinions on how poor education contributes to the nursing shortage. One of the factors contributing to the nursing shortage is fewer avenues of producing

new specialists due to faculty shortage (Cox, Willis, & Coustasse, 2014). This issue caused many prospective students to be turned away.

According to Chan et al. (2012), the current nursing shortage is widespread and dangerous as there are no skilled nurses needed to care for patients and the whole population. The work of the nurses in the world, which is approximately 12 million, is not well understood even by the educated individuals (Chan et al., 2012). However, nursing is a different scientific field, and it is an autonomous profession where skilled practitioners play a significant role in saving the lives of individuals and improving the patients outcome. The vast gap that exists between what the experienced nurses engage in and what the public think they do is a significant factor in the causes of the shortage.

Although education is the primary cause of the nursing shortage, there are other factors connected to the issue. They include poor working conditions, aging workforce, inadequate resources to help in conducting research, and the expanded career options for the women. Insufficient quantity of skilled nurses has a significant effect on patient outcome, mortality, and the well-being and health of population worldwide.

The nurses should also be proficient in clinical setting communication (*Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*, 2015). Skilled communication, effective decision-making, collaboration, authentic leadership, and appropriate staffing are among the healthy working environment constituents.

My Position regarding the Nursing Shortage

I am convinced that education plays a significant role in the nursing profession. However, currently, nursing students are not given the required education to help them perform their

responsibilities and duties efficiently. Lack of education can be caused by inadequate resources to conduct various activities needed during the training. If the issue of education in the nursing profession is not considered, then the nursing shortage will continue.

Although education is a significant factor contributing to the nursing shortage, other factors are also considered. The nurses are lowly paid as compared to the other professions in the medical field. This issue prompts many trained nurses to look for other occupations. The working conditions are also poor, and this makes nurses not to deliver quality care to the patients. It is vital for the government to make some changes in the nursing sector, and the problem should be approached from the root side – inadequate education for aspiring nurses.

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