

Gender bias in nursing



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Gender Female Bias

Gender bias is common in nursing. It is my own experience of facing gender bias in my own institution. When I was working as an Instructor in my institution, there was opportunity for me to get promotion but was denied and it was given to a female colleague. As I was working there for last three years with an outstanding performance for all those years in my opinion and that of many others, it was my right to be promoted to that post.

But the head of my institute had promoted a female who had less experience and lower level of performance although she had same qualification. I was in shock and she did not give me any reason for that. As cited in Rasch, Sherrod, Sherrod (2006) “the barriers confronted by men in nursing school are pervasive, consistent and have changed surprisingly little during the past few decades” (pp 47).

My view point is that, gender bias is occurring in nursing education as well as nursing practice. Gender bias in nursing is common in Pakistan. There are no male on higher position in nursing in Pakistan. There are few institutions in Pakistan you can find male but they are not in high position in nursing.

Different literatures have shown that men experience gender bias in nursing education and services, as according to BBC news only 10% of male are in nursing. It means that it is difficult for male who wants to do nursing.

Nursing all over the world has always been female dominated profession. As cited in Rasch (2005) “a number of gender barriers for men in the nursing education process, mainly due to feminization of this process and the profession” (pp47). It should be acknowledged that those females are in great

numbers than male in nursing. But it does not mean that male should be suppressed in nursing and their rights should be violated.

Moreover, another cause of gender bias is of social isolation and male are not acknowledged a vital part of nursing. This is supported by Rasch (2005) “no history of men in nursing was presented in texts or the classroom and textbooks and faculty referred to the nurse as “she rather than she/he” (pp-28). In history of nursing you will not find any history of male nurses who worked for nursing profession. These books always discuss about role of women in nursing and their work.

Even other health care members are worried about their presence in nursing. When male joins nursing, they are facing problems like adjusting in a female dominated profession. They are worried as to whether they will be accepted in nursing and by other health care members. The doctors are also having problem with them and they feel that, female nurses should take care of their patients.

Because they are afraid of being challenged and they will show resistance at any mistake done by them. According to Morgan, McMillian, Ament (2006) “the experience of male nurse as minority group seems to be that of encountering a lack of social approval, acceptance and adequate role models beginning in nursing school. Perceptions of threats to sexuality, role strain, social isolation and different performance expectations reported by male nursing students indicate that little has changed within nursing profession” (pp101). Male nurses are facing different problem in both government and private settings among which are, disrespect of male nurses and

discrimination therefore, given less or denied opportunities for growth and development in the profession. Here in Pakistan in some provinces male nurses are not hired and administrations give preferences to female nurses. As all the major posts are held by the male doctors in hospitals and they don't want any male nurses.

Even female nurses are not accepting and recognizing the role of male in nursing. They show disrespect to them and not consider them as nurses. There are many stereotypes regarding male in nursing like they are not caring and so they cannot give care to the patients. Different studies have shown that even female nurses are not accepting male into nursing. These problems are within nursing especially where female nurses in leadership positions tries to frustrate male nurses. As many male nurses have got more knowledge and having good communication skills.

One might say that female nurse leaders feels threatened by presence of highly qualified male nurses in their institutions, as a result thus not accepting them readily. There is also reluctance in males who wants to join nursing as career. The social construction of nursing as female profession also inhibits males from entering to nursing profession. The male population in nursing is very low and they give preferences to other profession in medical field and nursing is their lost choice to do it.

This affects nursing workforce at the hospitals and national levels, as many male nurses seek opportunities outside Pakistan. They go outside country because they earn more and they are respected outside. They get different opportunities they can achieve higher position in nursing. There are

evidences that nursing shortages in this country have occurred throughout the profession's history. It is not only Pakistan shortage of nurses occurs throughout worldwide.

As result of these males is leaving nursing very quickly. According to study done in USA“ Recent graduates of the nation's nursing schools are leaving the profession more quickly than their predecessors, with male nurses bolting at almost twice the rate of their female counterparts, according to a new study.

About 7. 5 percent of new male nurses left the profession within four years of graduating from nursing school, compared to 4. 1 percent of new female nurses, (University of Pennsylvania researcher, 2002) reported. This is alarming sign for nursing profession as already there is nurses' shortage in world. So it has further increase the shortage of nurses.

On the other hand, lack of role modeling for male in nursing contributes to low numbers of males in nursing. As there are fewer male nurses in nursing profession and that the reason they are changing their profession after some time. Because they see no professional growth for their and lack of opportunities.

They are different literatures shows that male are more resigning from the profession than women. Another study by Wynaden, Champan, Inoue (2006) “ men are four times more likely than women to resign from nursing profession” (pp566). Males are not satisfied from their job and they are leaving the jobs. There are few hospitals in which you can see diversity of both genders in nursing.

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The behaviors and attitudes of male nurses in nursing have produced a bad image of male nurses. There are numbers of males who joins nursing only to get degree and go outside the country. They are interested in patient care and image of nursing. Even others male who are doing nursing, they want to change their profession after finishing the nursing course. Some male have got fake degrees of nursing to go to any foreign countries for job. They are destroying the image of Pakistan as they are doing the wrong practices.

There are many incidents that occurred in last few years in U. K by male nurses as result the government of U. K has banned nurses of Pakistan to do job U. K. This is having bad consequences as there are many nurses who want to do further studies and work in U. K. But now they can, due to few members who have destroyed the image of nursing, hence causing others to suffer.

So male nurses are also responsible and due to their behavior they are not accepted in nursing. Furthermore, it has been noted that male nurses have a tendencies of preferring teaching and administrative jobs only. This might be the reason why they change jobs after a short while in nursing.

Kurt Lewin theorized a three-stage model of change that has come to be known as the unfreezing-change-refreeze model. There are three steps involved in this model. As cited in Heidenthal (2003) “ unfreezing means, moving to new level and the current or old way of doing is thawed” (pp329).

We need to create awareness regarding gender biasness and how it is affecting the nursing profession. We will remove negatives thinking about

perceptions of males in nursing. It will difficult to change the behavior of people regarding male nurses.

We need to motivate the nursing leaders to bring the solutions to this problem and its recognition. The second stage of change model is process of changing behavior. As cited in Heidenthal (2003) “ in the next step intervention or change is introduced and explained. The benefits and disadvantages are discussed, and the move to a new level is implemented” (pp329).

When need do implementation of strategies in this stage. When to need peruse people to support these changes. As it will be difficult because no role models are available for them. We will identify gap between this stage and the change we want to do it.

The third stage is making changes permanent. We will need sustain with this change as cited in Heidenthal (2003 “ refreezing means that the new way of doing is incorporated into the routines or habits of the affected people” (pp329). It will difficulty sustains this change of gender bias in nursing but reinforcement will be required to change these attitudes.

There are few steps could be done to solve gender bias in nursing. The hospitals needs to make sure that group diversity should be present in hospitals. Male and female nurses should be given equal chances of recruiting. Male should be respected and their role should be considered as vital.

Government needs to make sure about recruiting of male in different government hospital. More opportunities should be given to them for their growth and development. To ensure the delivery of quality patient care hospitals needs to include recruitments of men into nursing. Identify individual learning styles and needs during performance appraisals for both men and women. Provide educational programs that increase cultural sensitivity, decreasing stereotypes. (Rasch, Sherrod, Sherrod 2005).

Male nurses should change their attitude which can change the perception of male in nursing. Awareness regarding nursing need to be done in school and colleges. Few male nurses who are sincere with their profession should be made role model to other male nurses. Male needs to be sensitized and ask them about their expectations. After graduation clinical practice should be given importance's and necessary for the fresh graduates.

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