

How gender
expectations affect
both paid and unpaid
providers of health
care



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The medical/caring profession has changed in the last two centuries.

Notables such as Florence Nightingale stirred the advancement of nursing and provided an etiquette that is admirable as well as worthy to be imitated.

Now in this technological age, nursing is intricate and challenging as ever.

Some of the challenges that the discipline of nursing faced in its natal stage were dealing with antiseptics (or lack thereof) and disease outbreaks. In

today's age, advances in medicine have ameliorated such concerns

significantly. However, new obstacles have arisen and placed hindrances in

the work environment of nurses. Women care takers have overwhelmed the

nursing realm and has taken a dominant role within medicine.

The concept of women as workers is a relatively new phenomenon in the last

century or so. Since the beginning of time, it was deemed that women

should stay home and be "child bearers." Because of the fiscal pressures of

the century, women are now encouraged, and some times coerced, to join

the work force. Because it is not the ethical norm, sex discrimination has

surfaced to protest such radical changes. Discrimination has manifested in

the form of gender wages, uncooperation from opposite sex counterparts,

overlooked for job positions, and so forth. Women are seen inferior to the

male dominated workforce. "This invisibility persists at all levels, from the

family to the nation. Though they share the same space, women and men

live in different worlds." Albeit these discriminations and persecutions have

arisen, fierce political measures have been taken by western governments to mitigate such abuses and maltreatment.

As far as women as nursing or physicians, particular in Canada, women are

still subject to types of discrimination. Men are perceived physically and

emotionally stronger to take on duress of any type in contrast to women.

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When women are given long tough hours to handle a plethora of things, they are pushing the biological and emotional threshold to its limits. In an executive summary by Human Resources of the Advisory Committee of Health, nurses are overworked severely. (Margot Shields) This is a trend very common in other countries such as the United States. In an article called "Viewpoint" in the March 2007 subscription of American Journal of Nursing, Cathy Glasson, RN depicts a typical work environment she encounters weekly. She recounts a day when she finished a 16- hour shift and her services were in demand because that floor of the hospital was understaffed. She was relieved when she finally left the hospital but her relief was short-lived. When she arrived home and prepared herself to go to sleep, Cathy was horrified because she forgot what has transpired after she left work before she got home. " I realized I couldn't remember the colors of the traffic light signals on my drive home.. had I run a red lightHow could of I cared for critically ill patients safely if I couldn't recall such quotidian details" (Glasson, pg. 13) Her predicament has been encountered of many of her counterparts. A report has surfaced in 2001 from the then U. S. General Accounting Office citing insufficient staff, the increasing utilization of overtime, and " heavy workloads." (pg. 13) These circumstances increase the risk of nurses of making life- threatening mistakes. Many hours at work drains the effectiveness of nurses. When such an error occurs, those nurses involved may be tried as criminals because of negligence. " Fifteen years, criminalizing negligence was unheard of; there had to be some element of intent or willingness for charges to be considered." (Shalon, pg. 20) This quote is from an attorney defending a nurse charged of criminal negligence after unintentionally administering an epidural anesthetic by an IV route <https://assignbuster.com/how-gender-expectations-affect-both-paid-and-unpaid-providers-of-health-care/>

instead of IV antibiotics leading to the patient's death. Such judgment does not take into account the plethora of hours nurses are burdened with. As hospitals are cutting budgets, wages, and staff, criminal cases against the negligence of nurses has further exacerbated the problems of the lack in hospitals staffs. Experts deem the trend of the prosecution of nurses will engender fear and potentially sabotage the recruitment of new nurses. Efforts should be made to mitigate the level of hours allocated to female employees. While they strive for equal treatment, consideration and sensitivity should implemented to give women a fair opportunity to work, especially as a nurse. The executive summary of the Advisory Committee of health has addressed problems such as vigorous work hours by advising staff to give " fair working hours" to employees.

- 1) Shields, Margot and Wilkins, Kathryn. (2005) " The Findings from the 2005 National Survey of the Work And Health of Nurses" 2) (2000) The State of the World population
- 3) Glasson, Cathy, RN. " Enough Is Enough" American Journal Of Nursing Vol. 107 No. 3 (2007): 13-15
- 4) Shalon, Sibyl " To Err is Human- But for Some nurses, a Crime" American Journal Of Nursing Vol. 107 No. 3 (2007): 20-21