

# The role of nursing in patience care

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In respect of nursing Florence Nightingale, who was one of its most famous practitioners, said that "Nursing is an art, and if it is to be made an art, it requires as exclusive a devotion, as hard a preparation, as any painter's or sculptor's work, for what is having to do with the living body - the temple of God's spirit It is one of the fine Arts; I had almost said the finest of the fine Arts" (Donahue. 1996).

Furthermore, nurses comprise the largest group of health care professionals and nurses operate from a unique disciplinary perspective and they view each patient as a person in relation to their environment and the social, economic, and political forces that shape this environment. This makes it imperative to recognize that a nurse's duty consists of maximizing the promotion, maintenance, and restoration of patients' health after giving due consideration to the infinitely complex environment that people live in.

Nursing is quintessentially the blending of an art and a science and nurses bring about healing by assisting patients and their families to investigate the different options available for promoting health. Nurses display an abundance of creativity, sensitivity and empathy. As a science nursing theory consists of anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, psychology, etc. Moreover, a nurse has to be analytical and very quick to respond to the unusual, because a nurse spends the maximum time with the patient in comparison to other members of the medical profession. Hence, a nurse has to be bestowed with critical thinking skills like self-reflection, querying, analysis, interpretation and evaluation (Dept of Nursing. 2006).

The duties that nurses have to discharge are both dependent and independent. The dependent functions of nurses include duties that are performed consequent to the "orders of a licensed physician or dentist,

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including such duties as administering medications and changing dressings on wounds". On the other hand, independent functions that nurse have to perform on the basis of their own professional judgment.

Examples of some of these duties are bathing patients, changing their positions to prevent cramps; placing patients in such positions as will prevent joint contractures, education people in respect of how to care for themselves and making available such information or advise as will help people to obtain proper and adequate nutrition. These all important functions of a nurse are controlled, in the United States, by the nurse practice act of the relevant state (Carruthers, Evalyn P. 2006).

Leukaemia is a variety of cancer that affects the blood cells. It comprises the sixth leading cause of death in males. Its causes are tentatively supposed to be exposure to nuclear radiation, smoking of tobacco and genetic factors. The main treatment is by chemotherapy. The aim of treatment is to reduce the cancerous cells to such an extent as will allow the production of healthy red blood cells. This is known as remission.

I have been a witness to this dread disease at close quarters. My father has leukemia and was in remission for 10 years. Suddenly, last year the cancer resurfaced, as it does in most patients above 65 years of age, and this has necessitated frequent admission to the hospital. At present my father is in Cornell Hospital undergoing treatment for blood infection.

There is a lot of pain, anguish, mental tension and other problems associated with such protracted illness. I have come to accept this. However, I noticed that the nurses at the Cornell Hospital were working wonders by their selfless service, which was always rendered with a smile and with great kindness. Many a time the nurse is like a beacon of light in the darkness of

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the misery that is the ward for the terminally ill. Nursing involves the setting up of compassionate relationships with individuals and their families. Nurses play a vital role in ensuring the best possible health of a patient. Sometimes they have to ensure a peaceful death to patients who are at the doorstep of death. It is not for nothing that a nurse is considered to be an angel of mercy. My observation of these nurses has inspired me immeasurably and has strengthened my desire to follow in their hallowed footsteps by becoming a nurse.

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