



DOES INVESTING IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COACHING FOR NURSES HELP CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR BETTER FUNCTIONING IN THE HOSPITAL?

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ABSTRACT

Background: There are not many published studies to assess professional development among nurses in relation to nursing services provided in different departments of the hospital and also on importance of professional development among nursing in India. This prompted the investigator to evaluate the existing professional development program. Objectives of the study were to evaluate the current professional development training program provided to the nursing staff, assess the role of these professional development training program on nurses and contribution to their functioning and evaluate the impact that the hospital attains through the professional development in nursing.

Method: Descriptive cross sectional study which involved one-to-one interview of randomly selected 70 nursing staff working in various departments of a teaching, tertiary care hospital in Bangalore.

Results: Most of the participants were young, who had completed GNM Nursing with 2 - 3 years of work experience as staff nurse. Nurses with less education and less experience wanted to learn and know more about recent advances. All participants agreed that professional development classes were beneficial both for their personnel development and in improving their quality of nursing care provided to people.

Conclusion: Professional development trainings are beneficial both to the hospital and participants.

Key words: Hospital, nursing, professional development.

INTRODUCTION

The advancements in medicine and health care technology have also made patient care more complex. One of the major concerns in hospitals is to employ, train and retain trained human resources to meet the complexity of patient care. Nurses constitute a large section of the total number of employees and play a vital role in the functioning of the hospital.¹ The professional develop-

ment in nursing is a lifelong learning that primarily aim at professional development of nurses and to update their knowledge, skills and attitude which in turn improve the quality of nursing care in the hospital. This is a must for all health care organizations as per State Boards of Nursing.^{2,3}

The most commonly used training methods of professional development are on-the-job methods and off-the-job methods.⁴ The World Health Organization and the American Nurses Association

do mention that professional training programs will help improve knowledge, skills, attitude, communication capacity, personal growth, self-confidence and guidance to the nursing staff to render good care to the patients and also provision of safe, caring and effective health care.⁵⁻¹⁰

This study aims to assess the role of professional development in nursing and its contribution to the functioning of the hospital. The main objectives of the study were to evaluate the current professional development training program provided to the nursing staff, assess the role of these professional development training program on nurses and their contribution to the functioning of the hospital and evaluate the impact that the hospital attains through the professional development in nursing.

METHODS

Descriptive cross sectional study design was adapted to study the nurses professional training programs' current status, its impact on nurses and in-turn their functioning in the hospital. The existing program was of 120 - 150 minutes duration and was held on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The topics included were on recent advances in nursing care, malaria, tuberculosis, hand hygiene, management of patients admitted with HIV, geriatric care, universal precaution including hand washing practices, etc. This study was done in a teaching, tertiary care hospital in Bangalore. List of currently working staff nurses with work experience of more than one year in the study hospital was obtained from the nursing superintendent office. Ten percent i.e., seventy nurses working in thirty different departments of the hospital were selected from the list by simple random sampling. One-to-one interviews were conducted using a predesigned and pretested interview schedule.

The interview schedule had three sections: Section I had a set of instructions for the nurses. Section II sought the nurses' consent to take part in the study, and section III was the actual schedule. The schedule had five parts:

Part I: Nurses' opinion about the benefits which the hospital attains through professional development in nursing,

Part II: Nurses' opinion about the personal benefits of the professional development in nursing,

Part III: Nurses' opinion about existing professional development programs in the hospital,

Part IV: Nurses are asked some general questions regarding their opinion and suggestions about the

hospital, the training programs they would like to attend and,

Part V: Nurses' demographic profile.

Part II, III and IV questionnaire consisted of the combination of both close-ended and open-ended questions, which required them to indicate on a 5 - Point Likert Scale¹¹, their opinion about the benefits which hospital attains, the personal benefits, and the existing professional development programs in the hospital. The scoring of the 5 - Point Likert Scale was: Strongly Disagree - 1 Point, Disagree - 2 points, Neither agree nor disagree - 3 points, Agree - 4 points and Strongly agree - 5 points.

The study had to provide definite assurance about participant's anonymity and confidentiality of data collected. The first step was to approach the hospital management and nursing superintendent to seek permission to access the staff and it was assured that the identity of the participants would be anonymous so as to reduce or eliminate bias. Efforts were taken to avoid biased results by assuring the participants that the interview answers and suggestions regarding the hospital and professional development would remain anonymous and confidential. The participants were also requested to sign informed consent form before answering the questionnaire so that they may not hesitate to be objective in giving their feedback and suggestions.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile: Majority 46 (65.73percent) of the respondents were in the age group between 21 years to 25 years. Twenty-one (30percent) of the respondents were in the age group of 26 years to 30 years. Two (2.85percent) of the respondents were between 31 years to 35 years and one (1.42percent) was >36 years. This proportion matches the general age profile of the nurses working in this hospital. The designation of all the nurses was staff nurse.

There are more than 65 departments and more than 800 staff nurses working in this hospital. Seventy staff nurses are selected from thirty different departments. The departments and the number of nurses to be interviewed were selected randomly so as to have information from a wide range of staff nurses.

Experience-wise, majority 28 (40percent) of the respondents had 2-3 years of experience. Eight

(11.42percent), 16 (22.88percent), seven (10percent), six (8.57percent), two (2.85percent) and three (4.28percent) of the respondents have the experience of 6 months to 1 year, 1-2 years, 3-4 years, 4-5 years, 5-6 years and more than 6 years respectively.

Majority, 45 (64.29percent) of the respondents had completed GNM Nursing and 25 (35.71percent) BSc Nursing.

When asked about attending the professional development classes conducted in the hospital in the last six months, majority, 53 (75.73percent) of the respondents had attended 4 to 6 programs. Two (2.85percent) and 13 (18.57percent) had attended 1-3 and more than seven professional development programs respectively. Two (2.85percent) of the respondents have not attended any programs.

Benefits of conducting professional development program to the hospital: (Table 1) Ten statements were given under this area, which the nurses had to, on a five-point Likert scale, agree or disagree with. Based on the answers given, scores were computed for each of the statements in this area. Nurses had to either 'Strongly Disagree', 'Disagree', 'Neither Agree nor Disagree', 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree', with each of the statements. The scoring applied as explained above.

Majority of the respondents ranging from 36 (51.44percent) to 60 (85.74percent) "Agree" to all the 10 statements mentioned in this area (Table 1). The highest scoring is 60 (85.74percent), agree to the statement that "Professional development in nursing provides high quality of nursing care consistent with the philosophy and objectives of the hospital". Twenty (28.57percent) of the respondents "Strongly agree" to the statement that "professional development in nursing updates the knowledge and developing the latest skills which will need in particular fields". There are very few nurses who "strongly disagree" and "disagree" that professional development program benefits the hospital.

Nurses' opinion about their personal benefits from attending professional development program. (Table 2) Ten statements were given under this area, which the nurses had to, on a five-point Likert scale, agree or disagree with. Based on the answers given, scores were computed for each of the statements in this area.

Majority of the respondents ranging from 40 (57.15percent) to 52 (74.30percent) "Agree" (Table 2) to all the nine statements mentioned in this area except to the first statement. The highest scoring is 52 (74.30percent), agree to the statement that "Professional development in nursing helps me to function more effectively by exposing myself to the latest concepts, information, techniques and developing the skills which I need in my particular field". The first statement "Is there need for professional development in nursing?" 40 (57.15percent) "Strongly agree" and remaining 30 (42.85percent) agree that there is a need for professional development program. There are very few nurses who "strongly disagree" and "disagree" that professional development program benefits personally.

Nurses' opinion about the existing professional development programs (Table 3) Ten statements were given under this area, which the nurses had to, on a five-point Likert scale, agree or disagree with. Based on the answers given, scores were computed for each of the statements in this area.

Majority of the respondents ranging from 32 (45.74percent) to 46 (65.74percent) "Agree" to all the 10 statements mentioned in this area (Table 3). The highest scoring is 46 (65.74percent), agree to the statement that "Appropriateness" of the professional development programs in nursing provided in this hospital. Twenty-nine (41.42percent) of the respondents "Strongly agree" to the statement that "Number of sessions per month" for professional development in nursing is good.

General observations

Majority 56 (80 percent) answered positively that they would reconsider working in this hospital in the future. Greater part 30 (42.86percent) of the nurses responded that they will recommend the hospital to a friend as good organization to work for and 28 (40percent) of the nurses with reservations. Twelve (17.14percent) of the nurses responded that they will not recommend the hospital to a friend.

Though the majority of the nurses were satisfied and have good opinion of the hospital, a few recommendations are put forward. Nurses gave their suggestions on how to make this hospital to be a better place to work. The most common suggestion was to increase the number of nursing staff (37 (52.85 percent)). The second common suggestion was to increase salary (25 (35.71percent)).

Table 1: Professional development programs and benefits to hospital

Part 1: Your opinion about the benefits which the hospital attains through the professional development programs in nursing	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1.1 Professional development in nursing provides high quality of nursing care consistent with the philosophy and objectives of the hospital	2.85%	1.42%	1.42%	85.74%	8.57%
1.2 Prepare the nurses to meet the present as well as the changing requirements of the hospital	2.85%	1.42%	10%	75.73%	10%
1.3 Impart skills such as time, stress and emotional management, active listening and motivational skill etc to make the nursing profession more fruitful in the hospital	7.14%	10%	15.71%	51.44%	15.71%
1.4 Update the knowledge and developing the latest skills needed in particular fields	1.42%	1.42%	2.85%	65.74%	28.57%
1.5 Develop the potentialities of the nurses that will contribute to the patient quality care	1.42%	0	5.71%	65.73%	27.14%
1.6 Ensure smooth and efficient functioning of the department	5.71%	2.85%	12.85%	64.31%	14.28%
1.7 Provide maintained or increased productivity	4.28%	1.42%	21.42%	60.03%	12.85%
1.8 Provide well rooted educational and psychological principles	2.85%	4.28%	14.28%	62.88%	15.71%
1.9 contribute to better functioning of the hospital	0	1.42%	5.71%	68.59%	24.28%
1.10 Prepares for the new technologies, communication skills, efficient performance, discipline and work ethics	0	1.42%	7.14%	77.16%	14.28%

Table 2: Personal benefits of attending professional development program

Part 2: Your opinion about the personal benefits you gain through the professional development programs in nursing	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
2.1 Is there need for professional development in nursing?	0	0	0	42.85%	57.15%
2.2 Helps me to be competent, knowledgeable and experienced.	0	0	4.28%	57.15%	38.57%
2.3 Improves my level of performance and raised my self-confidence on my present assignment	0	0	2.85%	67.15%	30%
2.4 Helps to Improve the quality care, employment atmosphere and reduced work errors	0	1.42%	12.85%	57.16%	28.57%
2.5 Helps me to be more responsible and to bring organizational climate in the ward	0	1.42%	8.57%	71.44%	18.57%
2.6 Fosters in me the creativity, initiative and to adapt myself to the new technological changes	0	2.85%	18.57%	65.73%	12.85%
2.7 Helps on my personal growth such as my educational expressions, wider awareness and enlarged skill	0	2.85%	12.85%	61.45%	22.85%
2.8 Promotes in me a sense of responsibility, cooperative attitudes and good relationships	0	1.42%	8.57%	57.16%	32.85%
2.9 Helps me to function more effectively by exposing myself to the latest concepts, information, techniques and developing the skills which I need in my particular field	0	1.42%	5.71%	74.30%	18.57%
2.10 Overall I am happy with the training programs I received at this hospital	1.42%	2.85%	10%	64.31%	21.42%

Table 3: Existing professional development program and scope for improvement

Part 3: What is your opinion about the existing professional development programs in nursing and your comments to improve them:		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
3.1	Topics selected	0	0	24.28%	58.58%	17.14%
3.2	Speakers chosen	0	4.28%	28.57%	50.01%	17.14%
3.3	Acoustic/ Environment	0	1.42%	12.85%	64.31%	21.42%
3.4	Group involvement during sessions	0	8.57%	22.85%	52.87%	15.71%
3.5	Audio Visual Aids/ PPPs	0	4.28%	11.42%	48.59%	35.71%
3.6	Recognition/Appreciation received	1.42%	2.85%	18.57%	57.16%	20%
3.7	Number of sessions per month	0	1.42%	11.42%	45.74%	41.42%
3.8	Appropriateness	0	1.42%	21.42%	65.74%	11.42%
3.9	Adequacy	0	1.42%	24.28%	58.59%	15.71%
3.10	Timings	1.42%	0	20%	57.16%	21.42%

The third commonest suggestion was to reduce duty hours (19 (27.14percent)). The other suggestions were to avoid non-nursing duties like lab charging, billing, pharmacy issues, taking care of the blood and other samples, better job distribution among nurses, improved interaction between nurses and staff, doctors, patients and others working personnel, provision of residential quarters and employing male nurses.

Among the nursing staff surveyed, 42 (60percent) of the nurses responded that the existing professional development programs are adequate and helps to improve knowledge and skills.

Twenty-eight (40percent) respondents expressed that there should be some changes and improvements. These include - the training to be conducted by qualified and experienced persons (9 (12.85%)); the attendance to the training program should be made mandatory (6 (8.57%)); providing certificate will be motivating factor for the participants (4 (5.71%)). The other suggestion were to use innovative and creative methods of teaching and. Seventy (100percent) nurses remarked that professional development in nursing should be continued, because, It imparts knowledge and helps provide quality patient care (20 (28.57percent) commented). The training helps equips the nursing staff to face the challenging situations in the ward (6 (8.57percent) commented). Provides skills and helps improve the functioning level of nurses (4 (5.71percent) comments). The other reasons were, it imparts adequate self-confidence in nurses (3 (4.28percent) commented), helps updates with the advanced technologies in nursing field and help orient to hospital policies and objectives.

The other topics the nurses would like to attend/which they would like to be included in professional development in nursing are as follows: Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

and other infectious disease - 13 (18.57percent), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) - 12 (12.14 percent), Pediatrics Advanced Life Support (PALS) - 8 (11.42percent), Diabetes and its management, Pain and palliative care, Emergency care including those on ventilator support and Fire safety and evacuation.

DISCUSSION

With regard to the age of the samples, it is clear from the figure 1, that the majority 46 (65.86percent) of the nurses surveyed were young and were between the age group 21 - 25 years. There was no difference in the age of the study and non-study participants working in the hospital.

There was a correlation between education and demand for more information i.e., nurses who were less educated demand more professional development classes to update their knowledge. Similar studies¹²⁻¹⁵ have shown continuing education help nurses not only to retain their clinical skills but also develop leadership qualities. Studies have also shown improved knowledge, clinical competencies, patient care outcomes including management of acute care, care at the bed side, reduction in falls, 30 day readmission rate and mortality rates.

Majority of the study subjects agreed that professional development classes not only help them to improve their knowledge and skills but also help them to be more productive and provide high quality of patient care. The professional training also benefits them on their personal front, improves their self-confidence to be more creative and responsible. The current professional development programs were adequate and were able to meet their needs. Comparable studies^{15,16} on professional nursing training program have also shown improved self confidence and help coordination and communication between nurses which

helped improve individual and collective team skills which resulted in improved patient outcomes and satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Professional development is considered as the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills and the development of personal qualities necessary for execution of professional, technical duties throughout the individual's working life. Majority of the nurses agreed that professional development program are beneficial both personally and in improving their working in the hospital. The existing program in the study hospital did satisfy the above criteria among majority of the nurses. The other topics requested by the nursing staff were on advanced cardiac life support for adults and children, diabetes and management of its complications, end of life care, management of people on ventilator support and fire safety. Just like "Health makes life better", it is relevant to state that "Professional development in nursing makes hospital management better".

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