

Activities Performed by Student Nurses in a Medical Ward - An Observation Study

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Abstract: *Qualified nurses play a important role in achieving millennium developmental goals. Clinical field is a significant learning area for nursing students where students develop their clinical skills in order to become a professional nurse. Thus, it is important to conduct study to understand the activities performed by student nurses in clinical area. The results revealed that student perform 38.78% complex nursing care activities, 20.31% education related activities and 17.37% Nonproductive were performed. Student nurses have a total of 116.96 minutes per patient per day to provide nursing care to the patients.*

Keywords: Activity analysis, Nursing Activities and Observational study

1. Introduction

Nurses and midwives play a important role in health care delivery system and also qualified nurses play a vital role in achieving millennium development goals by contributing to achieve positive health outcomes such as reducing mortality, morbidity and disability, promoting healthy lifestyles, improving maternal and child health and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria tuberculosis(TB) and other diseases. Also, in addition to strong political leadership and commitment of the government, professional organizations and nurse leaders, policies are required on an optimum nursing manpower plan to attain millennium developmental goals.¹

The clinical field is a significant learning arena for nursing students not only in other countries also in India, as half of the bachelor's program takes place in clinical practice. Thus, students' clinical practice with real patients constitute a substantial part of teaching efforts within the university.²

Students enter nursing have various backgrounds and different prerequisites for goal achievement based on the National Curriculum of Nursing. Students encounter patients need to be well prepared and have proper knowledge and practical skills required within an increasingly specialized health care to ensure patient safety.²

Brain drain of health care professionals is a growing phenomenon worldwide and several policies have been developed in order to harmonize nursing education in the other countries. All the educational and learning activities during the clinical postings of nursing students could be termed as the Clinical Learning Environment (CLE).

The CLE includes everything that surrounds students and affects their professional development in the clinical setting. There is considerable evidence supporting that the CLE is extremely beneficial in familiarizing students with clinical judgment and decision-making, in stimulating their critical thinking, in challenging students to recognize the consequences of their mistakes, and in exposing them to

various socio-cultural, biological, psychological and mental aspects of patients' care.³

Within this context, the quality of clinical preparation of students has been systematically debated since 1980, in order to reach an optimal level of clinical learning achievements². Therefore, clinical practice is an essential and integral part of the nursing education program. Since nursing is a performance-based profession, clinical learning environments play a vital role in the acquisition of professional nursing abilities and train the nursing students to enter the nursing profession and become a registered nurse.⁴

Students' preparation and exposure to enter the clinical setting are one of the most important factors affecting the quality of clinical education. An optimal clinical learning environment has a positive impact on the students' professional development whereas a poor learning environment can have adverse effects on their professional development process.⁴ Thus, the current study was conducted to identify the nursing students' activities in clinical area.

Objectives

- 1) To analyze the types of nursing activities performed by nursing students in a medical ward.
- 2) Identify the Time spent on Nursing Activities by nursing students in a medical ward.

2. Materials and Methods

Descriptive study design was used for the study. Student nurses posted in a medical ward during study period were selected as samples. Nursing activities regularly performed by student nurses were identified and coding was done for each activity. After getting formal permission and ethical clearance, Study team was formulated. Work sampling technique was used to observe and record the activities performed by student nurses. At least one activity for each student nurse was recorded in observer's record in every 10 minutes interval from morning 7 am to 1 pm for 7 days. This intermediate observation provides the type of activities

performed by the student nurses and the activities that consumed most time.

Students were explained about the purpose of study in order to reduce the Hawthorn effect. Nursing activities were classified as basic care activities, complex care activities, administration, education, clerical, Housekeeping, maintaining supplies and equipment, off station and Nonproductive.

A total of 9 second year B.Sc nursing students and 3 final year B.Sc Nursing students were posted in a medical ward. Thirty-nine patients were admitted in 42 bedded medical ward. The ward has nurses' station, small laboratory, dressing room and classroom. It was well equipped with central oxygen supply, suction apparatus, dressing trolley and emergency trolley.

3. Results and Discussion

The results showed (table 1) that out of 1462 activities, maximum of 567 complex nursing care activities, 297 education related activities and 254 Nonproductive were performed by the nursing students which constitute 38.78%, 20.31% and 17.37% of total activities performed.(fig 1)

Similar study results showed that majority (85%) agreed or strongly agreed to master bed bath procedure with a real patient in practice after the training session. ²

Another study result revealed that the nursing students also got opportunity to administer drugs, injection etc (35%) of time and for recording and reporting (20% of time) under guidance of senior nurses. ⁵

Student nurses spent 243.67-man hours to perform 1462 total nursing activities out of which 94.50-man hours to perform complex nursing care activities, 49.50-man hours to perform education related activities and 42.33 man hour spent to perform nonproductive activities. No time spent to perform off station activities during study period.

The table 2 revealed that out of 116.96 minutes available per patient per day, maximum time 45.36 minutes were spent on complex nursing care activities followed by 23.76 minutes were spent on education related activities by student nurses in medical ward during study period. Also student nurses spent more time (12.24 minutes) on basic care activities.

A similar study on "nursing manpower requirement in neonatal intensive care unit of PGIMER, Chandigarh revealed that maximum time of 387.31 minutes were spent to perform direct care activities. ⁶

4. Conclusion

Student nurses spent significant amount of time in giving basic care activities, complex nursing care activities such as giving injections, collecting blood samples, providing IV therapy etc and education related activities even though they spent some time in non productive activities. Thus, Clinical posting of Nursing students helps to improve their clinical skills and also helps to become a professional nurse.

Table 1: Number, Percentage distribution of activities and Man Hour involved in performing activities by student nurses during day duty in medical ward

S. No	Type of Activities	Number of activities	Percentage of activities	Man Hours
1	Basic Nursing Care	153	10.47	25.50
2	Complex Nursing Care	567	38.78	94.50
3	Administration	37	2.53	6.17
4	Education	297	20.31	49.50
5	Clerical	18	1.23	3.00
6	House Keeping	83	5.68	13.83
7	Maintaining Supplies and Equipment	53	3.63	8.83
8	Off Station	0	0.00	0.00
9	Non Productive	254	17.37	42.33
Total		1462	100.00	243.67

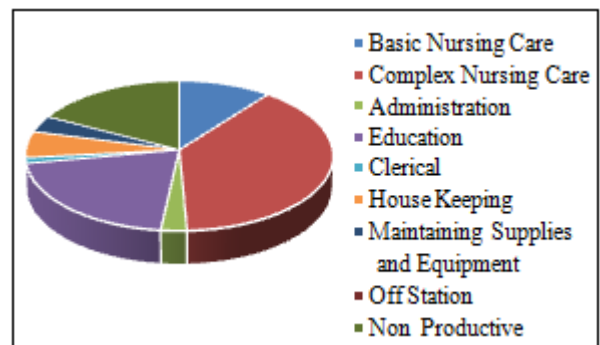


Figure 1: Type of activities performed by the students

Table 2: Comparison of the Average amount of Time available in Minutes per Patient per Day from student nurses with Average amount of Time spent on Basic , Complex care and Other activities in Medical Ward

S. No	Type of Activities	Time spent on activities by student nurse (in minutes)
1	Basic Care	12.24
2	Complex Care	45.36
3	Administration	2.96
4	Education	23.76
5	Clerical	1.44
6	House Keeping	6.64
7	Maintaining Supplies and Equipments	4.24
8	Off Station	0.00
9	Non-Productive	20.32
Total		116.96

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