

## Nursing as a profession: Challenges and opportunities

DULCE CORAZON Z LAMAGNA

On the journey of seeking healthcare services, nurses are often the professionals we turn to for assistance. They offer skilled care as we recuperate, advocate for our rights when we need care, educate us to assist in decision-making, stand by us at critical moments, helps us understand the system when it baffles us, and reassure us when we feel doubt of fear. Nurses are front liners in providing long-term care, home care, primary and preventive care, health promotion and public health. They are the wheel and hub of health service.

The role of the nurses has intensified and diversified within the widespread integration of communication technology and information science into health care agencies. The nurses' role in the delivery of patient's care is intensified by redefinition, refinement and modification of the practice of nursing. Nurses are expected to function well and are held responsible and accountable for the systematic planning of holistic and humanistic nursing care for clients and their families.

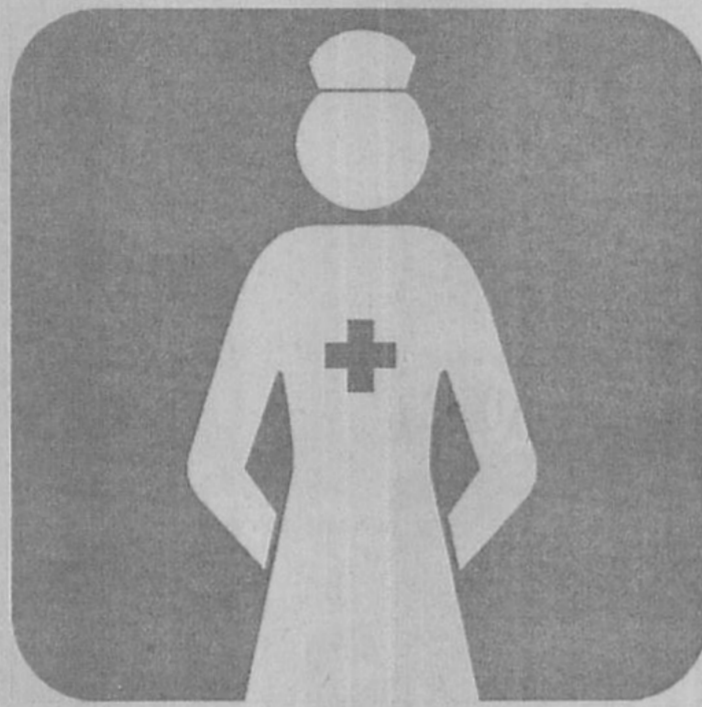
### Safe staffing saves lives

The concept of safe staffing

emerged as a result of changes in the healthcare system worldwide. Safe staffing means an appropriate number of staff, with a suitable mix of skill levels, is available at all times to ensure that patient care needs are met and that hazard free working conditions are maintained.

A significant relationship between nurse staffing and overall patient care outcome exist in hospital care settings. Nursing care is considered essential for providing healthcare in verity of setting. Hospitals with an adequate number of skilled nurses and physicians are using the size of their staff to increase their competitive edge against other hospitals. Safe staffing has repeatedly been shown to contribute to better patient outcomes which ultimately manifest in reduced health cost for individuals, families and communities and increased tax revenues as patient return to active workforce.

Safe and cost-effective staffing also requires an understanding of the differences in skill level, experience and education of various types of licensed and unlicensed personnel and a recognition that inadequate or marginal staffing levels can lead to higher mortality rates, greater



morbidity, increased risk of injury to both patient and staff, and increased utilization of both in-patient and outpatient facilities.

Factors to be considered in determining safe staffing include the sharpness level of patients, the need for nurses to have adequate opportunity and time to exercise professional judgment

with respect to patient care, and acknowledgment that patient needs can change from moment to moment and will encompass physiological, economic, chemical, psychosocial, educational and spiritual requirements in addition to safety. Staffing practices are also driving the exodus of nurses and health professionals from hospitals and other

facilities and leading to critical shortages in almost all health professions.

Health professionals experience the staffing crisis directly and personally. Everyday, it reduces the quality of their work lives and constrains their ability to deliver quality healthcare. Yet given these results, it is clearly not a problem limited to certain facilities, professions or regions. There is a shortage of qualified professionals in all of these fields, and those working in the field clearly recognise it.

### Current Situation in Bangladesh

Nursing faces a divergence between supply and demand that is evidence in insufficient nurse staffing with significant implications for patient safety. In Bangladesh, many believe this shortage of nurses, is entrenched in the long standing problems related to the value and image of nursing and limited role nursing has had in identifying priorities within healthcare delivery systems.

Healthcare sector in Bangladesh, in recent times, has become rewarding for private investors. The private sector development mainly comes in the form of hospitals, clinics and diagnostic centers. The growth

however has largely been chaotic, with little attention given to quality control, efficiency and competitiveness.

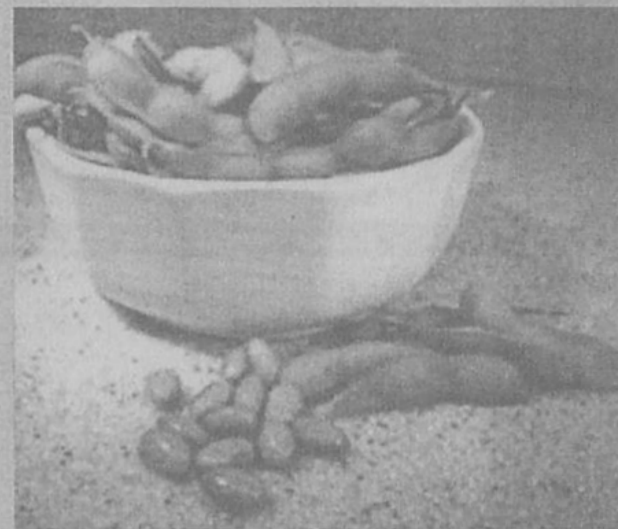
Although healthcare personnel, especially nurses, unquestionably have a vital role to play in the successful delivery of healthcare services, there is a scarcity of skilled nurses in Bangladesh. Inadequate training and skills result in poor service delivery. This definitely has an impact on the level of customer fulfillment.

### Conclusion

Nursing is a rewarding profession that offers diverse career path for men and women. Experienced nurses are in demand for a wide range of job opportunities and enjoy both national and international job mobility. Nursing is humanistic, caring and altruistic profession. Nurses help individuals, families, groups and communities to achieve and maintain an optimal level of health consistent with their abilities and desires. This is high time to pay attention to the nursing sector to contribute to the rapidly expanding health market of Bangladesh.

Dulce Corazon Z Lamagna is an MBA Student of American International University Bangladesh.

### Health Tips



## Soy may prevent breast cancer, study finds

REUTERS, Washington

Women who eat lots of soy foods appear to have a lower risk of breast cancer, but the benefits may come from health habits that go along with eating soy and not from supplements, researchers said.

Teams at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and Georgetown University in Washington looked at 18 different population-based studies of soy and breast cancer. They found an overall relative reduction of 14 percent in breast cancer risk in Caucasian women who ate soy, they reported in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

"We found that soy food intake was associated with a reduced breast cancer risk. However, we have no idea what soy supplements might do," said Leena Hilakivi-Clarke of Georgetown.

Many of the studies involve people in Asia whose diets are naturally high in soy. In contrast, Western women often seek short cuts by taking soy supplements.

"At this point, women should not be taking high-

dose soy supplements, especially those who are breast cancer survivors and women at increased risk for the disease," said Bruce Trock, an Associate Professor of Urology, Epidemiology, Oncology and Environmental Health sciences at Johns Hopkins.

"We need to take into account that Asian women are more physically active, drink less alcohol, have children earlier, and their entire diet is different from Western women - all of which decrease their breast cancer risk," Trock added.

Soy is high in compounds called isoflavones, which may block estrogens, promote the destruction of faulty cells, including tumor cells, and fight inflammation.

Trock said the studies mostly relied on women to report how much soy they ate. As soy products are found in a wide range of processed foods, women may have had no idea how much they were actually eating, he added.

And he noted there is evidence soy exposure early in life may be the most important factor in reducing cancer risk.

### LONGO OPERATION

## A modern operation for piles without any trauma

PROF DR AKM FAZLUL HAQUE

Whenever there is any bleeding and pain in the anus or rectum, people feels that they are suffering from something like hemorrhoid or piles. There are many symptoms like occasional bleeding, itching, discharge, pain, protrusion of lump (mass of hard tissue which rises on the surface or under the surface of the skin) from the anus etc. With the same symptoms, there can be varieties of diseases like piles, anal fissure, fistula, cancer, and polyp, ulcerative colitis tuberculosis etc. A doctor needs to do some test to decide about what the patient is suffering from. These tests are proctoscopy, sigmoidoscopy and colonoscopy. Through the instrument we can see the diseases inside anus, rectum and colon.

There are various treatment options for hemorrhoid (piles) like medication, diet, injection ring ligation, conventional piles

operation and the latest operation called Longo operation. Injection treatment started first in USA in 1869. Ring ligation started in UK in 1954.

About 20 percent hemorrhoid patients require surgical operation, which involves excision of three masses around anal canal causing three big wounds, which needs two months for healing. After conventional hemorrhoid operation there are pain, bleeding, itching, discharge, chances of anal narrowing, absence from working places for 3-6 weeks makes this operation unpopular.

In the backdrop of this situation, Dr Antonio Longo, Professor of surgery, University of Palermo, Italy, devised a circular stapling instrument by which piles operation can be done without any injury or trauma to the anal canal. This instrument works in the rectum and excises a circular band of mucus membrane and stitches by itself. This

cures the piles and the protruding mass also gets back into anus. Pain after operation is very short lasting.

Because there is no wound around anus after this operation, there is no need to heal the wound. The anus remains completely intact. Patients need only few days to abstain from normal work. Pain medication is hardly required for the procedure. Chance of recurrence after this operation is 2-3 percent. Patients need to stay in hospital for 2-3 days.

I did this operation for the first time in our country on June 8, 2003. Since then I have done 310 such operation successfully. Patients are very happy. We have treated about 40,000 Patients having problem of piles, anal fissure, fistula cancer, polyp etc. in last ten years.

Prof Dr AKM Fazlul Haque MBBS, FCPS, FICS is the Head of Colorectal Surgery in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSSMU), Dhaka.

### Comparative study of two types of operation

	Conventional operation	Longo Operation
Wound in anal canal	Yes	No
Pain	Lot of pain	Minimum
Discharge, bleeding, itching	4-6 weeks	Minimum
Operation time	Less	Slight more
Warm water hip bath	Required	No need
Pain killer medicine	Very much required	Minimum or No
Antibiotics	Does not require	Required
Off from work	3-6 Week	3-7 days
Hospital stay	3 days	2 days
Recovery For operation	Long time	Very short time
Anal Narrowing	May happen	Usually No
Recurrence of piles	2%	2%
Expenditure	Less	More due to disposable instrument
Patient satisfaction	Very much less	Much more



## Whole grain-rich diet may reduce gum disease risk

Eating lots of whole grains may do more than lower a person's risk of developing diabetes or heart disease, as has been previously reported. New study findings suggest a diet rich in whole grains may lower the likelihood of developing periodontitis, or gum disease, as well.

"A diet that is beneficial for general health is also good for oral health," study co-author Dr Anwar T Merchant, of McMaster University in Ontario, Canada, told, adding that "periodontitis may be prevented by diet."

Diabetes and high levels of blood sugar are known to increase a person's risk and severity of periodontitis, while whole grains and fiber have been shown to improve ability to process blood sugar.

To investigate, Merchant and colleagues followed over 34,000 men from the Health Professionals Follow-Up study, gathering information about the men's diet every four years via a food-frequency questionnaire. None of the study participants, who were aged 40-75 years at the start of the study, had a history of periodontitis, heart attack, high cholesterol or diabetes.

Over a 14-year period, 1,897 men were diagnosed with periodontitis, or inflammation of the gums that also involves bone.

Those who reported eating the most brown rice, dark breads, popcorn and other whole grains (about three

servings per day) were 23 percent less likely to develop periodontitis than those who reported eating less than one daily serving of whole grains.

In other findings, men who reported eating more whole grains were older, more physically active, less likely to smoke, and of lower weight for their height than those who reported the lowest whole grain consumption. They also reported eating more fruits, vegetables and nuts than their counterparts, study findings indicate. After taking all these factors into consideration, however, higher consumption of whole grains was still associated with a lower risk of periodontitis, the report indicates.

According to Merchant, "the likely mechanism is as follows: Whole grain intake improves glucose metabolism, resulting in lower levels of blood glucose. Lower blood glucose levels are reported to reduce the risk of periodontitis in diabetics. Lower blood glucose levels - resulting from consuming whole grains - may reduce the risk of periodontitis in non-diabetics as well."

The findings suggest that, without consuming more calories, three or four servings of whole grains - equal to three or four slices of whole wheat bread, for example - "may be optimal to reduce periodontitis risk," Merchant told.

Source: American Journal of Clinical Nutrition

### Your Doctor



Dear Doctor, My friend is married for the last 10 years and passing very happy conjugal life, but they have no child. They tried hard for this.

My friend's testostoren, LH, FSH level and semen count is very low. On the other hand, his wife's LH, FSH, HCG is high, but her progesteron and oestrogen level is very low.

They have no history of trauma, TB, cancer and other problems.

They have been receiving treatment from a physician for the last 2 years and used a lot of hormonal drugs. At last the doctor declared that they have no chance to get issues.

Now what should they do? Is there any hope left for them?

Regards, Ranjan Kumar Sarker

Answer: There are some points not mentioned in the query like

age of the couple, menstrual history of the woman.

You need to see a specialist to be clarified completely. There are certain options in treatment procedure. Even if the male partner cannot produce any sperm (the condition is known as azospermia), there is way to have children by testicular sperm aspiration (TESA).

However, as hormonal therapy has failed, you can try further options. If at least one fallopian tube of the woman is functional, there are chances to avail other procedures.

Intra uterine insemination (IUI), in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) can be explored in this connection.

The options are available in the country now-a-days. So you need not get worried about the situation and think that there is no chance of getting babies.

### HEALTH FITNESS TIPS

## Which type of exercise is best?



STAR HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

Exercise helps control blood glucose levels because exercising muscle cells use more sugar and oxygen than those at rest. Exercise also helps insulin to work better. Most of the time when you exercise, your blood sugar levels will drop.

There are two main types of exercise:

- 1) Aerobic exercise and
- 2) Anaerobic exercise

#### Aerobic exercise

Aerobic exercise is steady exercise over a period of time that causes your body to use more oxygen. It makes your heart and lungs stronger, lowers blood lipids, lowers blood pressure, and uses up blood sugar. Aerobic exercise includes walking briskly, cycling, dancing, swimming, jogging, cross-country skiing, some team sports, and - or course - aerobics.

#### Anaerobic exercise

Anaerobic exercise consists of short bursts of energy that work one part of the body at a time, such as weight lifting. It builds muscles but does not strengthen the heart and lungs. It uses small amounts of blood sugar, but not enough to have much effect on overall blood sugar levels.

Both types are valuable. While aerobic exercise works to lower blood sugar better, the benefits of anaerobic activities such as weight training are important, too. For maximum benefit, aerobic exercise should be done 3 to 5 times a week, for 20-30 minutes each time. If you are taking insulin, it is easier to balance your blood glucose levels if you exercise at the same time of day.