

Continuing Professional Development of Russian Pediatric Nurses: An Interprofessional Approach

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Key Words: professional development; pediatric nurses; education; interprofessional approach; Russian Federation.

Summary. *Background.* The modernization of healthcare in the Russian Federation is primarily designed to strengthen the material and technical base, provision of information technologies, and the professional development of pediatric healthcare professionals. For this purpose, the Russian Board of the Union of Pediatricians decided to hold practical-scientific forums of Russian pediatric nurses within the framework of the Annual Congress of Pediatricians. The aim of this article was to report the feedback of Russian pediatric nurses after forum type events and to discuss the importance of such activities for nurses' work.

Material and Methods. An anonymous questionnaire, developed by the researchers, was distributed to the first forum delegates, i.e., nurses (N=250) from children's medical and educational institutions from 4 regions of the Russian Federation in 2011. After the third forum in 2013, the same questions about professional disadvantages in nurses' work and proposals for improvement were distributed to 250 participant nurses from the same 3 regions, excluding 1 region.

Results. Most pediatric nurses reported low salaries and professional stress as disadvantages at work. One-fourth of the nurses from Moscow region were lacking career perspectives. After the 3 forums, the proportion of the nurses who reported the lack of information decreased by 10 times in Arkhangelsk region (from 49.0% to 4.8%) and by 3 times in Krasnodar region (from 34.0% to 13.2%). The opinion of the respondents about limited career perspectives also improved in Arkhangelsk region (from 47.0% to 4.8 %) and in Krasnodar region (from 41.0% to 11.0%).

Conclusions. Professional development sessions, organized for Russian pediatric nurses in the form of 3 national forums, helped identify the main disadvantages at pediatric nurses' work and possible solutions for improvement. Interprofessional collaboration allowed joining the efforts of pediatricians and nurses to improve the factors for nurses' work.

Introduction

The modernization of healthcare in the Russian Federation is primarily designed to strengthen the material and technical base, provision of information technologies, and professional development of pediatric healthcare professionals, including more than 60 000 pediatricians and 130 000 nurses according to the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation (1). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), it is necessary to teach nurses to think analytically and to prepare them for research in order to improve the scientific basis and professional practice of nursing.

The Russian nursing curriculum is maturing; educators and developers are further modernizing coursework to conform to new national standards and are aligning the curriculum with that of contemporary global nursing to improve education and performance of nurses and to raise the prestige of the

entire nursing profession (2). Recently, the general system of nurses' education has been modified in the Russian Federation. The most common nursing education is a college degree although a new opportunity to study in a bachelor's nursing program is also arranged. There are no master's programs in nursing yet, but the project to introduce such a program is in process.

Although nowadays there is no special legislation relating postgraduate education and knowledge improvement of nurses in the Russian Federation, it is obvious that quality nursing practice is inconceivable without a clear system of continuing nurses' education and training (3, 4).

Continuing professional development is the means by which the members of the profession maintain, improve, and broaden their knowledge, expertise, and competence and develop personal and professional qualities required throughout their

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professional lives. Such development involves reviewing practice, identifying learning needs, planning and participating in relevant learning activities, and reflecting on the value of those activities (5).

Following those recommendations, the integral part of healthcare modernization in the Russian Federation is the professional development and motivation of nurses to be ready for quality work that requires the development of new skills not only in medical procedures but also in data processing and nursing research activities, as well as the improvement of professional nursing knowledge through interprofessional education (6, 7).

In the Russian Federation, a special place in continuing professional development of physicians belongs to the largest nongovernmental organization – the Union of Pediatricians. With the support of the Union, nurses continuously improve their professional knowledge together with physicians but in different sections, participating in national and local conferences, training courses, and educational programs.

In different regions of the Russian Federation, various professional nursing organizations exist, but none of them specialize in pediatrics. In 2012, the specialists of the Federal State Budgetary Institution “Scientific Centre of Children Health” under the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences (FSBI “SCCH” RAMS) launched a nursing development project and delivered an educational cycle for nurses (lectures and practical courses).

The most effective form of training outlined in the WHO Framework for Action on Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice (2010) is training in a “doctor-nurse” team applying interprofessional education “when two or more professions learn about, from and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes” (8).

In this context, the Russian Board of the Union of Pediatricians decided to hold national forums for pediatric nurses within the framework of the Annual Congress of Pediatricians. The first forum of Russian pediatric nurses took place within the framework of the 15th Congress of Pediatricians of Russia in Moscow in February 2011. During the first forum, the proposal of the Union of Pediatricians of Russia on the organization of annual forums for pediatric nurses within the Annual Congress of Pediatricians of Russia was accepted. In 2012–2013, 2 more forums were held as professional development events and included master classes (intensive courses), lectures, symposiums, and round tables.

This paper reports on the feedback of Russian pediatric nurses who participated in the forums and developed their professional knowledge during oral and poster presentation sessions. The importance of

such activities for nurses’ work satisfaction was also analyzed.

Material and Methods

This paper presents the research consisting of 2 phases: 1) a pre-forum survey in 2011 with the purpose to study the current work situation of Russian pediatric nurses; and 2) a post-forum survey in 2012–2013 to evaluate the importance of the activities of 3 forums on nurses’ work-related factors. Nurses from 4 regions of the Russian Federation were included in the survey: Krasnodar, Arkhangelsk region in the North-East part of the Russian Federation, Khanty-Mansy autonomous region, and Moscow region.

Pre-Forum Phase. The survey of 250 nurses from children’s medical and educational institutions of 4 regions of the Russian Federation was conducted. To perform this survey, a questionnaire was specially designed by the author in the FSBI “SCCH” RAMS to highlight the problems of midlevel professionals, i.e., nurses. The multichoice questions about the nurses’ satisfaction with salary, stress at work, informational support, and career perspectives were included with the possibility to choose several options to answer.

The participation in the survey was voluntary. During the registration for the first forum, the participant nurses were asked to fill out the anonymous questionnaire and leave it in a special box in the appointed place of the lobby of a conference facility.

Respondents. Nursing managers, head nurses, hospital and district nurses, nursing educators from higher educational institutions, and researchers from scientific organizations took part in the forum. The biggest part of the respondents belonged to the age group of 40–49 years (32.8%). The youngest group of nurses (20–29 years, 35.7%) came to participate in the forum from Krasnodar region (south part of the Russian Federation) and the oldest group of nurses was from Arkhangelsk region in the North East part of the Russian Federation (40–49 years, 83.3%). In Khanty-Mansy region, the dominating age group was 30–39 years, and in Moscow region, it was 30–39 years (Table 1).

The majority (96%) of the nurses had college education, and 4% had university education. According to the position in nursing practice, 83.6% were staff nurses and 16.4% were nursing administrators. More than half of the nursing administrators represented Krasnodar (56%) and Moscow regions (41.5%).

Post-Forum Phase. Later, the participants for the second and third forums were invited according to the registration lists of the first forum. The sociodemographic characteristics of the participants were not recorded in the post-forum stage of the survey as mostly the same people with similar characteristics came repeatedly for professional development

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Age and Region

Age, Years	Region				Total
	Arkhangelsk	Khanty-Mansy	Krasnodar	Moscow*	
20–29	2 (4.2)	7 (14.6)	35 (35.7)	13 (23.2)	57 (22.8)
30–39	2 (4.2)	29 (60.4)	27 (27.5)	25 (44.6)	63 (25.2)
40–49	40 (83.3)	8 (16.7)	21 (21.4)	13 (23.2)	82 (32.8)
50–59	4 (8.3)	4 (8.3)	12 (12.3)	5 (9.0)	25 (10.0)
>60	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (3.1)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.2)
Total	48 (100)	48 (100)	98 (100)	56 (100)	250 (100)

Values are number (percentage).

*The Federal State Budgetary Institution “Scientific Centre of Children Health” under the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences.

events. The participants (N=250) of the same 3 regions (Arkhangelsk, Krasnodar, and Moscow) were included in the survey repeatedly. Khanty-Mansy region was not represented during the third forum, and there were no results of the post-forum survey because this region adopted the initiative of nurses’ professional improvement locally organizing similar educational events instead of participating in national forums.

The Program Content of the Forums

The program of the first forum of Russian pediatric nurses was developed and included 5 large master classes or intensive courses of 34 academic hours in total (3 days).

The program of the second forum included 3 basic topics: modernization of pediatric care, nursing education in the Russian Federation and foreign countries, and new technologies of pediatric morbidity prevention. This was the first time when international specialists attended this event. Dr. Ayse Ferda Ocakcy introduced her lecture “The Health of Turkish Children and Education in Turkey” giving a start to the sequence of events dedicated to sharing international nursing experience. Oral presentations were delivered by forum participant nurses. The scientific committee received 150 applications for oral presentations from pediatric nurses; therefore, due to the large number of applications, the organizing committee decided to hold a poster session for pediatric nurses for the first time in the history of such events for nurses. At the forum, 26 poster presentations (11 were made by the nurses of the SCCH RAMS) were presented.

The program of the third forum was built in the form of training school (29 academic hours) and included 6 large sections as master classes. The third forum format was somewhat different from the 2 previous as it was opened with a plenary lecture by Vera Balabanova, Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology of the First Moscow State Medical University named after I. Sechenov, devoted to emotional burnout among nurses in pediatrics.

Statistical analysis of the results was performed using MS Excel and was descriptive.

Results

The pre-forum survey was conducted to gather the data about the initial situation of pediatric nurses’ disadvantages at work. The results revealed that dissatisfaction with salary and perceived work-related stress were considered by pediatric nurses as the main professional disadvantages (Table 2).

The results demonstrated that the respondents from various regions of the Russian Federation suggested the following ways of practice optimization: salary improvement, management of work-related stress, and professional improvement during formal (degree) and informal continuing education (conferences, courses, etc.) (Table 3).

The results of the post-forum survey showed that after 3 forums, the lack of information was reported by a 10-time smaller percentage of nurses in Arkhangelsk region (49% to 4.8%) and a 3-times smaller percentage of nurses in Krasnodar region (34% to 13.2%). The opinion of the respondents about limited career perspectives also improved in Arkhangelsk region (from 47% to 4.8%) and in Krasnodar region (from 41% to 11%) (Table 4).

Among the proposals for improving the situation at work, professional improvement during formal (college diploma and university degree) and informal continuing education (conferences, courses, etc.) was the most common proposal reported (Table 5).

The importance of participation in conferences for nurses also increased in comparison with the pre-forum survey data.

Discussion

The pre-forum survey helped responsible bodies identify the most important issues of pediatric nurses at work and arrange a relevant and need-based forum program. The issue of low salary was discussed during several sessions with decision-makers, the need for education improvement of nurses was highlighted in the lecture about modernization of

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents According to Their Responses About the Main Professional Disadvantages in Their Work (Results of the Pre-Forum Survey) (N=250)

Work Disadvantage	Region			
	Arkhangelsk	Khanty-Mansy	Krasnodar	Moscow
Low salary	205 (82.0)	110 (44.0)	108 (43.0)	24 (9.6)
Work-related stress	154 (61.5)	118 (47.0)	118 (47.0)	26 (10.4)
Lack of information	123 (49.0)	108 (43.0)	85 (34.0)	33 (13.2)
Limited career perspectives	118 (47.0)	103 (41.0)	108 (43.0)	63 (25.2)

Values are number (percentage).

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents According to Their Responses About Proposals for Improvement of Work-Related Situation (Results of the Pre-Forum Survey) (N=250)

Proposal	Region			
	Arkhangelsk	Khanty-Mansy	Krasnodar	Moscow
Salary increase	227 (9.0)	207 (83.0)	187 (75.0)	117 (46.8)
Work-related stress management	205 (82.0)	195 (78.0)	182 (73.0)	107 (42.8)
Professional improvement during education (formal and informal)	176 (71.0)	187 (75.0)	105 (42.0)	98 (39.2)

Values are number (percentage).

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents According to Their Responses About the Main Professional Disadvantages in Their Work (Results of the Post-Forum Survey) (N=250)

Work Disadvantage	Region		
	Arkhangelsk	Krasnodar	Moscow
Low salary	95 (38.1)	102 (41.0)	19 (7.6)
Work-related stress	59 (23.8)	95 (38.0)	36 (14.4)
Lack of information	12 (4.8)	33 (13.2)	3 (1.2)
Limited career perspectives	12 (4.8)	11 (4.4)	1 (0.4)

Values are number (percentage).

Table 5. Distribution of Respondents According to Their Responses About Proposals for Improvement of Work-Related Situation (Results of the Post-Forum Survey) (N=250)

Proposal	Region		
	Arkhangelsk	Krasnodar	Moscow
Professional improvement during education (formal and informal)	69 (27.6)	102 (41.0)	18 (7.2)
Participation in conferences	60 (24.0)	77 (31.0)	23 (9.2)
Interactions with colleagues and specialists	52 (21.0)	70 (28.0)	11 (4.4)

Values are number (percentage).

children's health care, and a professional psychiatrist held a master class on the professional burnout and stress resistance. The human factor is the most vital and critical of all organizational resources. Consequently, for optimum performance, the workforce needs to be regularly motivated and encouraged through incentives, which can be economic, material, and psychological in nature (9).

Most pediatric nurses reported professional stress as a disadvantage. Pediatric nurses have to find an approach to all pediatric patients and their parents because nurses spend most of their time dealing with small patients. For this reason, the forums included training in communication and consulting and enabled the identification of nurses' expectations and their understanding of communi-

cation issues with patients' parents. Consequently, nurses are willing to improve their communication with colleagues, to improve their education level, and to participate in conferences. The forums of Russian pediatric nurses provide them with appropriate opportunities.

The main problems of pediatric nurses at work were frequent stressful situations in teamwork and the lack of new and advanced information. Despite the fact that the study participants worked in an academic research institution, modern information technologies at work were not used by the majority of the nurses. They also did not participate in conferences but suggested continuing professional development as a means to optimize the work of nurses. It needs to be noted here that due to climatic

conditions in Krasnodar, there are many sanatoriums and recreation and wellness centers, where college level education is enough to work. This is the reason why nurses in Krasnodar are not as preoccupied about education improvement.

As part of the overall development project at the last forum, the FSBI "SCCH" RAMS nurses participating in the forums were able to hold master classes in the clinical departments of the Pediatrics Research Institute and the Research Institute of Preventive Pediatrics and Rehabilitation of the FSBI "SCCH" RAMS. During the lectures, the nursing process in endoscopic examinations and treatment and operative procedures as well as modern possibilities of immobilization and wound care supplies in traumatology and orthopedics were discussed. Those topics were followed by the innovative methods of medical instrument processing using the quality control of ultrasonic washing and cleaning tools. The knowledge about children's healthcare was improved with the lecture about the role of the nurse in a school of the prenatal prevention method "Sonatal." Other practical-scientific reports were dedicated to the issues of healthy lifestyle of children, parents' adaptation at the birth of a child with disabilities, nursing technology in organizing children's summer countryside holidays, children's food quality and safety, and the role of the nurse in reproductive health services.

The poster session was a key event of the second day and consisted of 34 presentations from Trans-Baikal, Barnaul, Arkhangelsk, and Vladimir regions. More than half of the presentations were given by pediatric nurses from the FSBI "SCCH" RAMS (18 reports). The topics included the introduction of new technologies in nursing of infants with extremely low birth weight, burnout syndrome in nurses, comprehensive care of children with cystic fibrosis in a day hospital, etc.

As a practical implication of those 3 forums, the Moscow initiative was adopted later on in some regions (Ekaterinburg, Krasnoyarsk, and Khanty-Mansy) where regional forums (instead of representation of those regions at the national level) were held with the participation of the FSBI "SCCH" RAMS nurses and enabled identification of work patterns in various regions. The dissemination of good practice and experience continued during the first forum of Ural pediatric nurses and Siberia pediatric nurses. It was decided to include healthcare specialists into conferences, to develop the educational program for

pediatric nurses, and to improve the involvement of nurses into scientific research (data collection and processing). The example of those forums proves the importance of interprofessional collaboration for the realization of ideas that allowed joining the efforts of pediatricians and nurses to improve care provided to children effectively.

As a result of this study, the survey instrument was improved as well. The first version did not include the possibility to answer "I am satisfied with my work totally," and soon this option will be added to the new version of the questionnaire as there have been many efforts and actions done to satisfy pediatric nurses at work.

In order to provide nurses with information and to familiarize them with the scientific activities of the FSBI "SCCH" RAMS, the web page "Pediatric Nurse" was created. The Standing Committee of Pediatric Nurses was established according to the Charter of the Union of Pediatricians of Russia. Its main objectives are educational programs for pediatric nurses and share of experience across the regions.

Conclusions

Professional development sessions, organized for Russian nurses in the form of 3 national forums, helped identify the main disadvantages at pediatric nurses' work and possible solutions for improvement. The results suggested that in practice, there should be a regular promotion of nurses as well as encouragement and opportunities for educational advancement and informational support.

The educational platform led by the specialists of the Federal State Budgetary Institution "Scientific Centre of Children Health" under the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences created the opportunity for nursing professionals to discuss practical and educational issues, to be more informed, and to share good practices in regions, thus, improving the situation at pediatric nurses' work. The example of forums proves the importance of interprofessional collaboration for the realization of ideas that allowed joining the efforts of pediatricians and nurses to improve the factors for nurses' work satisfaction.

Similar surveys have to be wider employed for the investigation of nursing practice in the Russian Federation.

Statement of Conflict of Interest

The authors state no conflict of interest.

Rusijos vaikų slaugytojų profesinis tobulinimasis: daugiaprofesinis požiūris

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Raktažodžiai: profesinis tobulinimasis, vaikų slaugytojai, profesinis rengimas, daugiaprofesinis požiūris, Rusijos Federacija.

Santrauka. Įvadas. Rusijos Federacijos sveikatos priežiūros modernizacija susijusi su materialinės ir techninės bazės stiprinimu, aprūpinimu informacinėmis technologijomis ir vaikų sveikatos priežiūros specialistų tobulinimusi. Įgyvendinant šį tikslą, Rusijos pediatrų asociacijos taryba vaikų slaugytojams surengė mokslinius praktinius forumus, kurie vyko kartu su metiniu Pediatrų kongresu.

Straipsnio tikslas – išanalizuoti Rusijos vaikų slaugytojų atsiliepimus apie forumus ir aptarti jų svarbą slaugytojų darbui.

Medžiaga ir metodai. Vaikų slaugytojams ($N=250$) iš keturių Rusijos regionų gydymo ir švietimo įstaigų buvo išdalytos anoniminės anketos tuo metu, kai jie dalyvavo pirmajame forume 2011 m. 2013 m. po trečiojo forumo apklausa buvo pakartota, apklausti tų pačių trijų regionų vaikų slaugytojai, išskyrus vieną regioną, kuris nebuvo įtrauktas. Vaikų slaugytojų buvo klausama apie neigiamus profesinės jų veiklos aspektus ir prašyta pateikti rekomendacijas padėčiai gerinti.

Rezultatai. Dauguma vaikų slaugytojų įvardijo šias darbo problemas: maži atlyginimai ir profesinis stresas. Kas ketvirtas slaugytojas, dalyvavęs forume iš Maskvos regiono, nurodė stokojantis karjeros galimybių. Po trečiojo forumo dešimt kartų mažesnis skaičius vaikų slaugytojų iš Archangelsko regiono (nuo 49,0 iki 4,8 proc.) ir beveik tris kartus mažesnis skaičius slaugytojų iš Krasnodaro regiono (nuo 34,0 iki 13,2 proc.) jautė informacijos stygių. Vaikų slaugytojai iš Archangelsko regiono (nuo 47,0 iki 4,8 proc.) ir Krasnodaro regiono (nuo 41,0 iki 11,0 proc.) buvo geresnės nuomonės apie karjeros galimybes.

Išvados. Profesinio tobulinimosi renginiai – nacionaliniai forumai, organizuoti Rusijos vaikų slaugytojams, padėjo išaiškinti svarbiausias profesinės veiklos problemas ir jų galimus sprendimus. Daugiaprofesinis bendradarbiavimas, sujungus vaikų ligų gydytojų ir slaugytojų pastangas, padėjo pagerinti vaikų slaugytojų darbo veiksnius.

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