

EDITORIAL

Nursing Around the World – What We Learn and What We Achieve during 2020

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Nurses and midwives play a vital role in providing health services. These are the people who devote their lives to caring for mothers and children, giving lifesaving immunizations and health advice, looking after older people and generally meeting everyday essential health needs. They are often the first and only point of care in their communities. The world needs 9 million more nurses and midwives if it is to achieve universal health coverage by 2030. That is why the World Health Assembly has designated 2020 the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife (1).

The year 2020 has been a unique opportunity to introduce nursing science and nursing leaders to the public. However, this year has become a professional test for both current and future nurses, midwives and other healthcare professionals. And this global test has been given to us by COVID 19 infection. All countries have to adjust their priorities, reorganize the healthcare system and the educational process. Therefore, our life has had to move into cyber space and isolation.

Thus, the year 2020 has been truly exceptional not only because of the global focus on the nursing and midwifery profession, but also because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected the life and health of more than 1 million people across the world. Undoubtedly, healthcare systems have also been affected, and, of course, healthcare providers such as nurses are fighting on the frontlines to safeguard the lives of everyone affected.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director General, has stated in his report: “Nurses are the backbone of any health system. Today, many nurses find themselves on the frontline in the battle against Covid-19” (1).

During this difficult time, nurses have to re-orient themselves quickly, learn new skills needed to work in extreme conditions, and often remember leadership. Scholars from the United Arab Emirates have conducted an integrative review. The aim of the integrative review has highlighted the issues that affect nurses on the frontlines who fight and respond to COVID-19 (2). Researchers have

analyzed articles published by scientists from various countries (China, Spain, Australia, USA, Iran) since the beginning of the pandemic. The analysis has revealed that the main issues that affect nurses on the frontlines are lack of critical care resources, challenge of early recognition, crisis in management, nurses’ nervousness and anxiety, staff shortages, increase in the number of patients, and severe shortage of personal protective equipment.

A global pandemic needs strong nursing staff engagement in clinical management, awareness and knowledge exchange, as well as public safety. Nurses hold a vital function, as one of the most distinguished health service teams, in delivering public awareness regarding disease prevention and in decreasing the dissemination of myths to about the epidemic (3).

In 2020, *the State of the World’s Nursing 2020: Investing in Education, Jobs and Leadership* was prepared and published, providing data from 191 countries (4). The reported message is clear: governments need to invest in a massive acceleration of nursing education, creation of nursing jobs, and leadership. Without nurses, midwives, and other health workers, countries cannot win the battle against outbreaks, or achieve universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals.

So what have we achieved and what have we learned? 2020 has given nurses the opportunity to be visible in their professional field and to use all skills and competencies, giving them the opportunity to take the lead in providing care in extreme conditions.

And I think the most important lesson learned by nurses in 2020 is social responsibility and awareness towards oneself and society.

References

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