The Unique Role of the Nurse in the Health Care System

By

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Introduction

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Preamble

❖ It is with humility and immense gratitude to Almighty God that I stand on this podium, representing the Department of Nursing, Faculty of Clinical, University of Ibadan, to deliver today’s induction lecture.

❖ This is the third of this series of lectures delivered to the graduands of the Department of Nursing, College of Health Sciences of this great institution, Igbinedion University, Okada, Edo State.
INTRODUCTION

❖ You will recall that the Department of Nursing was established in 2006. The first induction lecture titled “Graduate Nurses in Contemporary Health care System: challenges and prospects” was given by Prof. Mildred John of the University of Calabar. The title continues changing in line with the demands of society.

❖ Today’s lecture titled ‘The Unique Role of the Nurse in the Health care System” is an appropriate choice for this occasion as it will attempt to delineate the traditional and expanded roles of the nurse in the continuously evolving system of knowledge on disease aetiologies, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.
Introduction

❖ The practice of nursing has been debated and discussed for decades. Often, organization executives and physicians are at the helm of these talks, attempting to define our role and justify our work financially.

❖ Adding to the confusion of credentials and titles, an array of healthcare personnel perform tasks that are also frequently performed by nurses, wear nurses’ uniform, and even answer when called “nurse.”
Introduction

❖ To make matters worse, when nurses are called upon to clarify our role, we have problems in clearly articulating the unique work of nursing; that is, the work outside of such basic tasks as administering medications and other treatments, documenting care, and communicating with team members.
Introduction

• A nurse is someone who has been educated for a specified number of years, passed the qualifying nursing examination and is fully registered by the board (eg Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria, NMCN), to practice Nursing in such a country. Focus of training is on meeting deficiencies in health demands of clients and their families, either within or outside organized health settings.
Image of a nurse and her client/patient
Introduction

❖ Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings.

❖ It includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people. Hence nurses are to be found in a large variety of specialties where they work both independently and as part of a team to assess, plan, implement and evaluate care. (ICN, 2002)
Introduction

- In today’s rapidly changing health care environment, the nursing role is becoming less traditional and increasingly diverse.
- As the professional disciplines are called on to provide expanded and more diverse health care services in a wide variety of settings, the traditional structure of provider roles is being challenged.
Introduction

- Moreover, most people do not appreciate nurses’ responsibilities, they are commonly labelled doctors’ assistants. This paper tries to clarify such misconceptions by discussing the unique roles and responsibilities of the nurse in healthcare system.

- Nursing is responding to this challenge by examining the nature of the professional role, exploring its underlying values and identity, and adapting it to better meet the needs of a dynamic health care system (Delgado, Zschaebitz and Friberg, 2019).
INTRODUCTION

- Nurses also have to be technologically savvy while demonstrating cost efficiency as they provide quality care. Nurses are not just at the bedside anymore, recording vital signs and dispensing medicine; instead they are taking on positions of greater responsibility.
- Being a nurse is about executing a number of roles in service to health and health care that are intertwined with the identity, talents, and values of each individual. That is, nurses are defined by the roles they play and their personal identity, which provides the substance and motivation for their work.
Introduction

❖ When this complex tangle of role, identity and nursing practice is mechanized, the meaning of being a nurse is diminished.

❖ On the other hand, the professional alignment of role and identity leads to personal and professional happiness; hence understanding the nature of role and identity and their interconnection is essential in evaluating the roles played by professional nurses (Delgado, Zschaebitz and Friberg, 2016).

❖ This is even more important for the inductees, as it will serve as their professional guide.
Unique roles of the nurse

• In the beginning, nursing care was provided by men and women serving punishment.

• This changed when Florence Nightingale, a well-educated woman from a middle class family, defied social conventions and became a nurse.

• She improved nursing ethics and practice drastically and it became accepted as a respectable profession.
Mother of Professional Nursing

Florence Nightingale

- Nursing is the act of utilizing the environment of the patient to assist him in his recovery.
Roles of the nurse

❖ Distinct from the stereotypes portrayed in the media and television, the actual roles nurses play are uniquely multifaceted.

❖ The scope of these roles has been controversial since Florence Nightingale first examined the role of nursing in her publication *Notes on Nursing: What It Is and What It Is Not* (1860).
Introduction

• The wisdom and vision of Nightingale were clear as she refrained from pigeonholing the profession in the context of time and space: “I do not pretend to teach her how, I ask her to teach herself, and for this purpose I venture to give her some hints” (Nightingale 1860, p. 8)
Unique Roles of the nurse

❖ Nightingale saw nursing as an art, and as such, the various roles in nursing as multilayered and fluid, defined by the context and demands of the environment in which that nurse works.

❖ Thus the nurse was seen as an agent who manipulates the environment to make it therapeutic for client, thereby facilitating care
INTRODUCTION

❖ The uniqueness of nursing in client management was equally observed by the early nursing theorist, Virginia Henderson.

❖ She contended that ‘the unique function of the nurse is to assist the individual, sick or well, in the performance of those activities contributing to health or its recovery, or to a peaceful death, that he would perform unaided if he had the necessary strength, will or knowledge,’ (Henderson, 1966).
Unique Roles of the Nurse

❖ In Virginia Henderson’s need theory, she mainly emphasized on increasing the patient’s independence so that their progress after hospitalization would not be delayed.

❖ She laid emphasis on basic human needs as the central focus of nursing practice which has led to further theory development regarding the needs of the person and how nursing can assist in meeting those needs.
Unique roles of the nurse

❖ She described the role of the nurse as substitutive (doing for the person), supplementary (helping the person), and complementary (working with the person), keeping in the mind the primary objective of the person’s independence at the earliest.
Roles of the nurse in the health care system

- Within the health care system, nurses mainly focus on helping patients meet their needs including emotional, social, physical, cognitive & spiritual.

- Nurses play multiple roles in healthcare and hospitals depending on the unique needs of the patient at a time. The following are its role in healthcare:
Functions and internal characteristics of the nursing profession (Delgado, Zschaebitz and Friberg, 2016.)
Roles of the Nurse

Communication

❖ Effective communication in the healthcare system is necessary as it can improve outcomes in the healthcare environment.

❖ The nurse has the responsibility of communicating with the patient and clears their doubt because if the communication is not effective, the healing process will be inhibited.
Patient’s Safety

• Nurses play a vital role in patient safety. After the doctor’s visit or diagnoses, it’s the nurse’s duty to prevent medication errors and ensure patients receive the correct treatment.

• In the case of fall or skin breakdowns, her responsibility is to provide proper safeguards as well as document the incident (TrioTree Technology, 2016).
A nurse is a caregiver for patients and helps to manage physical needs, prevent illness, and treat health conditions. To do this, they need to observe and monitor the client, recording any relevant information to aid in treatment decision-making.

Throughout the treatment process, the nurse follows the progress of the patient and acts accordingly with the patient’s best interests.
Caregiver roles

❖ They are responsible for the holistic care of patients, which encompasses the psychosocial, developmental, cultural, and spiritual needs of the individual (Yolanda, 2019). Nurses take care of their patients in hospitals like a mother takes care of their children.
Care giver roles contd

❖ Healthcare should address a patient’s cultural, spiritual and mental needs. Increasing diversity in a growing patient population requires nurses to demonstrate cultural awareness and sensitivity.

❖ Patients may have specific needs and preferences due to their religion or gender, for example.
Care-giver (Caring and compassion)

○ Compassion is that which makes the heart move at the pain of others. It crushes and destroys the pain of others (Delgado, Zschaebitz and Friberg, 2016).

○ If the act of caregiving drives the health care delivery role, compassion is an essential identity characteristic that guides
Leininger 1996 opined the nursing profession is grounded in the phenomenon of caring. Leininger became convinced of the need for a theoretical framework to discover, explain, and predict dimensions of care and developed culture care theory, the only nursing theory that focuses on culture.
Similarly, Jean Watson’s theory of caring describes the scientific basis of nursing as extending beyond human interaction, to a moral concern for preserving human dignity and respect for the wholeness of the care recipient (Child’s 2006). Both of these theories demonstrate the link between the caregiver role and the identity characteristics of compassion and empathy.
Care-giver (Caring and compassion)

• Caring is an essential feature of the profession, one that is central to a nurse’s identity and that serves to facilitate health and healing:

• “The culture of caring, as a fundamental part of the nursing profession, characterizes both concern and consideration for the whole person, a commitment to the common good and health of all, and outreach to those who are vulnerable.”

( National League of Nurses)
Patient Education and Support: Learning and Guiding

❖ Nurses are also responsible for ensuring that patients are able to understand their health, illnesses, medications, and treatments to the best of their ability. This is of essence when patients are discharged.

❖ They should also make sure that the patient feels supported and knows where to seek additional information.
Patient Education and Support: Learning and Guiding

❖ Providers are using new types of machines and applications every day. Medicine is becoming personalized requiring nurses to instruct patients about medical apps that can enhance traditional care.
Patient Education and Support: Learning and Guiding

- Patients can now use apps to monitor their glucose, track their blood pressure or access helpful information (Arkansas State University, 2017).

- The role of educator in the profession of nursing is based on the desire to help individuals and communities grow. The nurse in this role can actively teach and guide patients, families, and communities about health/wellness and illness—about living and dying.
Patient’s Advocate

❖ The patient is the first priority of the nurse. The role of the nurse is to advocate for the best interests of the patient and to maintain the patient’s dignity throughout treatment and care.
Act as a Patient’s Advocate

❖ Every patient or client has the right to receive just, equal, and humane treatment.

❖ Current health care system offers de-personalised and fragmented services. Many clients who are poor and disadvantaged are frustrated and the nurse becomes an advocate for clients pleading their cause and acting on their behalf.
Act as a Patient’s Advocate

- This is particularly important because patients who are unwell are often unable to comprehend medical situations and act as they usually would.
- It is the role of the nurse to support the patient and represent the patient’s best interests at all times, especially when treatment decisions are being made, in collaboration with other health professionals.
Act as a Patient’s Advocate

❖ Help clients gain more independence and self-determination
❖ Make the system more responsive and relevant to the needs of clients
Planning of Care

❖ A nurse is directly involved in the decision-making process for the treatment of patients.
❖ As other health professionals, such as doctors or specialists, are usually in charge of making the final treatment decisions, nurses should be able to communicate information regarding patient health effectively.
Specialists

• By choosing the appropriate medical specialization, nurses can address complications related to diabetes, obesity, heart problems, kidney disease and dementia.
Researcher—Inquiring and Discovering

❖ The role of a researcher in the nursing profession is vital for generating new knowledge to underpin nursing practice, clinical care, and public health.

❖ As both a caring art and scientific enterprise, nursing has an obligation to provide care that is continually examined through research. (ICN, 2009).
Researcher—Inquiring and Discovering

❖ The nurse applies research at the bedside by providing interventions that are based on current evidence.

❖ At an advanced level, the role of nurse as a researcher is fundamental to improving patient care and public health by defining research questions and designing scientific studies to answer them.
Colleague—Collaborating and Connecting

❖ This process includes writing grants, analyzing data, and sharing findings with the larger health care community.

❖ The role of nurse as colleague is not only essential to collaborative clinical and research practices, but integral to the team process in dynamic health care.
At the heart of being a colleague is the ability not only to cooperate, but also to actively collaborate. Collaboration is a multifaceted process of working together to accomplish a common goal; it involves a mix of differing viewpoints to better comprehend a challenging issue.
Colleague—Collaborating and Connecting

• An example of an important new arena for collaborative practice for nursing is the rapid advance of telehealth as a critical vehicle for health care delivery, especially in rural underserved communities.
Colleague—Collaborating and Connecting

• Through telehealth, colleagues provide medical, nursing, or other health care to a remote location

• This is collaborative practice in its highest form, because the role of the nurse in this setting is to leverage technology and nursing expertise to provide quality health care (Cattel-Gordon, 2009)
Manager—Leading, Inspiring, Thinking Critically

Fundamental to nursing practice is the role of nurse leader as manager. It involves pulling together people with the common goal of caregiving.

It requires a systematic way of providing care, a precise tending to details, and working from a comprehensive assessment and plan, as well as engaging colleagues in compassionate, collaborative, interdisciplinary practice.
Manager—Leading, Inspiring, Thinking Critically

- A nurse, for example, in caring for a dying patient, needs to know the critical point when the family should be called, how to manage the medications, when to touch and not to touch, when to be silent, and when not to do anything but be present.

- This role calls for the nurse to manage care and demonstrate leadership, seeing the whole and the part—the individual patient and the whole of the process of dying (Delgado, Zschaebitz and Friberg, 2016).
Manager—Leading, Inspiring, Thinking Critically

• Authentic leadership, is like the “glue’ needed to hold together a healthy work environment. (McCauley, )
Mentor—Sharing and Role Modeling

• Mentoring refers to a formal or informal process in which a mentor and a mentee establish a relationship with the mutual goal of meeting the career goals of the mentee (Bally, 2007).

• One of the roles of a mentor is to be true to oneself and guide another to greater personal awareness and skills. It is crucial to retaining and encouraging nurses in the workplace.
Mentor—Sharing and Role Modeling

• It’s been documented that the initial 3 months of a newly graduated nurse’s transition is vital to long-term success in the profession (Winfeild, Melo & Myrick, 2009).
Mentor—Sharing and Role Modeling

- Mentoring another nurse is a professional means of passing along knowledge, skills, behaviors and values to a less experienced individual” (NLN, 2006)
- Our today’s inductees need mentoring from experienced professional colleagues in order to learn new roles, skills that will improve their competences and facilitate adjustment.
- Ultimately clients’ care will be optimized and sustainable health system goals achieved.
Expanding Roles- Informatics

* Nursing informatics is a field of nursing that incorporates nursing, computer, and information sciences to maintain and develop medical data and systems to support the practice of nursing, and to improve patient care outcomes.

* Technologies evolved are: nursing reports, diagnostic test results, progress notes
Expanding Roles- Informatics
Expanding Roles - Ambulatory Care nurse

• An ambulatory care nurse is a nursing professional that treats clients seeking routine medical care for acute and chronic illnesses as well as injuries, usually outside of a hospital setting. They work on out patient clinics that do not admit clients.

• These nurses are highly intelligent, versatile and with very good critical thinking skill in order make sound clinical decisions.
Telehealth Nursing

❖ Telehealth nursing is a sub-specialty within ambulatory care nursing.

❖ It uses the nursing process to provide nursing care and make health care accessible to individual clients/community over the telephone.

❖ Practice occurs in multiple health care settings.
Nurse–led Clinics

• Also a sub-specialty of ambulatory care. A nurse-led clinic is any outpatient clinic that is managed by a registered nurse, usually with a master’s degree.

• Emerged over the years but more emphasis now in order to cope with the increasing number clients with chronic Non Communicable Diseases (NCD).
Nurse-led Clinics

• Nurse-led clinics typically focus on chronic conditions where regular follow-up and expertise is required, but also where a patient may not necessarily need to see a physician at every visit.

• Most nurse-led clinics use nursing theory and knowledge to educate patients and form care plans to manage their conditions.
Nurse-led Clinics

• Evidence show that adult clients with type 11 diabetes mellitus, hypertension and hyperlipidemia have better control in nurse led clinics either within or other conventional health centers (New et. al 2003; Denver et. al, 2003; Wong & Chung, 2006)
Genetics and Genomics: Nursing Roles

- Genetics is the study of single genes and their role in the way traits or conditions are passed from one generation to the next.
- Genomics describes the study of all parts of an organism's genes.
- Nurses need to understand the relationship of genetics and genomics to health, prevention, screening and treatment.
Genetics and Genomics Nursing

❖ Nurses need the skills to gather family history, identify hereditary risk, and make appropriate referrals for genetic consultation and testing. (use of pedigree- family tree)

❖ Nurses play a lot of role on genetic counselling
“Nursing Now” – Recent global trend

- A three year global campaign that aims to improve health by raising the profile and status of nursing worldwide.
- Run in collaboration with the World Health Organization and the International Council of Nurses (ICN)
- Seeks to empower nurses to take their place at the heart of tackling 21st Century health challenges and maximize their contribution to achieving Universal Health Coverage.
Nursing Now-Focus

❖ Ensuring that nurses and midwives have a more prominent voice in health policy-making;
❖ Encouraging greater investment in the nursing workforce
❖ Recruiting more nurses into leadership positions
❖ Conducting research that helps determine where nurses can have the greatest impact; and sharing of best nursing practices.
❖ Achievement of all these will make nursing more visible
Implications of the Role expansion

Nursing Education;

❖ Higher degrees in Nursing. Increase in knowledge from diverse areas will empower nurses and facilitate adaptation to the roles

❖ Curricular Review: All nursing curricular will be reviewed to add information on new areas like genome, informatics, in line with technological advancement.
Implications

Clinical Nursing:

❖ Review of nursing practice in line with changes
❖ Flexibility in accepting new roles
❖ Become more proactive in initiating and conducting research.
❖ Care should be evidenced based
Implications: Nursing Research

❖ Generate research ideas and conduct research
❖ Apply for research grants
❖ Publish articles in local and international peer reviewed journals

All nurses should be **proactive in politics** in order to influence policies concerning their roles.
Implications – Health Care Systems / policy makers

❖ Encourage nurses by supporting their educational advancement
❖ Award scholarship to outstanding nurses
❖ Outstanding financial remuneration (salary) to nurses with advanced academic achievement in line with other health workers.
Implications - Health Care System/ Policy makers

❖ Involve nurses in institutional policy issues
❖ Allow nurses to perform expanding roles and functions in line global trends
❖ Nursing consultants role become established (WACN fellows)
❖ Discourage gender based discrimination
Conclusions

• Florence Nightingale and Virginia Henderson were among the visionary leaders in the past who greatly influenced nursing practice and contributed much to the improvement of nursing status worldwide.

• Though nursing have a lot of definitions, yet it’s role centers on caring of the clients as a holistic being.
Conclusions

• Nurses also assume variety of roles and functions such as caregiver, leader, change agents, teacher, manager, case manager, counselor, client advocate, research consumer and more contemporary roles keep emerging. This calls for action by professional nurses in meeting the needs of the patients.
Conclusions

Dear inductees, the sky is no longer the limit, but the beginning for nurses. Nurses are well sought after all over the world, and there are variety of roles you can play to achieve your dream, optimise client care, as well as organizational goals.

There are many pitfalls to the journey, but do not be discouraged.

Be determined and persistent and through mentoring you’ll develop strategies to conquer them.
Sky is no longer the limit: Follow your dreams even if they are as distant as the moon: Sveetlana Lazereva (2015)
Conclusions

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Permit me to end with words of the scripture: Proverbs 3: 5-6
Trust in the Lord with all your heart, do not lean on your own understanding. Acknowledge Him in all your ways and He will direct your paths.
THANK YOU

Thank you for Listening!