4 Safety
A safe profession

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Is nursing a profession

- Nursing requires specialised knowledge and skill preparation
- There is continuing debate over whether nursing is or is not a profession

Question:
- Is nursing a profession?
Is nursing a profession?

Four criticisms of nursing being a profession

1. **Limited body of knowledge that has been tested and identified as underlying nursing practice**
   - We have not developed our nursing theories to guide our practice
   - Most of us have no known nursing theory underpinning our practice
   - Where are the nursing theories in your workplace?
   - What nursing theory underpins your practice?
Is nursing a profession?

Pioneer nursing theorists:
- Roy – Adaptation (coping with stimuli)
- Henderson - Caring and death with dignity
- Orem - Self care
- Rogers – Open systems, energy field
- Nightingale - Environment

New nursing theorists:
Pender, Watson, King, Newman, Peplau

- Nurse/nursing, man, health, environment, health promotion, line of defense, caring, body image, dependency
2. Made of segmented work groups who have varying amounts of education, hold varying sets of values, and express varying concerns

- RN: 2-4 year programs, Certificate, Diploma, or Degree (sometimes all in one country)
- Midwife: 1yr, 1½yr, 2 yr, 3 yr, 4 yr
- Assistive Personnel (most are unregulated)
  Enrolled Nurses, LPN, LVN; Assistant nurses - CNA
  Untrained and trainee nursing assistants,
  Nursing, health and community aides,
  Practical or bedside nurse attendants
Is nursing a profession?

3. The occupation possesses no common mode of thought in viewing its work

The ‘nursing process’ is the universal language of nursing

- Is it used in our daily practice?
- Do we assess, plan, implement and evaluate?
- Is the process the same in all our institutions?
- Is the process the same the world over?
Is nursing a profession?

4. The educational base is not extensive enough to warrant professional status

- Aim of the training is to provide a beginning level practitioner in nursing.
- Question: Is the graduate RN able to meet the terminal objectives of the curriculum and training and be a safe practitioner?
Criteria of a profession

1. Education  (theory and practice)

- Has a theoretical body of knowledge leading to defined skills (nursing has this)

- Knowledge is based on extensive education
  (For nursing it is usually accepted to be about 3 years of university/college study, but there is a great deal of variation in the training)
2. Regulation: regulates itself and practice

- Protects its members and make it safe for them to practice effectively
- Has laws - set of legal rules of practice
  - Nursing acts and regulations (not in all countries); labour and other laws, eg tort law, criminal law, occupational health and safety law
- Credentialling, examination, licensure, registration
- Standards - professional practice, performance appraisal
- Scope of practice delineated
Criteria of a profession

- Competence and competencies
  - Basic education using set curricula and methodology
  - Continuing education and skill acquisition
  - Certification and re-certification

- Welfare and morale - salaries, benefits, fees, prestige, titles
Criteria of a profession

3. Research

- Advances knowledge in its field
- Validates professional practice and its outcomes
- Emphasises the generation of knowledge and policies to guide the effective and efficient delivery of services
- Provides ethical guidelines for the delivery of services
- Supports systems that effectively and efficiently prepare people to fulfill their profession’s current and future social mandate
- Is an important management tool
Criteria of a profession

Research as it applies to nursing

- In large measure, nursing would fail this criterion; they do not conduct enough research to validate their practice.
- Where is the nursing research done by nurse managers and clinicians to guide practice?
- What is the basis (evidence) for ordering supplies?
- What is the basis (evidence) for nursing decisions?
4. **Code of Ethics**

- ICN Code of Ethics for Nurses contain professional standards that guide practice
- Most countries have adopted or adapted the ICN Code of Ethics for Nurses
- Do we know the Code of Ethics?
- Do we practice by the Code of Ethics?
  
  (Nurses and people; Nurses and the profession; Nurses and society; Nurses and co-workers)
5. **Autonomy**

   Means: self-directing, assertive, initiative-taking, independent decision-making

   - Nursing is an autonomous, self governing profession. *Is it?*
   - Nursing is a distinct scientific discipline with many autonomous practice features. *Is it?*
   - Who speaks for and lead nursing? *Nurses?*
6. Values

- Competence
- Commitment
- Prestige
- Trustworthiness

(For nursing: beneficience, non-maleficence, honesty, empathy)
7. **Altruism**

Means: service not for gain (does not mean that persons should not be paid for their work, but there should be a measure of community service)

- Philanthropy - voluntary giving
- Volunteerism
- Providing a needed service to society
  (Nurses do volunteer in their various church, school work institutions and community organisations)
Criteria of a Profession

8. Professional Associations
   (National, Regional, International)

All professions have Professional Associations

- Miller (1991): A key to the model for professionalism is participation in the professional organization
- ICN Code: “through your professional organization........”

For nursing: What is the level of participation?
For associations: What is the level of performance?
Nursing’s Verdict

- **Profession - Is nursing a profession?**
  Nursing has many of the criteria and frameworks for a profession. However it fails in many areas to manifest these in totality.

- **Safe profession - Is nursing a safe profession?**
  We need to examine what would be the features of a safe nursing profession and the extent to which nursing would qualify.
Features of a safe profession

Delivery of services are:

- Client-focused
- Outcomes oriented
- Well-planned
- Responsive
- Interactive
- Safe
Features of a safe profession

- Acknowledges the rights of the broader community to receive safe and high quality nursing care
- Provides an opportunity for the client to choose and help decide service options, involving patients and their families in decisions about their care
- Treats all people with whom they have contact in the course of work fairly and courteously. This includes peers, subordinates, staff, students, and managers
- Fosters an environment in which staff are valued, their skills and talents recognised and utilised
Features of a safe profession

- Adopts ethical management and practice
  - reports fairly and honestly on staff performance
  - fair recommendations for promotion, training
- Accountable in the use of all resources (wastage, pilfering, damage, maintenance)
- Involves staff in the financial planning and costing of care
- Provides reporting on monies spent
- Fosters collaborate partnerships which achieve the best outcomes for clients (with other health workers)
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Features of a safe profession

- Forms partnerships (pools resources)
- Is unified - a voice, not a whisper or an echo
- Provides leadership and mentoring
- Delegates safely
- Advocates for patients
- Advocates for students (curriculum, stipend and other issues)
- Advocates for self (safe workplace, remuneration, career paths, ongoing education)
- Provides opportunities for entrepreneurship
- Develops new career paths (nurse lawyers, historians, lawyers, researchers)