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ABSTRACT

Inter-professional collaboration is a process and also a method of peace building amongst the various professionals in the health sector. These include medical doctors, Nurses, Pharmacist, Laboratory Scientist and others. How the Nurse who stands at the centre of these professionals foster the peace building to better the health of the patient is what this paper is all about.

OBJECTIVE

To evaluate how the Nurse should be able to initiate and foster a peaceful relationship between the different professional groups in the hospital's setting in order to achieve a high quality of care to patients.

METHOD

Personal interview method was used to gather information for the write-up, Nurses, Doctors, Pharmacists, Laboratory Scientists as well as patients and Health assistance were personally interviewed to get the opinions on the subject matter.

RESULT

Findings revealed that Nurses are much positioned to foster inter-professional team work due to their humble disposition. Out of 40 personnel interviewed, 35 of them were of the opinion that if others cooperate with Nurses, collaboration would be highly effective.

INTRODUCTION

Inter-Personal Collaboration in our health care institutions involving the professionals such as Nurses, Medical Doctors, Pharmacists, Laboratory Scientists and others has been identified as an evident based strategy that strengthens health care outcome. In fact, working together brings about delivery of the highest quality of care to the patients. Some see the concept as a process while others see it as method.

World Health Organization (WHO) defined inter-professional team work or collaboration as a situation where multiple healthcare workers from different professional background work together with patients, caregivers, families and the community to deliver the highest quality of care. This situation is made possible when these professionals assume complimentary role and co-operate to work together sharing responsibilities towards solving problems.

Since IPC has already been seen as a method of peace building among the professionals, how then can the Nurse foster this collaboration? Nurses are essential in fostering collaboration in the hospital, the Nurse is a key member healthcare team who share patient specific information, advocates for patient needs and work alongside other professionals like the Physicians, Lab Scientists and others to improve the quality and safety of patient.

THE ROLE OF THE NURSE

How then can the Nurse initiate, sustain and foster collaboration among the professional groups in the healthcare system?

Patient Centered Communication:

Since the Nurse spends every hour with the patient, according to National Institute of Health (NIA) Nurses effectively communicate patient needs and responses to other team members, ensuring everyone has a complete understanding of the patient's condition.

ADVOCACY

Nurses are seen as advocates to patients, sharing their knowledge, insight and wisdom to develop the most suitable care plan that will be used to achieve a standard of care for him by involving other professionals.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

A particular Professional cannot know all in the issue of caring for a patient in the hospital setting. So, Nurses share their experiences and observations with other healthcare providers which help inform decisions and improve the collective knowledge base of the healthcare team.

BUILDING TRUST

Trust remains the key to collaboration and effective team work involving different professionals; through attentive listening and mutual respects, Nurses create an environment where other team members feel valued, fostering trust and willingness to exchange ideas.

COORDINATING CARE

Through the central position of the Nurse in the healthcare setting in the hospital, she coordinates by bridging communication gaps and advocating for comprehensive plans, nurses contribute to a more coordinated and efficient healthcare process by drawing the attention of the other professionals to meet the needs of the patient.

Benefits of a Nurse-led **Collaboration:**

There are so many benefits to the collaborative effect of the nurse in the hospital. They include:

Enhance Patient Safety:

Open communication amongst healthcare professionals reduces medical errors and increase patient's safety as issues of errors in prescriptions repeatedly happens in our hospital Wards.

Increased Efficiency:

When all team members work together effectively, the healthcare system functions more efficiently as the best in the area of prescription, medication and overall care of patient is given adequate attention.

Professional Satisfaction:

A collaborative environment where all members are respected and heard contributes to increased job satisfaction for healthcare professionals.

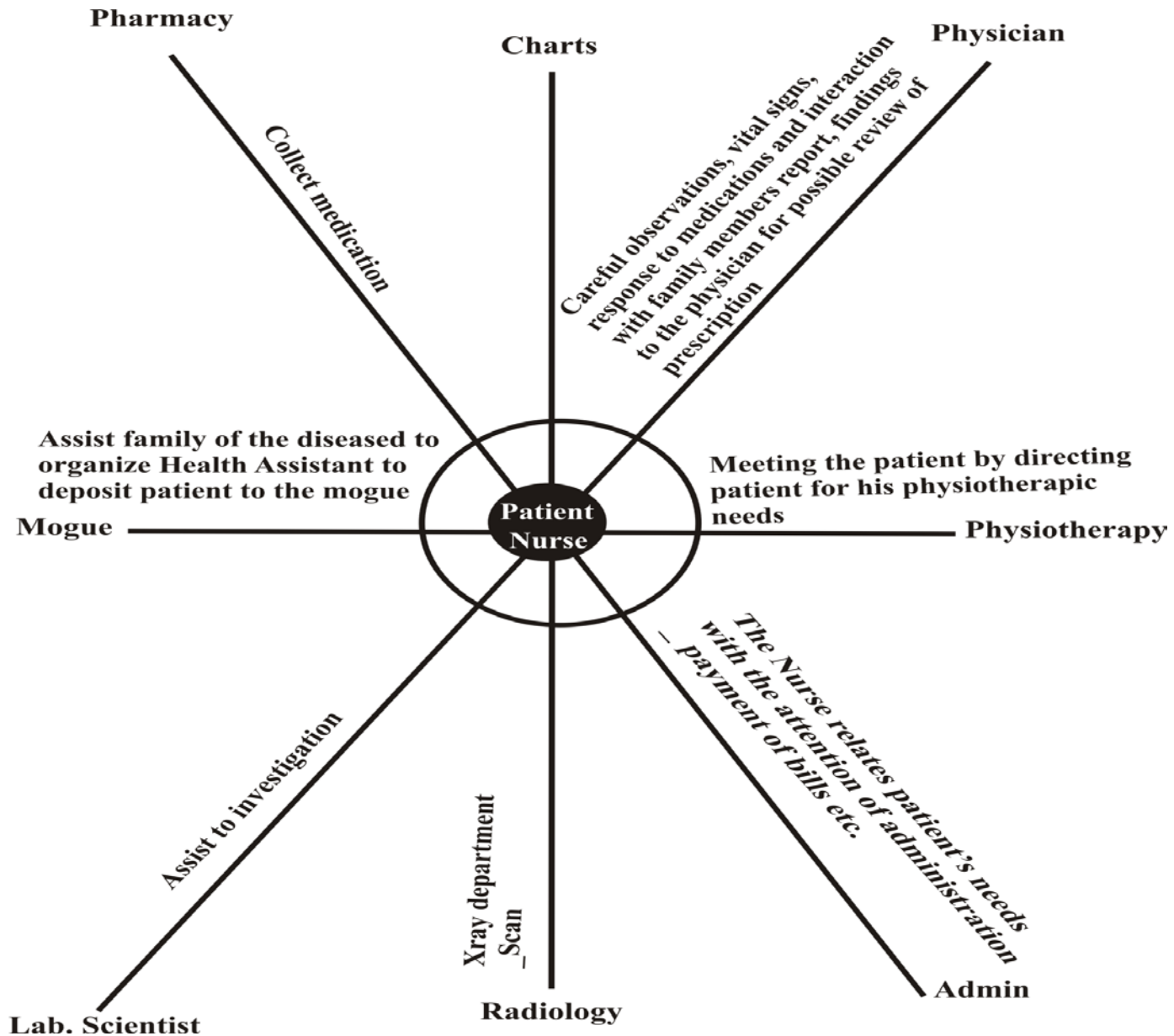
The Central Roles of Nurses:

Nurses are on the frontlines providing direct care, administering treatments and supporting patients with daily needs. This is only possible because the Nurse occupies a central and strategic position in the healthcare delivery system as without the nurse, there is no hospital.

The roles and functions of the Nurse is represented in the Chart below.

**Improves
patients
outcome:**

Collaborative care leads to more personalized treatment plans and better overall patient health.



Are there challenges of IPC
fostered by the Nurse?

The answer is yes.

A Nurse cannot foster IPC without challenges as systems issues like power imbalances, communication barrier, and lack of mutual respect among professions create significant hurdles even with a Nurse central and frontline position in the health system.

Hierarchy and Health Leadership:

Challenges:

The traditional hierarchical structure in the health system leads to power imbalance where Nurse's wisdom expertise and contributions are undervalued not even recognized by other professionals particularly medical officer. Today, the leadership structure is tilted towards one sided structure. Before 1985, leadership in the health care institutions was based on the most qualified professional to hold such office; administrators were heads of administrations but Decree 10 was promulgated for teaching hospitals to be headed by Chief Medical Directors (CMD) who must be a physician and the law trickled down to other health institutions where doctors head the administrative structure without the prerequisite qualification leaving the administrators answerable to them. Today the structure has led to conflict issues in the hospitals – Rosann (2002) posited that difference in attitude in inter-professional healthcare is about who is ultimately in charge could be a major problem to smooth healthcare delivery in Nigeria. Doctors are truly in charge in all medical interdisciplinary team work. They have occupied all leadership position both public and political and as such they may not cooperate with the Nurse in fostering inter-professional collaboration.

**Communication
breakdown:**

Ineffective communication skill or lack of open dialogue can result in misunderstanding, loss of critical information and sub-optimal patient care.

Lack of Cohesion and Trust:

Lack of trust among team members can hinder effective collaboration. This can come from individualistic approaches to problem-solving or a general lack of an environment for open question and discussion of such question.

**Inefficient
competencies:**

The Nurse may encounter
lack of sufficient
professional competences
or knowledge sharing
within the team, making it
difficult to build a friendly
collaboration plan of care.

TIME:

Lack of time is a barrier to collaboration and achievement of goals. Time must be given to all team members to collaborate including patients. But due to the shortage in Nursing profession, Nurses today have larger patient number to attend to providing for a limited amount of time to spend with patient, so it becomes so hard to leave the Nurse's core role of attending to patient to foster collaboration. Today the JAKPA Syndrome has complicated matters more.

Unions/Association:

Healthcare sector accommodates so many associations and unions all fighting for the welfare of their members.

The existence of multiplicity of unions and associations in the health sector has brought a lot of unhealthy rivalries and envy which has resulted in lack of time to promote collaborative effort. Unions like National Association of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives (NANNM), Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), Joint Health Workers Union (JOHESU), Medical and Health Workers (MHWUN) and a host others, all of them scheme to outwork the other in an attempt to draw the attention of government to meet the plight of members of their association.

In a sector where remuneration are approved to favour some of the unions against the other, e.g. COMESS is the salary structure for medical doctors as against COMHESS for the other health workers. These obnoxious salary structures has brought major conflicts and strikes in the health sector as most of the time, the need for one is in direct opposition to the other and makes dispute resolution not in anywhere near in Nigeria. In fact, the structure in Nigeria Healthcare Delivery favours dispute and conflict as Johesu demands are countered by NMA has been the issue in the health sector; even in 2014, this led to industrial action between Doctors and Nurses, Doctors and Pharmacists etc, not until government treat every profession the same,

industrial harmony will be difficult to achieve let alone collaborations.

Just recently, a professional clarification issue erupted in Lagos State where the association of Community Health Practitioners tend to challenge Nurse's position in the recruitment structure of Lagos State Primary Healthcare claiming that they are more educated than the nurse and as such must boss the in hierarchical structure of the organization (BIDI 2025)

CONCLUSION

Nurse's position in the healthcare delivery service is so strategic as her central roles and function makes her so suitable to initiate, unite, coordinate and collaborate with other professionals to achieve high quality of care to patients who stand to benefit from these processes. But despite the nurse's laudable position in the healthcare system, some social factors within the service tends to limit our efforts.

ADVICE

For the nurse to achieve and to be recognized with a strong voice in the team collaboration, she should embrace continuous education in under graduate and post graduate courses both in Nursing and other areas.

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