

STANDARDS AND ITS APPLICATION WITHIN NURSING PRACTICE

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Abstract

Healthcare is becoming progressively more expensive specially in the view of ever increasing technological developments, new demands for highly specialized staff training, changing facility requirements and increased consumer demands. We must strive to perform better and meet the challenging needs with our resources, which means we must organize and manage the available resources more carefully and furthermore, continually evaluate our performances. These activities eventually lead us back to the need for standards against which the performance must be measured.

Keywords:- Standards, Nursing Practice, Standard Maintenance.

What are Standards?

Avedis Donabedian defined Standards as, “Professionally developed expressions of the range of acceptable variations from a norm or a criterion”. He also defined Criteria as, “Pre-determined elements against which aspects of the quality of nursing services may be compared”. Norms, as defined by him states that they are, “Measure of usual observed performance”.

Concept of Standards:

According to Oxford dictionary the key concepts of definition of standards are:

- a. Standards of degree of excellence
- b. Standards serve as basis of basic comparison
- c. Standards are a minimum with which a community may be reasonably assessed.

Pre-Requisites for Standards:

Requirements prior to developing standards are:

- * The belief that they are desirable and useful
- * The will and knowledge to develop them
- * The resources for developing them and subsequently implementing and maintaining them
- * The ability to promote them once they are

established and to educate the potential users in them

- * The recognition that standards must be “tailor-made” if they are to serve well the specific constituency for which they are intended.

Types of Standards:

Donabedian directed standards towards structure, process and outcome.

- * Structure Standards apply to the things we use (human, financial and physical resources)
- * Process Standards apply to what we do (activities that constitute care service or management)
- * Outcome Standards address the results (both clinical and nonclinical) of how the resources have been utilized.

Steps of Standard Formulation:

The standards can be formulated by following the enlisted steps:

- * Organize small groups of nurses who work in the same field and meet periodically
- * Decide on the area of nursing practice for the standards to be established
- * Review philosophy, purposes and

- objectives of the institution
- * Review existing nursing care practices and processes and identify client, nursing service and their role & strategies for nursing care services
 - * Write the statements considering all the frame of reference giving rationale and criterion i.e. assessment indicators, see that the standards are relevant
 - * Discuss them with nursing service administrators for approval
 - * Devise a method for determining achievement of the standards formulated. For example through criteria checklist or patient's feedback etc.
 - * Determine the validity for giving to the experts.
 - * Try the formulated standards to determine their feasibility
 - * Further, standards are then put to practice and quality care is audited.
 - * Periodically update the formulated standards

Levels of Standards' Setting:

Enlisted below are the four levels of setting the standards:

- a. National and State
- b. Community
- c. Institutional, and
- d. Departmental

Uses of Standards:

Within the health care setting, standards are used in one of the three evaluation processes mentioned below:

- a. Self-assessment
- b. Inspection
- c. Accreditation

Self-assessment implies to the evaluation of one's own performance, whereas inspection usually infers to the official examination within the health care setting by experts. However, accreditation further involves a periodic visit from a regulated body or accreditor or their team, which may comprise of two, selected and trained members, who determine a facilities' level of

compliance against their set standards in order to accredit that particular institution or hospital for example.

Advantages of Standards in Nursing:

Nursing is a vast healthcare profession and hence a periodic review of our services against a set measures helps to improve the health care services, facilitating delivery of best possible amenities to the clients. Following can be listed as the advantages of standards in nursing:

- Helps in improving quality of nursing care
- Plays a pivotal role in evaluation of nursing care being provided
- Standards have provision of scientific and rationalized care with a definite direction.
- Supervision and performance appraisals. Attaining a distinct position by drawing a demarcating line as to how nursing is different and unique as a profession.
- Justifying demands in resource allocation
- Time conservation and its management
- Proper utilization of available resources
- As healthcare system involves a multi-disciplinary team, therefore avoid duplication of work

Hindrances to Standards in Nursing in Indian Setup:

There are different categories of nurses in India, based upon their level of qualification for example, ANM, diploma (GNM) and graduate nurses (B.Sc. Nursing), Post-graduate nurses and M.Sc. Nursing and last but not the least, M. Phil. and Doctorate nurses.

- * Standard objectives and a proper job description are not yet available for each category of nurses. There is no clear line demarcating roles and responsibilities for them.
- * Lack of nurse administrator with appropriate qualification is one of the reasons for poor initiation of any innovative project within nursing.
- * Nurses are not permitted to perform higher-level functions and make critical judgments and decisions, in the health care system dominated by the medical profession.
- * There is no regulatory body to assess the standards of nursing services. Hence, it

has to be performed at the institutional level, which causes difference of standard of nursing care delivered throughout. For example, Nursing and Midwifery Council, U.K., has formulated, “The Code-Standards of Conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives” and this is to be strictly followed by each practicing nurse within the United Kingdom. This is governed by the NMC itself.

- Indian publications on nursing are very few, especially on local application of knowledge and utilization of available resources according to the Indian setup.

Roles of A Nurse Administrator/ Educator/ Evaluator In Standard Maintenance:

A Nurse Administrator plays the following roles in standard maintenance:

- * Initiator- To create awareness or to sensitize the nurses at first and second level leadership position.
- * Facilitator- Nurse administrators facilitate to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate standards for nursing practice.
- * Provider- Needs to provide the necessary infrastructure for developing, implementing, maintaining and evaluating the standards of nursing
- * Plays an active role in the formation core-group
- * Assures for induction, in service education to enhance the implementation and monitoring of standards of nursing practice.
- * Ensures nursing audits and periodical reviews are conducted timely.

As a Nurse Educator her roles are:

- * Planning and conducting orientation program for nursing personnel's regarding the need for maintaining standards in nursing practices.
- * Stimulating and motivating the nurses to implement and maintain the set standards.
- * Provide training to core group to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate the nursing services against the formulated standards.

As an Evaluator a nurse advisor:

- * Monitors the implementation of the standards in effect.
- * Evaluates the nursing audits and reviews the process for updating the standards of nursing practice.

Conclusion:

In the current era of advanced technologies, globalization and in a competitive consumer oriented society it is very challenging to continuously meet the high demand for quality care. In order to achieve the delivery of best possible healthcare especially nursing care to the individuals, it is essential to formulate standards for nursing practices so that the work of the nursing professionals can be measured against the set standards to ascertain that the client receives the quality care timely.