

Challenges Faced by Nursing Administrator

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Received, 14 November, 2017

Accepted, 3 December, 2017

Nursing administration is the strategic management of nursing personnel, patient care, and facility resources through the support of regulating policies. Nurse administrators are responsible for ensuring that hospitals or other healthcare facilities operate in a safe and cost-effective manner. They achieve this through the management of financial and human resources, and through the supervision of nurses and other allied healthcare team members. In today's ever-changing health care environment the role of nurse administrators are challenged by number of factors such as Multi-Generational Workforce, The Business of Health Care, Ethics, Competition for Health Care Professionals, Nursing turnover, Nursing shortage, Staff absenteeism etc. The purpose of this study is to describe the challenges faced by Nursing Administrator in today's complex health care system.

Keywords: challenges, nursing administrator, nursing service.

American Nursing Association defines Nursing, as an integral part of the health care system, encompasses the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and care of physically ill, mentally ill, and disabled people of all ages, in all health care and other community settings. Within this broad spectrum of health care, the phenomena of particular concern to nurses are individual, family,

and group "responses to actual or potential health problems".¹

The unique function of nurses in caring for individuals, sick or well, is to assess their responses to their health status and to assist them in the performance of those activities contributing to health or recovery or to dignified death that they would perform unaided if they had the necessary strength, will, or knowledge and to do this in such a

way as to help them gain full of partial independence as rapidly as possible as defined by Virginia Henderson.¹

Nursing Administration is the process by which nurse manager work through others to achieve nursing organizational goals. It is also a system of activities directed towards the nursing care of patients and includes the establishment of overall goals and policies within the aims of health agency and provision for organization, personnel and facilities to accomplish these goals in the most effective and economic manner through coordinating the service with other departments of the institution.²

Nurse administrators are responsible for ensuring that hospitals or other healthcare facilities operate in a safe and cost-effective manner. They achieve this through the management of financial and human resources, and through the supervision of nurses and other allied healthcare team members.²

In addition to overseeing the nursing staff, nurse administrators are called upon to address and direct any number of projects related to regulatory, quality/safety, community, and financial issues. It is up to nurse administrators to ensure that all activities are efficiently and safely coordinated.²

Due to the rapidly changing state and complexity of healthcare system, the expertise of nurse administrators serving at the forefront of the nurse leadership team is crucial. They are challenged by numbers of issues which are describing below.

Challenges Faced by Nursing Administrator

It's clear that health care is undergoing huge changes and growth, and will continue to do so in future. As the societal changes the health care changes. Nurses are at the forefront of this transformation. Nurse administrators hold much of the responsibility for responding to challenges and integrating new solutions to ensure that patient care is efficient and supports positive outcomes. There are a number of challenges that faced by Nurse Administrator that need to addressed through appropriate national policies and strategies.³

Multi-Generational Workforce

Today's nursing workforce spans several generations. Nurse administrators have to manage nurses who have different attitudes, work habits, and communication styles. Nurse administrators have to learn how to identify generational differences, make sure nurses of different generations are able to communicate clearly about expectations and habits, and minimize conflicts.

The range of ages and experience among nurses is an asset, but only if nurse administrators can remove the obstacles to collaboration and learning among nursing team members. For example, younger nurses can learn from older nurses' years of experience dealing with potential problems and issues, while older nurses may learn newer and more efficient ways of caring for patients from younger nurses.

Nurses with strong interpersonal and

leadership skills can build opportunities and environments in which nurses from different generations feel supported about their abilities and empowered to grow and learn.³

Health Care Business

The increasing costs of medical care and the corporatization of health care have transformed the industry. Nurse administrators are often tasked with providing care and trying to ensure positive patient outcomes with limited resources, such as less time available to spend with each patient and diminish budgets.

Nurse administrators must create realistic strategies and plans for effective patient care maximizing the resources available, both equipment and employees. Skills in budgeting, information technology, organizational leadership, and human resources are vital elements in their toolbox.³

Ethics

As medicine and technology advance, humans have to contend with their ethical implications. Nurse administrators need to have an understanding of ethical principles, be aware of available resources related to ethics, study how to apply them in practice, and learn how to communicate them to the nursing staff, patients, and patients' families.

Given their direct experience at the bedside, nurse administrators play a pivotal role in ethics consultation, education, and policy development and review. They move back and forth between policy and practice: they communicate information and experience from the practice side, presenting those

findings to ethics review boards and helping incorporate them into ethics policies, and then communicate those policies and create strategies for putting them into practice.³

Changes in Health Care

Health care in the world faces new challenges each day and the decision largely falls on administrators to strategize and address these issues and to continue to provide adequate care for patients. These challenges are derived from a variety of factors, including the implementation of new legislation, advances in technology, and the shift of patients towards specialized providers.⁴

Competition for Health Care Professionals

Due to a shortage of health care professionals, there is increased competition for hospitals and health care providers to recruit and hire qualified individuals to treat patients effectively and efficiently. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, health care employment is expected to rise 23% by 2018 yet administrators are still faced with the task of creating a work environment that offers competitive pay and benefits to attract the most qualified registered nurses, physicians and surgeons as well as nursing aids. These roles are essential to the operation of any health care facility therefore; administrators must execute skilled recruiting and hiring processes.⁴

Evidenced Based Practice in Nursing

In today's medical world, research is becoming another task that nurse are encouraged to undertake. Exploring research and applying the findings to

patient care can help improve patient outcomes. Due to its importance and positive results, evidence-based practice is becoming increasingly encouraged in the healthcare sector. Nurses need to stay up-to-date on the latest technologies and research findings in order to provide effective nursing care. There are some barriers that become challenges for the nurse administrator to utilize the research based care in clinical practice. They are arranging EBP training, providing time off from work for nurses to learn and implement new techniques and mentoring by nurses with EBP experience.⁵

Turnover of Nurses

Nurse's turnover is an undesirable trend for healthcare organizations. It's expensive, it's disruptive, and it threatens the quality of care and patient safety. Understanding turnover is a critical for nurse administrators to reduce its negative effects on overall operational performance and patient's outcome of organization. To increase staff retention and decrease turnover rates in health care it would be beneficial for organizations, and nursing administration to focus on increasing salary, clear promotion policy, fair evaluation system, job security provisions and career opportunity.^{6,7}

Absenteeism of Nurses

Employee absenteeism is a remarkable phenomenon that has been widely emphasized as a problem affecting productivity in various sectors. Studies that addressed absence in the health care sector in particular have shown that nurses' absenteeism is usually the highest

compared with the rest of health-care providers, with sickness being the most prevalent reason behind Absenteeism. Nurses' absenteeism imposes a significant burden in health-care settings. Organizations usually incur large costs for the sake of ensuring the continuity of patients' care when absenteeism occurs. In addition, it often leads to work overload and a high nurse to patient ratio, which in return compromise patients' outcomes and increase mortality rates. Nurses' sickness absenteeism also relates to staff satisfaction and turnover. Nurses are often overloaded when covering for their absent colleagues, which might decrease their job motivation and work productivity and lead to subsequent absences. Although the rates of nursing staff absenteeism vary among settings, it is often high, making it an alarming problem in the global nursing workforce. Nurse administrators need solve this huge burden.⁸

Inadequate Nurse Patient Ratio

Deficient Manpower leads to unmanageable patient load and disparity in the Nurse: Patient ratio. Nurse: Patient ratio needs to be well maintained as it highly affects the patient care delivery system. When nurses are forced to work with high nurse-to-patient ratios, patients die, get infections, get injured, or get sent home too soon without adequate education about how to take care of their illness or injury. So they return right back to the hospital, often sicker than before. When nurses have fewer patients, they can take better care of them. When there are sufficient numbers of nurses in a healthcare setting, the nurses have more

time to advocate with the patients and their relatives about the plan of patient care and s/he can ensure that the patient gets everything s/he needs, and thereby patients are more likely to thrive in such situations. Nurse staffing is a constant challenges for administrator to maintain effective patient care.⁹

Multiple Doctor's Round

Medical ward rounds are complex clinical activities, critical to providing high-quality, safe care for patients in a timely, relevant manner. They provide an opportunity for the multidisciplinary team to come together to review a patient's condition and develop a coordinated plan of care, while facilitating full engagement of the patient and/or caregivers in making shared decisions about care. Additionally, ward rounds offer great opportunities for effective communication, information sharing and joint learning through active participation of all members of the multidisciplinary team.¹⁰

Nurses have a crucial role on ward rounds, not only sharing key information between the patient and the healthcare team, but also supporting patients in articulating their views and preferences. Absence of a nurse at the bedside has clear consequences for communications, ward-round efficiency and patient safety. Too many doctors round at one time is a problem faced by nurse administrator to allocate nurse at bed side on round which is crucial for patient safety and quality care.¹⁰

Conflict Management

Conflict is inevitable in an organization. Interpersonal conflicts remain a predominant in an organization which made

the nurse's leadership performance most difficult in the hospital environment. Interpersonal conflicts are those that have a relational nature, and may occur between people, between a group and a person, between an organization and a group, and so on. Furthermore, interpersonal relationships are considered as a potential stressor, as they involve various individual and group variables, making it unfeasible to find a measure capable of making everyone happy. Misunderstandings between nurses and physicians are common in hospital environment. Interpersonal conflicts among these professionals tend to interfere in the progress of health work and consequently the performance and motivation of these workers, affecting the quality of the care to users. The nurse administrator utilizes the effective strategies to deal with conflict management in a hospital Environment.¹¹

Resources and Facilities

Availability of resources affects the quality of healthcare services. High-quality outputs (services) require high-quality inputs. Working with low quality material decreases employees' productivity. The resource shortage also increases employees' job stress, which consequently affects the quality of their work. Nurse administrator recognized financial resources as the most important factor affecting the quality of healthcare.¹²

Employee Recognition

With healthcare being one of the fastest growing industries, organizations face challenges in more ways than before in employee engagement. That's why more than ever; healthcare organization must

consider employee recognition as part of their overall strategy. While healthcare employees work in extremely high-stress situations, and are not rewarded accordingly, the employers deal with serious challenges due to a high turnover rate and labor shortage.

Power and Position

Majority of nurse administrators lack higher position in their workplace. Executive board of hospitals and Academic institutes consist members from various disciplines. Only few nurses hold positions in Executive board. Among them who hold some position, often it is seen that they don't have adequate authority to match the responsibilities that they are entrusted with. Authority without responsibility has no ultimate purpose or justification for existing; likewise, responsibility without authority to carryout assigned duties is useless.¹³

Inadequate Communication and Collaboration

In today's health care system, multiple health care practitioners with varying levels encounter in patient care during educational and occupational training. During the course of a 4-day hospital stay, a patient may interact multiple number of employees, including physicians, nurses, technicians, and others. Effective clinical practice thus involves many instances where critical information must be accurately communicated. Team collaboration is essential. When health care professionals are not communicating effectively, patient safety is at risk for several reasons: lack of critical information,

misinterpretation of information, unclear orders over the telephone, and overlooked changes in status. Lack of communication creates situations where medical errors can occur. These errors have the potential to cause severe injury or unexpected patient death. Medical errors, especially those caused by a failure to communicate, are a pervasive problem in today's health care organizations. For instance lack of proper communication between doctors during multiple physician consultation for a single patient regarding treatments create problem for nurses and visitors.¹⁴

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) has provided interdisciplinary collaboration and teamwork can have on key dimensions of organizational performance. The lack of interdisciplinary collaboration and communication remains a significant challenge for healthcare executives, college deans, practicing nurses, physicians, and other healthcare professionals.¹⁵

Respect from Others

Nursing is a rewarding profession, yet many nurses face lack of respect from their patients, co-workers, administrators and even doctors. Although the nurses work long hours, still they are not given the respect they deserve for being an important part of the health care industry.

Sometimes, the patients also turn out to be a real challenge for many nurses. Some of them might be bad-tempered, stubborn, or simply do not follow nurses advice. Understand their condition during moments of frustration and ask if they need any help regarding any issue is a challenge for nurse administrators.

Job Satisfaction and Morale of Staffs

Job satisfaction is an employee's positive emotional response to job or aspects of job. Pay promotion, supervision, working condition and work group are aspects of job. Job satisfaction connects employee's attitudes towards the job.

When people have a high job satisfaction and morale, they are enthusiastic in their work, and their attitude is favorable towards their fellow workers, to the work environment, and to the organizational goals. High morale is the manifestation of employees' strength, dependability, self confidence and commitment. Low job satisfaction and morale inhibits the willingness and ability of the individuals and group to attain the organizational goals. With constantly changing health system, hospitals will have to recognize the importance of employees' job satisfaction. One of the key challenges for nursing administration is to maintain the satisfaction of employees and increase their motivation.¹⁶

Market Competition

In this era of modern society, increasing emphasis on health and healthy living has resulted increased focus and financing on health agencies. Due to this, year by year new health organization is being established. This has lead to high customer demand and patient satisfaction. Customer seeks institutes with high/optimized care and outcome. Meeting customer demands and gaining reputed status of institute in the society is a major challenge to the nurse administrator.

Organizational Commitment & Loyalty

Organizational commitment is an individual's willingness to dedicate efforts and loyalty to an organization. There are number of factors that hinder employee's motivation and faiths towards their organization such as role conflict, low salary, less opportunity for professional growth, less job rotation etc. The nurse administrator has the challenged for effective leadership style to encourage a sense of belonging to team, adequate remuneration, job flexibility, opportunity for growth to enhance and encourage their commitment.

Other Challenges

According to internet based review of literature there are some other challenges which was faced by nurse administrator which are described below:

A cross sectional study on Challenges on the way of nursing administration at public hospitals in Kabul among 86 nursing managers and 17 head nurse found that 13 major challenges that hinder their performance. They are: Staff shortage, Too many responsibilities, Too little authority, Too many critically ill patients, Staff absenteeism, unrealistic supervisor expectations, Too many doctor's round, Inadequate equipment and supplies, Conflicting supervisor expectation, lack of co-operation from physician, lack of recognition from heads, Lack of knowledge about organization and Lack of management experience. This study concludes that the challenges that hinder the performance of nursing administration that

need to be addressed through appropriate national policies and strategies.¹⁷

A qualitative study to describe and analyze future challenges in hospital found that nurse managers saw challenges and threats for the future on the level of society, the hospital, the work unit and for employees. In Society-level challenges they are related to the effects of legislation on practice, challenges related to co-operation between organizations, the difficult economic situation and organizing education; in Hospital-level challenges they are related to use of financial resources, reinforcement of strategic management and staff recruitment and retention; in Work unit-level challenges they are related to customer orientation, inadequate interprofessional co-operation, frontline management in every-day practice, promotion of staff well-being and the development of nursing and in Employee-level challenges they are related to supporting nurses' careers and increasing a sense of community.¹⁸

The study shows that nurse managers have the ability to identify challenges in the future that they can influence by carrying out change management procedures. There is a need for more holistic management and closer inter professional co-operation in health care for the benefit of patients in terms of customer oriented care. Furthermore, shared leadership is needed, which on a work-unit level means better pair management involving a front-line nurse manager and a physician. One requirement for nurse managers is the need to develop a sense of community. The ability to create environments that promote

staff well-being is also important from the viewpoint of staff turnover. Nurse Managers are usually well educated, so they should make more of an effort to utilize their education in their management work and update their expertise in management matters as well.²⁰

In the study to identify the major challenges in Executive Nurse Leader Roles today found that the current challenges are: Expectations are high and resources are limited; Maintaining the level of customer service that patient expect; Achieving a balance between quality nursing care and financial responsibilities of the institution; Achieving the right level of staffing in the face of declining resources; Adjusting to the rapidly changing health care environment; Implementation of a fully electronic medical record; Helping staff remain engaged with their work; Managing a diverse, multigenerational nursing workforce with many different needs; Doing more with less and being asked to continually improve efficiency; Achieving high scores on all the various performance measures; Maintaining quality and avoiding variability; Justifying resources to continue the professional development of staff.²¹

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