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Research Article

**EXAMINING THE EDUCATIONAL STATUS AND CAREER
PROSPECT OF NURSING GRADUATES IN IRAN**Abdolreza Gilavand¹ and Sakineh Gilavand^{2*}¹Department of Education Development Center, Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz, Iran² Graduate Nurse, Department of Education Development Center, Dezful University of Medical Sciences, Dezful, Iran**Abstract:**

Introduction: Health systems of the world have stepped into a critical period of human-resources shortage. Shortage of qualified nurses has been posed as one of the biggest hurdles to achieving the effectiveness of health systems. Hence, the present study examined the educational status and career prospect of nursing graduates in Iran.

Materials and methods: The study was done analytically benefitting from content analysis technique.

Results: In Iran, it is possible to continue studies towards PhD in nursing. Concerning the job opportunities in nursing, one should note that employing nurses' in the hospitals is based on education level (undergraduate, masters, doctorate). Nursing graduates can work in hospitals, clinics, health centers, private and public nursing homes for the elderly and children as shift nurses, head nurses, clinical supervisors, infection control supervisors, educational supervisors, and hospital nursing head. It should be noted that nursing graduates can independently establish a private health center (for evaluating the health status of community members) or establishing a kindergarten.

Discussion and Conclusion: Although employment conditions are available for most nursing graduates in Iran, lack of nurses is a concern for managers and a major challenge for the health system in Iran. However, benefitting from committed and specialized nurses is one of the essential components in a health-work environment. Unfavorable work environments, lack of resources, unbalanced workload, disproportionate nurse-to-patient ratio, increased writing affairs, high documentation, lack of supportive management, inadequate salaries and reduced employment permits are of the major challenges the Iranian health system faces, so despite many young graduate nurses there is a severe nurse scarcity crisis.

Keywords: Nursing, Academic Status, Career Prospect, Iran.

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INTRODUCTION:

Professional nursing in Iran is taken from European countries. The first nursing school in Iran was established in Urmia in 1915. In 1958, according to the act of Nurses Union, admission of candidates with high school diploma for a 3-year nursing course began, and the nursing degree was considered to be equivalent to a bachelor's degree. In 1975, the Ministry of Science approved and the bachelor's course of nursing and increased its duration to 4 years. In 1986, with the establishment of the faculty of nursing, this major greatly developed. The first Iranian female nurse was Fatemeh Tavanayi and the first male nurse holding a degree in nursing in Iran was Morteza Hasanpour. The term "Nurse" meaning nutrition is taken from the Latin word "Nutrix". Nursing is a branch of medical science whose role in health care is critical. Nursing graduates should have a full physical, mental, and spiritual health. They must be careful and patient, so that they can use it to learn about the illness by learning the relevant knowledge and acquiring professional skills and enjoying the knowledge of the day, the services needed for health, care and rehabilitation to provide and maintain, and promote community health. A nurse cannot succeed merely by relying on her academic courses, but must use his knowledge in different situations, and this requires good analysis, speed, and psychological readiness. The nurse has multiple roles including care, support, treatment, counseling, management, and research coordination, and one can state that the work of a good doctor comes to a favorable outcome when an expert and well-versed nurse has the responsibility of the patient.

Current developments of the educational system suggest that higher education should maintain, improve and enhance its educational performance while considering existing financial constraints. Evidence suggests that educational institutions can perform their own tasks and objectives if they have more favorable conditions in terms of educational quality (1). Universities of Medical Sciences throughout the country are supposed to train students who have the ability to train, prevent, treat and promote health in society. Students obtain the necessary information and knowledge for their maximum effectiveness in their theoretical classes, and by practicing and experiencing in clinical settings, they can gain the necessary scientific knowledge (2). Nursing education plays a major role in nurturing the mind to think through clinical actions, questionable situations, and connecting events, decision making and conceptualization to promote community health. This training enables nursing students to consider their experience and knowledge as knowledge resources in their internship and take advantage of it in clinical

situations (3). Past traditions, nurses' compliance, and apprenticeship model in nursing education have had significant impacts on their attitudes up to now, which has been an obstacle to the development of theoretical education and its adaptation to clinical care (4).

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

The study was analytical using the content analysis technique to study the educational status and career prospects of nursing graduates in Iran.

RESULTS:

Nursing major is one of the disciplines that despite its hardship is very popular among the volunteers of the experimental sciences group in Iran, and has always had a lot of enthusiasts with many volunteers every year desiring to gain a degree in the field. We witness that even in the case of non-admission; the applicants want to know the conditions of nursing without examinations (Konkur) and study nursing. To know the nursing and the nurses' duties, one can state that nurses are one of the most important members of the staff and the medical and health care team with many roles, such as care, treatment, support, counseling, management, and so on. Concerning the duties of the nurses, it should also be noted that helping the doctors and other staff in the hospital, registering the patient's profile in a medical record, and presenting nursing reports, collaborating with the different departments of the hospital, giving the patient's medicines in accordance with the doctor's instructions, injecting, blood transfusions, cleaning and dressing of patients' wounds, and so on. For succeeding in nursing (due to communication with patients), having the features like proper mental and physical fitness, patience and sympathy, and compassion, respect and proper treatment of patients, remaining calm in critical condition, interest and desire to help others and so on are necessary in this discipline. Hence, the applicants must be fully acquainted with their mentality before choosing a field and studying to avoid problems during their studies. However, it should be noted that nursing in Iran has a good status in terms of the labor market and the diversity of the work environment of nurses is very high and, fortunately, most graduates are recruited to the labor market and will not face unemployment. The undergraduate nursing course has 130 units, of which 22 are general courses, 15 are basic courses, 54 are professional courses, 18 are related to internship and 21 are apprenticeship topics.

It is possible to continue towards PhD in nursing. The length of graduate course in nursing is 2 years and includes 26 units, and the graduates can attend various health centers, nursing services and clinical services, in education, in nursing schools. Students

interested in pursuing a PhD degree in nursing, in case of having the necessary conditions like having general entry requirements for higher education, passing PhD exam, having a recommendation letter qualifying them to study this course from at least 2 previous professors, gaining the passing score in the following English tests - MCHE Minimum score = 50, TOFEL Minimum score = 48 - IELTS Minimum score = 50 - MELAB Minimum score = 70 – can take steps to study.

Considering job opportunities in nursing, it should be noted that employment of the nurses in hospitals is based on the level of education (undergraduate, masters, doctorate). Nursing graduates can work in hospitals, clinics, health centers, private and public nursing homes for the elderly and children as shift nurses, head nurses, clinical supervisors, infection control supervisors, educational supervisors, and hospital nursing head. It should be noted that nursing graduates could independently establish a private health center (for evaluating the health status of community members) or establish a kindergarten.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

Nursing is one of the branches of medical science with the duty of care for patients. However, with the advances in science and technology, unlike the past, nursing needs a valid degree, and the role of a nurse is not limited to patient care. In the academic divisions, the value of a nurse is equated with the value of a physician as the patient has the most contact with the nurse in the hospital and the patient's satisfaction with the nurse means his/her satisfaction with the hospital. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2014), there are currently 2.7 million shortages of nurses at the international level. It is estimated that this decline will reach 12.9 million by 2035 (5). Nurse shortage in Iran is a concern for managers and a major challenge for the health system. According to the Ministry of Health and Medical Education nursing assistant, the number of nurses working in Iran is 140,000, whereas 260,000 nurses are needed to provide ideal care. In 2014, a health promotion plan began in Iran, according to studies conducted by many nurses; it was not satisfied with its implementation (7). However, according to studies conducted, patients have been satisfied with the implementation of this plan (8).

Overall, the bottlenecks and problems faced by the nursing profession in Iran can be summarized in the following parts:

1) The first and perhaps the most important issue about the nurses currently working is the income. One cannot definitely comment on the income of a nurse as it can vary depending on the experience, knowledge, the place where they are working, as

well as the private or central government in which they work. The point about nursing income is that public nurses are said to gain 60 to 70% percent more than the private sector nurses and gain more than most state-licensed graduates. Thus, if we compare nursing income with other bachelors, it seems reasonable and good, but when there is a comparison of nursing income with specialist doctors, there will be a great difference.

2) Heavy shifts and many patients (one of the most important disadvantages of nursing jobs): Another point considered as the problem of nursing work in Iran is the large number of patients and the proportion of nurses to the patient, so that one nurse may be responsible for 10 patients in some cases. This will end in heavy and difficult shifts. However, this is not always the case, and in some areas it seems that, for example, emergency nurses are almost always dealing with patients.

3) The ill patients: certainly, as the improvement of patients or the birth of a baby is effective in our morale, seeing ill patients and the ones with a poor physical condition can also be effective in reducing function and morale. This is, of course, the case when the patients are sympathized with the patients, but if we have sympathy with our patients, we will have fewer issues with these issues.

4) Patient objections: The nurse is the first person to be referred to in case of a patient facing a problem. This is becomes problem when the patient sees any shortage of hospital personnel and protests with the nurse and asks him to resolve the problem. However, sometimes the nurse plays a role neither in the problem nor in solving it; and this has to do with something else. The issue of dealing with dissatisfied and angry patients might be one of the most important problems of the nursing profession.

5) Attitude of some colleagues: another issue that exists not only in the treatment environment but also among colleagues in all occupations is the behavior of the colleagues. A nurse is in contact with many people, such as an aide nurse, assistant, assistant hand, doctors and so on, this communication can be challenging in some cases. For example, the treatment of the doctors and nurses is one of the issues that has been heavily tense, which is not acceptable at all (not for the nurse, not for the doctor, not for the whole treatment community), but at times such tensions happen, which is said to be the case in all occupations, especially the sensitive professions, but the main point is managing and controlling them. Thus, nursing, like other professions, involves difficulties and pleasures with each other, and those nurses can be successful that are aware of all these and through implementing the solutions mentioned try to improve their profession more.

Although the employment conditions for most graduates of nursing in Iran are provided, the

shortage of nurses is a concern for managers and a major challenge for the health system in Iran. However, benefitting from committed and specialized nurses is one of the essential components in a health-work environment. Unfavorable work environments, lack of resources, unbalanced workload, disproportionate nurse-to-patient ratio, increased writing affairs, high documentation, lack of supportive management, inadequate salaries and reduced employment permits are of the major challenges the Iranian health system faces, so despite many young graduate nurses there is a severe nurse scarcity crisis. The existence of a gap between theoretical education and clinical care can endanger the health of patients. Hence, to promote and improve the nursing profession and turning today's students into efficient and capable nurses in the future that besides the tasks related to patient care can do the important and critical nursing activities, developing appropriate programs and methods of training with the existing conditions and facilities by taking into account the strengths and weaknesses in different nursing areas are imperative to match theory and clinical care. Additionally, by providing the context, one should strengthen a healthy work environment for the growth and development of care management among the students.

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