

EDITORIAL**Some Thoughts on Nursing****Despina Sapountzi-Krepia, BSc, MSc, PhD, RN, RHV****Professor and Chair, Department of Nursing, Frederick University, Nicosia, Cyprus****Professor Emeritus, Alexander Technological Educational Institution of Thessaloniki, Greece**

Correspondence: Despina Sapountzi-Krepia, Nursing Department, Frederick University Cyprus, 7, Y. Freiderikou Street 1036, Nicosia, Cyprus. E-mail: desapoun@yahoo.com

Abstract

The core concept of nursing is care; although caring is a universal concept and a component of the philosophies guiding the practice of all health and caring professions. Human beings learn to care by being cared by other people. In primitive societies there was not a clear distinction between healer and carer. However, caring, healing, and curing include a meaning of getting control over and expressing power upon people who are receiving care. That was a crucial point for the separation of caring from healing and curing. Nursing evolved from the mother's role and is frequently identified in people's perception more as a woman's duty than a job. Nursing continues to struggle to overcome the stereotypes held for centuries. However, as nursing is maturing as a science, an emphasis on the meaning of care and the approach of nursing as a purely caring science is apparent in many scientific nursing books and papers. Caring is evolving as a new paradigm for nursing, as the profession seeks its rightful place in the modern societies.

Key words: nursing; caring

Introduction

Caring has long been adopted worldwide as the core concept of nursing (Nightingale 1897, Watson 1985, 1988, Leininger 1988, Kapborg and Berterö 2003, Ranheim, Kärner and Berterö 2011). However, caring is a universal concept included in philosophy, religion, and sociology, and is a component of the philosophies guiding the practice of all health and caring professions. Nursing in our era is a science and a profession understood in different ways by different people. People worldwide have different concepts in mind when they say “nursing”. The diversity regarding how the term “nursing” is perceived in different societies is rooted in the fact that the word nursing is evoking different reactions in different cultures (Hisama 2000, Sapountzi-Krepia et al. 2007).

Nevertheless, if we try to investigate how “nursing” is understood by the nurses themselves, we will soon arrive to the conclusion that there is diversity in the way in which nurses, from different educational backgrounds and from various countries, understand this concept. For nursing scholars

“nursing” is a science, which accumulates a body of scientific knowledge, characterised as “nursing knowledge”. However, “nursing” is also viewed by nursing scholars as an “art”, a combination of applied science and technical skills focused on two targets: a) the provision of comfort and care to those who are ill, and b) the preservation, maintenance, and promotion of health (Rovithis 2002, Sapountzi-Krepia 2004, Sapountzi-Krepia et al. 2007a, 2007b). Besides, for some nurses, “nursing” is a profession expressed through the current patterns of practice and which mainly deals with patients. Therefore, it could be said that there is great diversity in the way in which “nursing” is understood by nurses themselves and by societies.

An easy and generic answer is to say that nursing patterns have their origins in the social and historical forces that have shaped modern culture as a whole. That is a truth which includes a complexity giving ground for many tales to be plotted around it. Nevertheless, in order to develop a better understanding of the diversity surrounding nursing, it would be wise and helpful to focus on investigating the way in which nursing has evolved and developed in the

different parts of the world. Furthermore, as it is stressed by Littlewood (1991) cultural issues surrounding illness, health, “pollution” from illness and from physical secretions of the human body have to be also examined in order to find connections with the way in which nursing is understood in different societies.

Nursing and caring

People in all societies and in all times have experienced a variety of health problems, emotional distress, and behavioural problems and, therefore, they need care. In every culture there have been developed indigenous ways on helping people and caring for people.

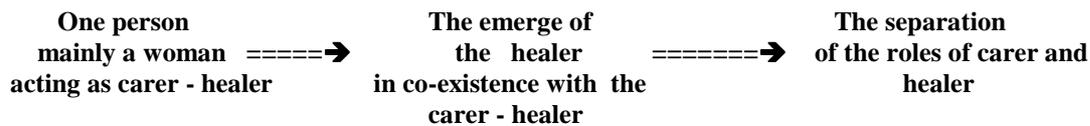
Human beings learn to care by being cared by other people (mother, father, sisters, brothers, grand parents, relatives, friends and neighbours) and by their early socialization

with other people through caring relationships.

In primitive societies caring was performed within the family, by the women of the household, who learned to care, to use herbs for comforting and later on to prepare “medicines” (Maclean 1974, Sapountzi-Krepia 1999). Therefore, there was no clear distinction between the healer and the carer. However, caring, healing, and curing include the meaning of getting control over and expressing power upon people who are receiving care.

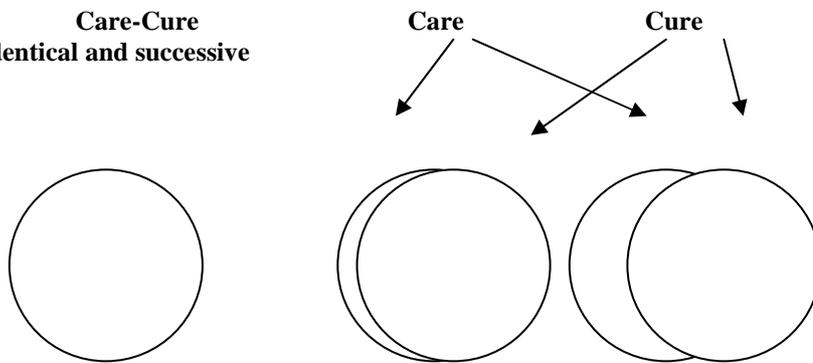
That was a crucial point for the development and the separation of caring from healing and curing. As societies developed and the divine aspect of healing and curing was emphasized, religious leaders undertook the role of the healer. That was the starting point for the distinction between healing and caring.

Heal - Care - Cure

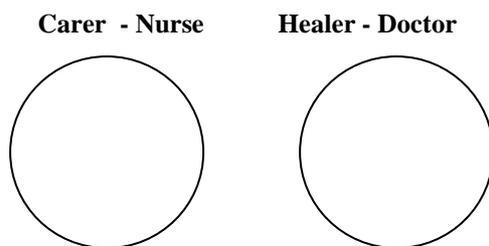


The Emerge of Contemporary Nursing

Care-Cure identical and successive



The Distinguish of Labour



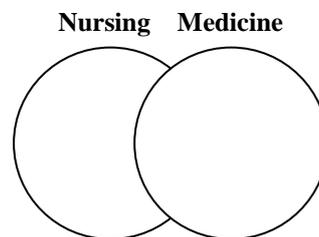
Historically, nurses were expected to take on caring more as an identity deriving from the fact that the vast majority of nurses are women than as a profession.

Caring encapsulates the idea of helping each other and for nursing is the concept enriching its nature. Nursing evolved from the mother's role in the family and thus nurses have had to understand and to deal with what appears as a dichotomy between the duty of caring for others and the right to control their own activities in the name of caring.

Nursing is frequently identified in people's perception more as a woman's duty than a job.

Nursing continues to struggle to overcome the stereotypes held for centuries. However, it seems to be too tied to society's broader problems of gender and class, and therefore nurses in recent years have to work hard in order to create a new political understanding of caring and to find ways to gain the necessary power for implementing it (Choi, Byon & Kim, 1991).

The Position of Nursing In The Current Model of Care



Nursing in a rapidly changing social environment

Contemporary societies are characterized by rapid change and ambiguity, as traditional social values are questioned by the new generation, and at the same time new values and traditions have not yet been established. Nurses as scholars and as professional carers have to face this challenge by developing certain abilities.

Nurses are expected to manage effectively their professional and scientific authority and autonomy in the health care sector, as well as in the society, while at the same time they have to be effective in assisting other people to deal with personalized aspects of change and ambiguity (Littlewood 1991).

About fifty years earlier an honoured nursing scholar and theorist, warned nurses about that by stating “nurses must learn to develop their caring skills in an age characterized by change and ambiguity” (Henderson 1978).

Nursing is a profession and nurses are providing care to people who have certain expectations about how the nursing social role has to be performed.

Nurses have to develop a better understanding of how the “social nursing image” is perceived in the society in which

they are providing care, in order to face with an open mind their clients' attitudes and perceptions about nursing, and thus to be able to understand them and to provide better care.

Nursing as a caring science

Care was always in the core of nursing. However, during the last decades, as nursing is maturing as a science, an emphasis on the meaning of care and the approach of nursing as a purely caring science is apparent in many scientific nursing books and papers. Caring is evolving as a new paradigm for nursing, as a profession that seeks its rightful place in modern societies.

References

- Choi Y.H., Byon Y.S. & Kim R.N. (1991) A study for womanhood and caring. *Taehan Kanho* 30(5):75-82
- Henderson V. (1978) The concept of nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 3:113-130
- Hisama K.K. (2000) Cultural influence on nursing scholarship and education. *Nursing Outlook* 48(3):128-131
- Kapborg I. & Berterö C. (2003) The phenomenon of caring from the novice student nurse's perspective: a qualitative content analysis. *Int Nurs Rev* 50(3):183-92

- Leininger M. (1988) *Care: The essence of nursing and health*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Littlewood J. (1991) *Anthropology and nursing*. Routledge, London
- Maclean U. (1974) *Nursing in contemporary society*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London
- Nightingale F. (1897) *Letters to nurses*. E.A. Rathbone, Liverpool, England
- Ranheim A, Kärner A. & Berterö K. (2011) Caring theory and practice-entering a simultaneous concept analysis. *Nurs Forum* 47(2):78-90
- Rovithis M. (2002) Nursing as an art. *ICUs and Nursing Web Journal*, Issue 9
- Sapountzi-Krepia D. (1999) Women and health care provision. *Health Review* January-February 37-40
- Sapountzi-Krepia D. (2004) Nursing: forming the future through the richness of the past (editorial). *ICUs and Nursing Web Journal*, Issue 19
- Sapountzi-Krepia D., Raftopoulos V., Sakelari E., Psychogiou M., Krepia V., & Dimitriadou A. (2007a) The concept “nursing” in Greece: a focus group approach. *Health Sci Jour*, Issue 4
- Sapountzi-Krepia D., Psychogiou M., Sakelari E., Kostandinidou A. & Dimitriadou A. (2007b) How Greek nurses and nursing students define nursing: a qualitative Content analysis. *Health Sci Jour*, Issue 3
- Watson J. (1985) *Nursing: Human Science and Human Care, A Theory of Nursing*. Norwalk, CT: Appleton-Century-Crofts
- Watson J. (1988) New dimensions of human caring theory. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 1(4):175-181