

**Letter to the Editor**

**Pediatric Home Health Care: A Missing Position in Iranian Health Care System**

**Naser Lotfi Fatemi**

PhD candidate in Nursing, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Mashhad, Iran

**Hossein Karimi Moonaghi**

Evidence-Based Care Research Center, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Mashhad, Iran  
Department of Medical-Surgical Nursing, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Mashhad, Iran

**Abbas Heydari**

Evidence-Based Care Research Center, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Mashhad, Iran  
Department of Medical-Surgical Nursing, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Mashhad, Iran

Recent progresses in pediatric and neonatology, and rehabilitation have resulted an overpopulation of children with chronic and complex conditions, often dependent on medical technology. This created a high demand for hospitalization and challenges for admissions. Consequently, they cause problems such as hospital infections, reducing of parents' satisfaction and increased health costs. On the other hand, the many studies shown that home health care were a cost-effective alternative to hospital care in certain situations ( Parker, et al, 2013). Home health care has been described as the fastest growing segment of personal health care.

The pediatric home health care as a model of service delivery in pediatric care is effective in reducing hospital admissions too (Parker et al., 2001, Financing CoCH. 2006). It increases patient and parents' satisfaction with care provision for ill children in the their home (RadcliffeJ, Schwarz & Zhao. 2013, Ng, et al., 2014). Treatment of children has become common in pediatric health care worldwide by home health care facilities.

A pediatric home health care can support administered medications, physiologic monitoring, parenteral nutrition, phototherapy, nasogastric feedings, peritoneal dialysis, oxygen

administration, nebulizer therapy, respiratory support, palliative care and speech therapies for developmental needs in children (Ellis, et al., 2012). When these services are available from pediatric home health care services, home health care can play a key role in the pediatric services. Home health care provides a better quality of life and a sense of normalcy for parents, and the opportunity to hold jobs for families (Sender, 2011).

In spite of recent expansion of pediatric home health care in the world, research on the nature, scope, quality, and outcomes of pediatric home health care are very scarce. But a review of studies regarding home health care for elderly provides some indication of what might be suitable for pediatrics too.

Although pediatric home health care offers several benefits to the patients, there are some problems in using it. Home health care facilities should be staffed by expert providers and trained staff to manage children who are seeking home care. Home health care requires that nurses become more knowledgeable and active in planning and managing it. Nurses need to become more aware of home care and have direct access to recent advances to prepare for home care responsibilities.

The pediatric nurses should be monitoring symptoms of children as a main strategy. It is important that they maintain the highest quality standards of care. Insurance companies should also support home care services so that all people have access to quality services at affordable prices. It is important that physicians pay attention to appropriate candidate selection for improve quality and risk management; preparation; patients and families education; and communication among nurses, home care service providers, physicians, family members and informal caregivers.

Pediatricians and nurses could serve as interdisciplinary links during the hospital discharge process and be participants in home health care provider teams. Therefore, these aspects, as quality indicators, should be considered when designing pediatric home health care. Since home care is a new issue in Iran, it seems that there are still many challenges to public awareness and the culture of home care (Hemati, Namnabati &, Taleghani, 2016).

On the other hand, due to the possibility of any problems in the care of children and infants, home nurses need support from the health system. Otherwise, they may face a lot of problems. Furthermore, well-designed clinical studies are required to investigate effectiveness pediatric home health care in Iran.

Eventually, well-managed pediatric home health care facilities can enhance the provision of

pediatric services to the children of their communities, be integrated into the medical community, and provide a safe, effective adjunct to, but not a replacement for common medicine.

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