

Achieving Excellence in Healthcare through Nursing and Midwifery Education and Research in Contemporary Times: A Review of Literature

M. Wombeogo^{1*}, M.Y. Wombeogo²

¹ Dean, School of Health and Allied Sciences, Regentropfen University College, Kansoe-Bolgatanga, Ghana

² Lecturer, Department of Civil Engineering, Dr. Hilla Liman Technical University, Upper West Region, Ghana

*Corresponding author: michael.wombeogo@regentropfen.edu.gh

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Abstract

The government of Ghana and the International Community are becoming more aware of the importance of human resources in the health sector as a fundamental prerequisite for delivering high-quality healthcare services as a result of the new health issues that are emerging today. In addition to having enough health workers, nurses and midwives need to be well-educated in order to deliver high-quality treatment that addresses the community's complex and multifaceted requirements.

The topic of achieving excellence in healthcare through nursing and midwifery education and research is aimed at asserting how excellence in healthcare can be achieved through nursing and midwifery education and research in the practice and academic advancement of the nurse/midwife in contemporary times. A review of the social sciences and nursing and midwifery literature as well as a search for existing education excellence revealed an apparent dearth of evidence specific to excellence in nursing and midwifery education and research. Nursing is grounded in the ethic of caring which is linked to a teaching philosophy intimately fundamental to the discussion on this topic. Clear program standards, well-prepared faculty, qualified students, well-prepared administrators, evidence-based programs and teaching/evaluation techniques, quality and adequate resources, acknowledgment of expertise, and student-centered, interactive, and innovative programs and curricula are the eight essential components needed to achieve and maintain excellence in educational programs, according to the Nursing Education Model.

Keywords- Excellence, Education, Healthcare, Nursing and midwifery, Research, Ghana

INTRODUCTION

By encouraging research and the creation of new knowledge both now and in the near future, this study offers a platform to begin a strategic roadmap for hastening a "complete revitalization of higher education in nursing and midwifery" (1). In order to significantly aid in the direct and indirect execution of the health development agenda in Africa, NEPAD (2013) called for the

establishment of Regional Centers of Excellence Research in nursing and midwifery (2).

If this has not yet been implemented by NEPAD and the AU, Universities such as the University of Ghana, Legon School of Nursing and Midwifery, KAAF University College Faculty of Health and Allied Sciences, University of Cape Coast School of Nursing and Midwifery, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

(KNUST), Regentropfen University College School of Nursing and Midwifery, among others in Ghana, have just taken the lead.

OBJECTIVES

The aim is to assert how excellence in healthcare can be achieved through nursing and midwifery education and research in contemporary times.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To elaborate from evidential information on nursing and midwifery education and research
- To make concretise views on how evidence from literature can propel the agenda of achieving excellence in nursing and midwifery education and research in contemporary times
- To provide recommendations for the way forward in advancing education and research in nursing and midwifery in Ghana

BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Nursing's physical character and practice continue to be infused with a good dose of compassion, while maintaining a balance between science and art. To be proud of their work, nurses and midwives must maintain the focus on striving for excellence, especially in the face of adversity. This applies to all of these areas of the profession. The Nursing Education Model, which outlines eight essential components needed to attain and maintain quality in nursing and midwifery training programs, serves as the foundation for achieving quality in Nursing Education.

These include:

- Unambiguous program standards,
- Knowledgeable faculty,
- Competent pupils,
- Capable administrators,
- Programs and teaching/evaluation

techniques based on evidence,

- Sufficient and high-quality resources,
- Acknowledgment of knowledge,
- Innovative, participatory, and student-centered programs and courses.

Numerous crucial drivers of greatness, including the environment and research, are included in these fundamental components. While each of these components is important, offering a student a curriculum that is learner-centric is particularly crucial. The education of nurses and midwives is currently navigating through shifts and transformations in the competencies and advancements in modern research and education. There has never been a more pressing need to develop graduates who can thrive in the "real world," where value, outcomes, responsibility, access, and affordability are all subject to an unprecedented level of scrutiny. Therefore, in order to be recognized as exceptional in the academic and health sectors, nursing and midwifery schools must successfully demonstrate their dedication to pursuing and upholding the standards of excellence.

By and large, these intermediary and long-term achievements are leaned graciously on the following:

POLICY

Nursing and public policy are closely related disciplines. Nurses are in a good position to influence policy decisions that affect patient care and staffing. Decisions about healthcare policy at the federal, state, and municipal levels dictate how funds are allocated and healthcare is run. Nurses can participate in policy by joining state and national nursing groups, attending legislative sessions to learn about the system, and reaching out to their state representatives in the house and senate to express their opinions (3). Public health nurses make a substantial contribution to improving population health outcomes through service delivery and community education. Through community development and policy reform, they can

bring about constructive improvements (4).

By pointing out areas that require attention, updating inefficient policies, and making sure that sound policies are upheld, nurses can also significantly alter public health policy (5). Policy choices must involve the greatest number of healthcare experts. These policy choices include advanced practice regulation, scope of practice, nurse shortages, and reimbursement. Nursing practice depends on each of these domains (3). All things considered, nurses have a special role to play in reimagining healthcare's future, especially in the policy-making process. Advocacy and involvement in health policy are critical competencies for nurses (2). In order to achieve success in clinical practice, scholarship, and nursing education, proactive engagement in the public policy arena is essential. Our country and profession face complex socioeconomic and health policy concerns (3, 6). The government of Ghana and the international community are becoming more aware of the importance of human resources in the health sector as a fundamental prerequisite for delivering high-quality healthcare services as a result of the new health issues that are emerging today.

In addition to having enough health workers, nurses and midwives need to be well-educated in order to deliver high-quality treatment that addresses the community's complex and multifaceted requirements. Ghana and Africa as a whole face the task of creating, fostering, and maintaining knowledge societies for the twenty-first century and beyond. To improve her standing in the globalized world, Ghana must not only create information pertinent to its own circumstances but also elevate the value of that knowledge. In order to acquire unique benefits in society and to better comprehend and get insights in a complicated healthcare environment, people need knowledge (7, 8).

The stakes are higher because the outcomes can literally be life-altering as it could lead to advance operational efficiency within the nursing and midwifery fraternity

and the Ghana Health Service, enables self-resolution for both healthcare staff and patients to find solutions to their questions; promote collaboration and continuous learning, eliminates knowledge gaps and enhance innovation in the healthcare sector (8).

Knowledge management is essential in healthcare as it can improve operational efficiency, reduce the risk of errors, and improve communication across teams and organizations (9). Effective knowledge management can lead to informed decision-making, better medical outcomes, and seamless communication among healthcare personnel (10).

It can also help avoid medical malpractice by ensuring that practitioners adhere to step-by-step processes, reducing the chance of error and enabling them to deliver a higher quality of care (11).

In Ghana's healthcare system, highly skilled professional nurses and midwives are playing an increasingly important role in this exciting period. From taking on high leadership positions in healthcare facilities to influencing policy creation to having greater freedom and accountability at the front lines and patient bedsides. The policy decisions that affect patient care and the advancement of nursing and midwifery professionalism, education, and research will be shaped by the nurse leaders of the future.

The reality remains that nurses and midwives play a crucial role in the formulation and execution of healthcare policy in Ghana, notwithstanding the several limitations that restrict their potential influence on the country's healthcare system. Given their status as Ghana's largest medical profession, nurses and midwives ought to take the lead in reorganizing the healthcare system and determining the future of healthcare for Ghanaians (3). In order for this to occur, nurses and midwives need to be highly proficient in patient care, interdisciplinary cooperation, technology and informatics, putting evidence-based practice into practice, and quality improvement.

These effects are difficult to achieve. They are fruits of education foundations, concerted leadership and systematic endearing academic prowess. There is no doubt, nurses and midwives are at it and can do even more to achieve more in the policy orientation and advancement of the healthcare sector.

All too often, nurses and midwives become frustrated by policies affecting nursing and midwifery practice, particularly when those policies are written by individuals with limited healthcare knowledge and experience (12). This frustration often leads to passivity, laxity, negativity, disillusionment, bitterness, poor work output and burn-out. There is need therefore to take cue from Oestberg (2012) who states that “As nurses, we need to think of policy as something we can influence, not just something that happens to us (13).”

EDUCATION

Despite a number of restrictions that limit their potential impact on Ghana's healthcare system, the fact remains that nurses and midwives are essential to the development and implementation of healthcare policy. As the largest medical profession in Ghana, nurses and midwives should be at the forefront of restructuring the healthcare system and deciding how Ghanaians will be treated in the future (3). Nurses and midwives must be extremely skilled in patient care, interdisciplinary collaboration, technology and informatics, implementing evidence-based practice, and quality improvement for this to happen. Achieving these results is challenging. Bachelor degree registered nurses working in hospitals have been linked to the following outcomes, according to Hartley and Taylor (2018) (14).

- Lower mortality rates
- Lower re-admissions
- Higher chances of failing to save a patient
- Improved decrease in hospital-acquired diseases such as pulmonary embolism

and pressure ulcers

- Shorter hospital stays, heart failure mortality, and lower post-surgery mortality rates
- More job satisfaction, longer tenure, and four times the likelihood of pursuing graduate education in various nursing and health fields

In Ghana, nursing is a special career that demands a great degree of education, expertise, dedication, empathy, compassion, and the display of the highest level of care. An essential component of effective practice is nursing education. Therefore, optimum patient care is correlated with a nursing workforce that is highly educated.

In order to improve the standing of the nursing profession, this discussion centers on human resources for health and makes the case for services that have an adequate number of competent nurses and midwives with advanced degrees of education and training.

According to the Institute of Medicine (IOM, 2011), Ghana has not only fallen short of the IOM's recommendation to raise the percentage of BSN nurses (40%) in 2020, the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth, but has also failed to graduate more BSN-prepared nurses than non-graduate nurses in recent years (15). This is a dangerous trend that may have an adverse effect on Ghanaians' current and future healthcare outcomes and access.

The ability of educational programs to produce nurses and midwives with the appropriate set of competencies and with the ethical and professional values expected of them, as well as the suitability of health professionals graduating from educational institutions to deliver high-quality professional services, are major concerns in the modern era. The cutting edge involves both the application of nursing art and the science of nursing in healthcare through research. Rapid growth and advancement in health care systems, as well as the advancement of the nursing and midwifery professions, are strikingly visible when the

art and science of nursing and midwifery are combined.

One may ask why this conviction on academic excellence being a key tool for quality nursing and midwifery care delivery. According to Mitchell (2008), nursing has clearly been concerned with defining and measuring quality long before the current national health protocols placing emphasis on quality improvement (16). For instance, Florence Nightingale analyzed mortality data among British troops in 1855 and accomplished significant reduction in mortality through organizational and hygienic practices (17). She is also credited with creating the world's first performance measures of hospitals in 1859. Florence Nightingale, the one accredited with being the mother of modern nursing was affluent and highly educated woman and who advocated that academic achievement at higher levels should be the benchmark for professional nursing. Excellence in academic achievement for nurses is an important landmark for nurses and midwives to deliver safe and quality nursing and midwifery care to clients. Although it's not always simple, it's crucial to support recently graduated nurses. Before beginning their first clinical position, newly graduated registered nurses are expected to possess a vast amount of knowledge, and we want to do everything in our power to support and encourage their success.

There are increasing demands for substantial change on nursing and midwifery schools. In light of contemporary trends in higher education, how should they interpret and update their educational mission?

RESEARCH

By incorporating knowledge of research evidence into clinical practice, nursing and midwifery education places an emphasis on research and innovative ways of thinking that improve best practices. It is assumed that nurses and midwives can address the diverse requirements of the

community with the best possible care thanks to their education and experience.

A significant amount of research on nursing and midwifery education has not yet been published, primarily in the form of master's dissertations, according to the literature search.

Since many dissertations are only available from the institution where the author was based, it is more difficult to ensure comprehensiveness than for published work, even though a portion of these dissertations are centrally available, such as in the libraries of the University and Schools/Colleges of Nursing and Midwifery. To put it simply, many research materials are still locked up at universities and have not been used. The published matter's content frequently consists of generalized social issues that lack theoretical or policy direction to introduce novel concepts to nursing and midwifery in general.

CHALLENGES

Undergraduate nursing and midwifery education faces both internal and external challenges. The emphasis on illness and treatment at the relative expense of behavior and character impacts, as well as the contrast between inpatient and outpatient education, are important internal issues. The exponential expansion of information, related technological ("disruptive") advancements, and societal shifts are examples of external forces. The healthcare industry is undergoing significant change as a result of shorter hospital stays, higher patient acuity, and faster knowledge generation. It was expected in the 1950s that medical knowledge would double in around 50 years. According to a study by Densen (2011), it will only be 73 days by the end of 2020 (18). It's really too much. With a view toward 2020 and beyond, resolute institutional leadership is needed to address these issues.

Threats to nursing and midwifery education is poor political will on reforms from moving back and forth in first levels of nursing and midwifery education in Ghana.

The maintenance of the Nursing and Midwifery strategic option supports the professions' dedication to advancing the development of nursing and midwifery in Ghana. This choice offers a well-defined plan for nursing and midwifery to expand upon the solid groundwork already established for the provision of high-quality, reasonably priced, and easily accessible nursing and midwifery education and research. But only with your help and participation will it be successful.

The nursing and midwifery academics have, in recent times, increased in numbers throughout the higher institutions of learning. Unlike other health professions, the nursing and midwifery professions have suffered the double effect of non-availability of core programmes and limited opportunity for positive role-modelling from inspirational people in their field to help them to dream the dream. Thankfully, it is heart-warming to know of the unmeasurable transformation that is taking place in Ghana, which set to propel the dynamism of the professions of nursing and midwifery to a new level. Ghana Universities can now train nurses and midwives from BSc to PhD levels with no apology. The nurse scholar who started PhD nursing and midwifery studies is herself a Vice Chancellor of one of the Public Universities in Ghana, obviously, the first nurse to ascend to that height in Ghana and the West Africa Sub region. The ladder is fully staged and there should not be any excuse whatsoever for the young nurse or midwife not to seek the fullness of nursing and midwifery education in Ghana.

Strategies for Nurse/Midwifery Educators to Advance Excellence

There is need to institute a national nursing and midwifery mentorship programme by the Nursing and Midwifery Council, the Ghana Health Service and the Ministry of Health to review the study leave policy to make it flexible and based on a comprehensive training needs assessment of the nursing and midwifery workforce for those in the service needing to upgrade their

knowledge and skills

The NMC, GRNMA and the GCNM to ensure that the entry point to professional nursing and midwifery starts from bachelor's degree level as soon as immediate. In a similar fashion that the Colleges of Education were mandated to start from degree so shall it be with nursing and midwifery. They (NMC, GRNMA and the GCNM) may dialogue on this matter soonest with the MOH, GHS and stakeholders in nursing and healthcare for a smooth political orientation and professional adjustment accordingly in starting the profession of nursing at the degree level. This will not only enhance the image of the profession of nursing and midwifery globally but will also provide a congenial platform for bargaining for better services and policies for the growth and development of the twin professions of nursing and midwifery.

The nurse/midwife scholars must stay focused, take calculated risks and work towards achieving their goals and aspirations. "Do not lose sight of the insignificant things that will make you stand out. Stop the inferiority complex, encourage, empower and build yourself. Remember that the best form of revenge is to succeed," (19).

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the GHS/MOH/NMC/GCNM/WAPCNM to hold fast NEPAD (2013), "university partnerships in Africa will need to be further strengthened in order to provide postgraduate programs that will help produce the best human resources for the workforce of nurses and midwives"(2).

The Caring Framework for Excellence (CFE) in Nursing Education is created by university nursing and midwifery schools. The generic structures that best represent teaching excellence excellence in teaching practice, teaching scholarship, and teaching leadership may give rise to this paradigm. In order to provide the best possible care for patients, this framework should ideally support excellence in nursing

and midwifery practice and, consequently, in nursing and midwifery education.

Research in nursing and midwifery will be supported by the Ghana National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). The National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), which seeks to increase the ability and capability of our present and future workforce to embrace and actively engage with research and innovation, values a workforce that is engaged in research. In order to enhance patient outcomes, transform services, and guarantee value for money, the NHIA will encourage and utilize the most significant research and innovations.

Upgrading all professional nursing and midwifery programs to bachelor degrees is something that health policymakers should think about because it could improve training quality and address the issue of many nurses and midwives pursuing bachelor's degree training shortly after starting work, which occasionally places them at the offending end of organizational policy.

CONCLUSION

The nursing and midwifery community must consciously make sure that they

- Support initiatives to promote clinical practice excellence by empowering and enabling nurses and midwives to practice at the level of their education and licensure to attain healthcare excellence through research and education in nursing and midwifery.
- Investigate and develop strategies for establishing a healthy work environment and implementing nurse-led workplace enhancements backed by evidence-based leadership paradigms.
- Step up our efforts to establish a culture of learning and education for midwives and nurses. In order to do this, we will work with partners both inside and outside the company to provide ongoing education to enhance professional skills and expertise.
- Dedicated to creating cutting-edge

programs that will help our teaming nurses and midwives provide better care in challenging work settings using effective and high-quality research and teaching. Among these is technological innovation aimed at enhancing interdisciplinary team collaboration.

- Offer educational and research programs that will enable nurses and midwives to access their professional development portfolio and better control their own career trajectories.

The place of achieving academic excellence in healthcare through higher education and research in the nursing and midwifery professions cannot be overemphasized in today's ever growing and technologically drifting health care system. The need to be equipped above the possession of registered nurse is gaining more ground, while seeking diversification for the yet to be explored fields and opportunities, is generating much more concern. According to Tedros, World Health Organisation's Director General, during the 2019 Pakistani Nursing and Midwifery Summit, "Nurses and midwives are not doctor's assistants. They are health professionals in their own right, with specific skills and training that enable them to perform a wide variety of essential roles" This accession shows the increasing greater nursing responsibility that can only be attained through quality higher nursing and midwifery education. When medical doctors and their peers see nurses and midwives in like education frame, they equally see each other in the health team as co-equals. In this frame, they see each other as team players on similar footing, imbibing greater respect and support for the good of their clients. Therefore, with adequate planning, implementation and evaluation, much can be achieved. Nurses and midwives must all follow the train and trend. Otherwise, tomorrow may not have a place for them as co-players on equal footing with the rest of the health team members.

Because of the professionalism and commitment they bring to nursing and

midwifery education and research on a daily basis, every nurse and midwife researcher working in Ghana's universities, colleges, and larger healthcare system deserves everyone's recommendation. They are contributing to improving patient care and establishing the professionalism of midwives and nurses in Ghana. Their work is crucial to ensuring that nursing and midwifery remain professions that value quality and make nurses and midwives proud of their generality.

Until now, there is no known nationwide plan in Ghana to assist nursing leaders and educators in increasing the proportion of bachelor degree-prepared registered nurses and midwives in Ghana. Without a plan or an urgency to address this problem, no policy advancement in nursing or midwifery education or practice will be able to advance the course of nursing and midwifery professionalism in Ghana. The purpose of this article is to define the problem, describe the plan, and establish a call to action for increasing the proportion of higher education in nursing and midwifery to advance quality and safe nursing and midwifery care in Ghana. This we just did.

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