



## History of Nursing and Their Role in Modern Healthcare

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### Abstract

Nurses play an essential role in society in improving healthcare facilities among the people. The history of professional nursing traditionally begins with Florence Nightingale in the mid-19th century. The nursing facilities all over the world are evolving day to day due to technological advancement all over the world. This study will focus on the history of nursing and how the nursing facilities evolve over the time. Additionally, the role of nursing in the modern healthcare system has also been evaluated throughout the study and how technology and other factors changed the nursing facilities in present time. The nurses all over the world play a significant role in care giving, managing patients and assisting doctors in order to give direct care to the patients. In this study, secondary quantitative data sets are collected from other research papers and journals for analysing the role of nursing in modern society. Results of the analysis have been discussed in the discussion and data analysis section. The discussion section of this study has emphasised on the role of nursing in the modern healthcare system. Consequently, this study includes providing recommendations to improve nursing systems all over the world and overcoming different healthcare issues in future.

Keywords: Nursing, healthcare system, nursing facilities, history of nursing

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### 1. Introduction

Nursing is an integral part of the healthcare system and it is an important profession that plays a crucial role in patient safety and care. Nurses' role in the healthcare system is difficult to evaluate as it has numerous unspecified aspects. When nurses' work is neglected it affects public health and the healthcare facility negatively. Historically, professional nursing started with the Florence Nightingale in the mid-19th century and it evolved over time. This study is performed to determine the historic background of nursing and to understand the role of nursing facilities in modern healthcare. Besides, this study is also performed to evaluate the role of nursing in the healthcare system of the modern age.

### 1.1 Aim of the study

The main purpose and aim of the study are to understand the history of nursing and how nursing facilities evolve over time. Besides, the study will also focus on the role of nursing in modern times.

Objectives

- To evaluate the history of nursing facilities in the healthcare system
- To determine the evolution of nursing facilities over time in the healthcare system
- To understand the role of nursing facilities in the modern healthcare system

### 1.2 Significance of the study

Nursing is an inseparable part of the healthcare system which encompasses the promotion of health and the prevention of physical and mental illness. The nursing profession is associated with public health care and it is also important for ensuring the physical and mental health of people. The nursing facility in the world evolves over time from its beginning. Therefore, understanding the historical background of nursing and the evolution of nursing is very important. Healthcare facilities are crucial for society to give people a healthy and tension-free life. Considering this, the main focus of the study is to determine the role of the nursing profession in modern healthcare. Hence, the following study bears significance for having a core idea regarding the history and role of nursing.

### 1.3 Operational definition

#### Nursing practices

Nursing practice is the systematic approach of substantial specialised proficiency and skills that are derived from the physical, behavioural and biological sciences to care for and provide treatment to physically and mentally ill people. Nursing practices also encompass assisting physicians and other health care experts to provide patients care and advice to get a healthy life.

#### Healthcare

Healthcare refers to the maintaining and restoring of health through the treatment, lifestyle modification and prevention of disease specifically by trained and licensed professionals. Healthcare basically refers to the prevention and treatment to get a physically and mentally healthy life.

## 2. History of Nursing

The word "Nurse" originated from the Latin word "Nutrire" but in the late 16th century it attained its modern meaning which is "*person who cares for the infirm*". Historically, professional nursing started with Florence Nightingale in the 19th century [1]. Nightingale challenged social norms by becoming a nurse. At that time, the public objected to the idea of women's nursing but nightingale saw it as an opportunity for women to serve the community. She believed that patient care can be improved by using education and scientific knowledge. The nursing profession's evolution accelerated later during the American civil war [2]. Fighting erupted in North and South America due to the civil war. Women, mostly the mistresses or wives of soldiers, began following the armies and primarily, they treated the sick troops suffering from pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria and typhoid. Besides, the volunteer nurses and sometimes the female slaves helped to save a huge number of lives.

Consequently, respect for nursing grew over time among Americans and all over the world. During different epidemics such as cholera, smallpox and typhus, men played a significant

role at that time. Stephen Girard won the hearts of the citizens of Philadelphia for his courageous and compassionate nursing of the victims during the yellow fever epidemic. During urbanisation and industrialisation, different hospitals and healthcare centres were established where some patients received excellent care [3]. Women and men from the religious nursing orders were generally known for the quality nursing facilities provided in the established hospitals. Hospitals formed their training institutes to train nurses for providing people with more effective and good services. Lectures and clinical instructions are provided to the students to educate them and make them competent for giving quality healthcare to the patients. The Crimean war and both the World wars are significant for improving facilities around the world [4]. At the time of war men and women from different professions came to treat the injured and sick soldiers and that helped society to understand the importance of nurses.

### 3. Evolution of nursing over time

Professional nursing facilities started in the early 19th century and wars played a significant role to improve nursing awareness among the people. The evolution of nursing facilities started after the 19th century and modern-day nursing is different from the time of the Crimean war [5]. Nursing facilities have changed over time specifically in the education and training areas of nursing. Technology and healthcare awareness are the main factors that help in the evolution of nursing facilities. Presently nurses have to perform a wide range of work that includes taking vital symptoms of patients, recording medical histories, and conducting physical examinations and they also have to work under the instruction of physicians. Nurses are getting proper training to perform these works and technology helps them to perform these works efficiently.

Different nursing training institutes were formed after the 19th century to make nurses competent for performing different works in patient care. The evidence-based practice began in the 1990s and appeared after 2000 nursing [6]. Evidence-based practice is a systematic approach that integrates clinical experience with scientific knowledge. It helps to improve nursing practice for the patients and it is also effective to get a positive outcome for sick patients. Evidence-based practice is useful in recent times to identify clinical problems and streamline the healthcare process. Not only has the practice approach of nursing changed over time but also the resources of nursing changed over time due to technological advancement. Advanced equipment and diagnosis techniques are the main cause of change in nursing facilities. Professional nurses work independently and in collaboration with other healthcare professionals and nursing is becoming a popular profession globally. Around 2.9 million registered nurses in the United States alone and that determines nursing facilities in the modern age are improving [7].

### 4. Subjects and methods

Research methods and designs are the techniques and processes that are used in the research study to understand and evaluate the issue. Determining effective research methods is important to perform a research study efficiently. During the research different research types, philosophies, and data collection methods are needed to understand the research study more efficiently... This research follows the *exploratory research design* to understand the role of nursing in modern days. Research philosophy is also important for a research study and it gives insight into ideas to perform research effectively. The *interpretivism research*

*philosophy* has been followed in this research and this philosophy helps to identify the main factors that need to focus on during the study [8]. This research study follows the *secondary qualitative data collection* methods to perform the research study more efficiently. The secondary qualitative data collection method is time efficient and it is also reliable for the study [9]. During the data collection, authentic journals, websites and newspaper articles that are published after 2018 are selected to collect data.

It makes this research more authentic and reliable and data analysis is also an important part of a research study, it gives an overall understanding of the outcome and helps to evaluate the outcomes of the study. This research has followed the *qualitative data analysis method* that makes this research study more time efficient. During the data analysis process, different themes have been formed according to the role of nursing in the modern age. This *thematic analysis* is crucial to understand the issue more prominently and it gives the advantage in the evaluation of research results [10]. During the research different ethical aspects have been considered to make the research study ethically correct

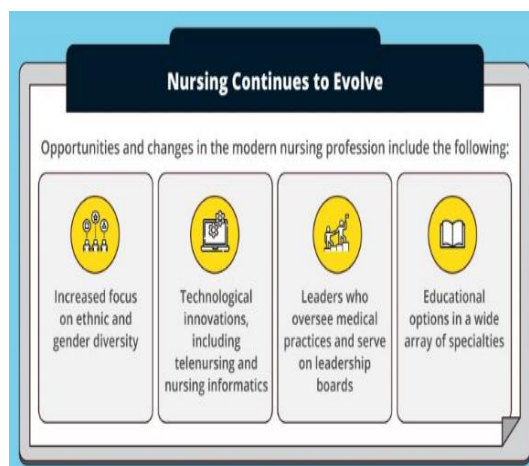
## 5. Result

### 5.1 Factors that help to evolve nursing facilities over the time

Professional nursing facilities started in the early 90s and evolved over time and nursing has grown in complexity from its origination. Few factors are there that help nursing facilities to evolve over time. New development in nursing facilities including education, training, advanced automated equipment and diversity among the nurses are influenced more to evolve nursing facilities. Development is the most effective tool to evolve any service and *development in the healthcare sector* is the most effective here to provide optimal treatments to patients. *Technology* plays a significant role in healthcare facility development. Emerging telehealth facilities and the innovation of automated equipment are crucial parts of today's medical facilities [11]. *Telehealth facility* helps patients to get nursing advice over the phone and it also helps the nursing staff to provide care to more people in a small time frame. *Advanced automated diagnostic equipment* and caregiving instruments are the main pillar of evolution in nursing facilities.

This equipment makes nursing staff more efficient and accurate at their work. *Education in the nursing profession* is very important to give care to needy people. The education system of nursing facilities is more advanced than before and it is more scientific. *Evidence-based practices* are the main pillar of success in the nursing education system. [12] Presently, nurses adopt evidence-based practice methods to get success in caregiving to needy people. Curriculums of bachelor's degree in nursing are mainly focused on the evidence-based learning method and also pay attention to the practical trial methods which enable nursing professionals to be more capable in caregiving to patients.

*Diversity including ethnicity and gender* is the main factor that helps to evolve the nursing system globally. Presently, the patient population is more diverse than before at the same time, inequalities in society are increasing. These days, people from different cast, ethnicity, genders and cultures are taking training from nursing institutes for giving healthcare to patients. Diversity among the nurses helps to remove discrimination among the patients and the diversification of the nursing workforce is important to address issues and helps to give effective treatment to the patients.



**Figure 1:** Factors that influence nursing facility evolution  
(Source: Influenced by [12] )

## 5.2 Role of nursing in modern healthcare

Nurses are the primary caregivers to the patients and are responsible for understanding the complex treatment measurements of a patient. Nurses work individually and also work in collaboration with other healthcare professionals to give patients optimum healthcare facilities. Registered nurse has multiple responsibilities to their patients. Nurses organised the patient's care and the primary role of nurses is educating patients about their healthcare awareness. They link the patients and a multidisciplinary team to provide cohesive medical treatments to sick people. Nurses have essential duties to provide patients with optimum treatment for improving the health of sick people. [13] Essential duties are centred around the different roles of the nurse and these include the following responsibilities

**Medication and treatment administration** is the primary role of nurses in giving healthcare facilities. Nursing professionals assist patients with medication and other healthcare advice to improve patients' health. They identify the symptoms and collect previous medical records that help the physicians to make treatment planning. **Client education** is also a crucial part to give people a healthy and tension-free life and nurses play a significant role in giving healthcare education to the people. Nurses educate people about the different health-related complications and make them aware of the symptoms. They also educate people about prevention measures for certain health-related issues. **Diagnosis** is the most important aspect of treating physically and mentally ill patients and nurses play a crucial role in diagnosing diseases.

Advanced technology evolves the healthcare system in the modern age and healthcare equipment evolves with time. Therefore, operating modern healthcare equipment is the most important part of caregiving to sick people. Due to modern training in nursing institutes, nurses learn to operate this new equipment and that helps them to diagnose people and deliver care to the patients. **Case management** is an important part of treating patients with severe complications. Nurses help other healthcare professionals to manage the case which helps doctors and other caregivers to plan treatment for sick people [14]. Nurses make records related to the medication and diagnosis reports from time to time and it helps doctors to suggest further procedures for the patient. Besides, nurses are the **communicator between physicians and patients**. They monitor the patient from time to time and inform doctors

about the physical and mental condition of the patient. It helps to keep severe patients out of danger and also helps to get out of the health-related issues of the patients.

## **6. Discussion**

Nursing facilities are important in caregiving to physically and mentally sick people and it originated in the early 90s. After the origination, nursing facilities around the world evolved over time. Different factors have played a significant role in this evolution and these factors also help the patient to optimum nursing facilities in the modern age. Development in the healthcare sector, telehealth facility, advanced automated equipment, educational development and diversification of the nursing profession are the main factors which influence the evolution of nursing facilities. Telehealth services play a significant role in caregiving to patients [15]. Telehealth facility helps the nursing staff to give proper advice over the phone to the patients. It enables them to attend to more patients in a small time frame and makes nursing facilities more efficient. Advanced automated diagnostic and caregiving equipment make nursing staff more capable to give optimum care to patients.

Educational development is the major factor that evolves nursing facilities over time. Advanced training and education in nursing enable nursing staff to identify diseases and also help to give care to patients. Diversification of ethnicity, caste and gender is the most influential in the improvement of nursing facilities over time. It enables them to understand the issues prominently and makes them more capable to deliver the optimum care to the patients. Nursing facilities and the role of nursing staff have evolved over time. Nurses give assistance to physicians and other healthcare experts by providing health-related advice to patients. Medication and treatment administration is the main role of nursing staff in recent days. Nursing staff observe different symptoms of patients and provide health advice to get a healthy life.

These days, nurses have a crucial role in improving patients' education and awareness. They provide advice to the patients related to their physical and mental complications and it helps them to live healthy and tension-free lives. These days, nurses are capable of handling different advanced diagnostic equipment and they can diagnose patients effectively. It makes treating patients easy for physicians and makes the healthcare system more reliable. Nursing staff plays a significant role in the patient's case management. Nursing staff these days makes medication and diagnosis report-related records to assist doctors in treatment procedures [16]. Nurses act as the communicator between physicians and patients and that improves the health care facility.

## **7. Conclusion**

Nurses are considered the main pillar of the healthcare system for assisting doctors and other healthcare experts to treat patients prominently. Nurses play a significant role in providing healthcare and also give advice to patients to live healthy and tension-free lives. On this note, technological development is the main factor that helps nursing facilities to improve over time. Telehealth facilities and advanced automated equipment are important factors in improving the nursing and healthcare system. Besides, the educational development and diversification of ethnicity, race, caste and gender also help the nursing facility to improve in recent times. Modern healthcare facilities depend on the nursing staff and they play a significant role in medication and treatment administration, diagnosis, patient case management and improving communication between patients and doctors. Considering all

these, the implementation of technologies and enhancing nursing knowledge can provide support in providing better care to patients and ensuring a sustainable outcome.

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