

# Clinical Application of Nightingale's Theory

Anila Naz AliSher<sup>1</sup>, Samia Atta<sup>2</sup>, Iqra Yasin<sup>3</sup>, Muhammad Ahmed Sohail<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>MscN Student at Aga Khan University Karachi Pakistan and Nursing Faculty at Mayo Hospital Lahore,

<sup>2</sup>MscN Student at Aga Khan University Karachi Pakistan and Nursing Faculty at Nishtar Hospital Multan,

<sup>3</sup>MscN Student at Aga Khan University and Faculty at Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital Lahore,

<sup>4</sup>Registered Nurse at Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital Lahore

## ABSTRACT

This Paper is based on the Florence Nightingale theory and application of her theory on clinical grounds for the improvement of nursing practice. A careful step by step approach is being adopted to discuss case scenario, main concepts of theory, analysis, hypothesis and conclusion.

Since, DM is become a major cause of morbidity and mortality throughout the world. Unavailability of better nursing services, petty management, poor personal cleanliness and congested environment is one of the reasons of compromised care of diabetic patients. Therefore, the paper focusing on a lot of things which could be better while providing care to a diabetic patient to modify the environment and to make the patient feel better by implementing Florence nightingale theory principles.

This paper would enable the readers to identify all environmental factors which can exaggerate any patient's health conditions and propose different strategies and ways to correct them in order to gain level of recovery and satisfaction among patients.

**Keywords:** *Nightingale's theory, Theory Analysis, Clinical Application of Theory.*

## INTRODUCTION

Florence nightingale (1820-1910), is considered as first nurse theorist. Her theory of nursing focused on the environment and she gave a detailed portrayal of each feature of environment in her theory. Nightingale's concepts of theory are brief, simple and easy to understand. It is still applicable to practice today. It makes the nurses to work more efficiently by using their own intuition about patient care and modification of environment.

Nightingale wrote about many of the essential beliefs of the natural hygiene movement. She referred to these hygienic beliefs as the "*laws of life*". In Nightingale theory the person himself is responsible for his health but collaboration with nurse and environmental factors.

According to Florence nightingale many of the problems faced by the patients are not directly related to their ailment but the environment in which they are living.

## Over view of Theory

Four major concept meta-paradigms of Florence nightingale theory are the following

### Human

In Florence Nightingale's theory, "A person is one of the elements in the four metaparadigms in the individual receiving care" <sup>7</sup>.

### Environment

The environment plays a very vital role in maintaining health and wellbeing and promoting recovery. And environment of patient is a changeable thing. It could change according to the person's need and health by nurses. "An environment that promotes health allows the patient to retain their energy, or vital powers for use towards self-healing" <sup>6</sup>.

### Nursing

Nursing is basically the modification of patient

environment to provide him comfort during disease period. Florence Nightingale describes “I use the word nursing for want of a better. It has been limited to signify little more than the administration of medicines and the application of poultices”<sup>6</sup>. Nursing aids in the ability of a person to maintain health and to heal, by managing the environment.

**Health**

Health is a dynamic process according to Nightingale “Health is not only to be well, but to be able to use well every power we have”<sup>7</sup>.

Nightingale relates the health with 6 essential elements in order to secure an individual’s health. “These include fresh air, pure water, well-organized drainage, cleanliness as well as proper light”<sup>3</sup>.

**Florence Nightingale main concepts of environment described in 6 D’s**

elements	comments
Dirt & Dust	personal hygiene as well as sanitation of houses
Drinking water	Pure Drinking water
Dietary habits	must take healthy fresh and balanced diet
Damping	dried out and a little warm environment
Draughts	Air ventilations
Drainage system	proper drainage and sewer systems

(Google images, 2013)

**Sub concepts of Nightingale theory**

- \* Ventilation and warming
- \* Variety
- \* Light
- \* Chattering hopes and advices
- \* Noise
- \* Taking food - What food?
- \* Cleanliness of rooms
- \* Petty management
- \* Health of houses

- \* Observation of the sick
- \* Bed and bedding
- \* Personal cleanliness

These are referred to as Nightingale’s 13 Canons<sup>6</sup>.

**Assumptions**

There are seven assumptions of Nightingale’s theory. According to Selanders, Nightingale philosophical assumptions are identified and serve as the basis for the model development.

These assumptions are following

Natural laws

Human beings are able to can gain perfection.

Nursing is a calling as well as it is an art and a science.

Nursing can be attaining by environmental changes.

Nursing requires a definite didactic support; and nursing is distinct and separate from medicine

**Clinical scenario**

A couple of years back, I come across the most despondent situation of my practical life in nursing profession. I was sent by my chief nursing superintendent to a surgical unit of one of the tertiary care hospital of Lahore for the duty as a head nurse. When I entered the ward, I feel a very bad smell. I take a round of ward for the sake of searching out the smell origin. Because it was annoying all the patients present in the ward I feel everyone was disturb due to that.

when I entered the 2<sup>nd</sup> portion of ward the intensity of smell got increased and what I have seen there was a middle aged poor man lying on dirty hospital bed sheet which was stained with urine, under his bed there was a bed pan and a urinal as well as a dust bin full of dirty swabs and dressing material. His daughter was standing beside him. The smell was arousing from this poor old man. After inquiry from her daughter I came to know that he was admitted 15 days back with the history of diabetic foot in this surgical ward. According to a report of international diabetes federation there were over 7 million cases of diabetes in Pakistan in 2015<sup>1,3</sup>.DM is become a major cause of morbidity and

mortality throughout the world. The patient was admitted for wound debridement but now he is suffering from fever malaise and shivering also. Reason of fever was unknown. Baseline investigations were sent to lab to find out the reason of fever. His daughter was with him from the time of admission to until now. And she was the only person who was caring this poor man because she was his only offspring.

Near to the patient bed side trolley there was a lot of eatable openly placed in which fruits and other things were placed. There were 2 windows in ICU area of that surgical ward and both were closed due to AC. Therefore there was no outlet for smell to out and to ventilate the area of ward.

I asked to a staff nurse who was giving medicine to the patients that why this patient and the area surrounding him is being so dirty? Why she is not giving much attention to this patient? Then she said that she is only one nurse in this 50 bedded ward due to severe shortage of nurses and she have to perform so many tasks so she is unable to give equal attention to all patients. After more inquiry she told that she has ordered the sweeper so many times to empty the dustbin and make this patient area clean as well as to change the bed sheet but the sweeper refused to do it because this poor patient was unable to give him money so he will not do anything for the sake of this patient.

At that time what I could do for this patient is that I advised his daughter to cover all eatables as it could contaminate by germs and can be a health hazard for her father and herself. I advised to old man that he need to go to washroom with the help of wheelchair so that his blood circulation could improve in different parts of body including limbs. "One of the nurses' duties is helping patients with diabetic foot ulcers to have the movement of limbs"<sup>1</sup>. He should not use bed pan and urinals to avoid from many other health problems for this purpose.

### **Analysis**

When I look back towards my case scenario to keep Florence theory in mind, I came to know that there were a lot of things which could be better at that place to modify the environment and to make the patient feel better by implementing Florence nightingale theory principles if I could have a better understanding of her theory at that time.

My patient was a poor diabetic and being neglected in terms of environmental factors. According to a statistics "Pakistan is a poor country, having very little quota for health budget. 24\$ per person cost of diabetes in Pakistan<sup>3</sup>. As the disease burden of diabetes is already very high in Pakistan. So by providing them a better environment as well as better nursing care, mortality and morbidity rate could be minimize and could increase the life expectancy among diabetic patients. As in my scenario the patient was not availing even the basic nursing care. According to nightingale theory one of her canon was chattering hopes and provides advises to patient make them feel better and it create a sense of security among patient.

Unavailability of better nursing services and good environment was one of the reason of his poor exaggerating condition as well as petty management ,personal cleanliness and bed and bedding were also needs to addressed at that time . Here I will not blame only a nurse to responsible for that but also the poor cooperation of janitorial staff with nurse and the patient. According to Florence "Bad sanitary, bad architectural and bad administrative arrangements often make it impossible to nurse to provide a better environment to patient"<sup>6</sup>

The windows of ward in my scenario were closed due to AC and that's why the ward was so stinking. At that time I too thinks like the windows should need to be closed so that cooling could preserve but Florence nightingale argued in her theory that "I have known in one summer three cases of hospital pyaemia, one of phlebitis, two of consumptive cough all the immediate products of foul air." It showed that opening of windows is necessary to allow fresh air to get in rooms and foul smelly air to go out. So I conclude that my patient's fever was might due to this stingy environment because there was no any other known reason of fever.

Another issue in my scenario is that I observe that all eatables were uncovered placed on bed side trolley of my patient. As in Florence nightingale theory she described that "the use of any chamber utensil without a lid should be utterly abolished, whether among sick well"<sup>6</sup> so it could be harmful not only for the patient but also for a healthy person.

Another issue which really makes feel sad about the situation is that shortage of nurses in Pakistan which leads to poor nursing care ". The existing nurse-

patient ratio in Pakistan is approximately 1:50 whereas the ratio prescribed by the Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC) is 1:10 in general areas and 2:1 in specialized areas<sup>3,4</sup>. This is the main issue which should be solved by administration and government steps and initiatives.

That area of hospital was at risk of many ailments so by using Nightingale's principles and observations about the environment I developed a plan in my mind to improve that situation.

### Hypothesis

(A)-If patient will be provided a hygienically good environment in the health care setting then there is probability of having occurrence of complication will be reduced.

(B)- If policy makers and stakeholders focus to increase the number of the nurses in the hospitals it will decrease nurse patient ratio as well as the shortage of nurses will decrease in order to maintain community health status which ultimately leads to achieve health outcomes.

(C)-Health education and counselling play a major role in self-care among patients. So, if diabetic patients are being taught about self-care and foot care during hospitalization and on follow ups then the probability of having amputation will be reduced.

(D)- The government needs to initiate the department that focus on quality assurance, need assessment and management of the hospitals and its staff, it will help to better manage the ward condition which ultimately increase the quality of care.

### CONCLUSION

Florence Nightingale theory is based on her personal experiences which she faces during providing care to sick and injured soldiers. In her theory she described that there is very strong relationship of a person with his/her environment, health and nurse. Being a nurse I need to know the ways by which I can provide better health to my patients as in my scenario I failed to take

care of my patient in such way. After this assignment I am able to identify the all environmental factors which can exaggerate of any patient health and ways to correct them in order to gain level of recovery and satisfaction among patients.

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