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Impact of nurse practitioners in community-based interventions for physical and mental health

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Abstract

Nurse practitioners, usually a registered nurse with advanced clinical training, have an influential role in health care system. By stimulating the general public regarding lifestyle modifications, they can be productive in the vast sphere of public health, contributing significantly to the reduction of health risks in families and communities. Nurse practitioners conduct systematic screenings to detect several infectious diseases in the initial stages and implement client-focused interventions, which can have a positive financial impact on the disease burden and ultimately improve community health outcomes. Moreover, they raise public awareness about non-communicable diseases such as cardiac disorders, cancer and diabetes mellitus, which remain the leading causes of death in the current framework of health conditions. Nurse practitioners recognize mental illness by screening through mental status examinations for conditions like depression and anxiety. They can collaborate with physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists and other health professionals to provide integrated care. Despite the possibility of their profuse contributions in the field of public health, nurse practitioners still face challenges in impersonating their role in public health for several reasons. They have limited authority in treatment and management when compared to physicians. There is no global policy or uniformity of rules regarding training and competence-based education; different countries have different policies. These barriers hamper their full integration into public health care. In conclusion, health organizations should develop global policies to empower nurse practitioners to provide comprehensive patient care.

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Introduction

Nurse Practitioners (NP), usually a registered nurses with advanced clinical training, play a pivotal role in community promoting public health. They contribute by encouraging client focused lifestyle modifications and reduce the high-risk health behaviour in families and communities. Their role is primarily concentrated on disease prevention and long-term health outcomes. They actively support the early intervention strategies to reduce the disease burden by conducting health education sessions and encouraging the importance and maintenance of healthy diet, exercise and mental well-being. These activities not only improve current treatment outcomes but also have a considerable effect on reduction in incidence and prevalence of chronic diseases.^{1,2}

Physical Health Promotion

Furthermore, NP conduct and participate in the regular systematic sessions of screening in the initial stages of several diseases and implement lifestyle-focused interventions, which has a positive financial impact on patients and ultimately improve community health outcomes. Moreover, they raise public understanding and awareness about non-communicable diseases such as cardiac disorders, cancer and diabetes mellitus, which remain the leading causes of death in the current framework of health. They share knowledge and influence attitudes regarding diet, nutrition and lifestyle, smoking cessation, stress management and incorporating yoga therapy into daily routines.³ Their work in educating individuals regarding the health risks associated with smoking, can provide cessation support, or advise on dietary changes and exercise routines to prevent cardiovascular diseases. Therefore, there is an emerging need for an increased number of NPs in healthcare delivery systems to improve the quality of health services and healthcare outcomes.⁴

The NPs have a wider range of tasks in dealing with complex ageing population, other than the care physicians provide. Their expanding presence in healthcare delivery underlines the significance in ongoing reforms to improve delivery models and payment systems.⁵

Active involvement in managing chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and asthma, add value in development and implementation of individual nursing care plans, including consistent monitoring, patient education, and scheduled follow-up appointments. They guide patients and caregivers on medication adherence and self-monitoring techniques. Moreover, they encourage participation to reduce disease complications and strive for better long-term outcomes. Their approach is deeply rooted in the empowerment of patients; they motivate individuals to take an active role in their healthcare journey. That is why patients and family members are also delighted with the compassionate and communicative approach of Nps. They are regularly described as attentive, understanding and holistic caregivers.⁶

Mental Health Promotion

Mental health is just as important as physical health. In the current era, mental health is a growing concern for public health due to hectic schedules and is often ignored by individuals themselves. The NP recognizes mental illness by screening through mental status examinations for conditions like depression and anxiety. They provide nursing interventions to reduce these disorders as well. They keep patients engaged using a holistic approach, including yoga, which can significantly reduce these issues in the field. As per their scope of practice, they can diagnose and treat mental illness through non-pharmacological interventions. They can manage mild to moderate depression, anxiety and stress. Additionally, nowadays, substance abuse is more common in community areas. They can educate individuals about the deadly side effects and refer them for further management in specialized treatment centres.⁷

They collaborate with physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, and other health professionals to provide integrated care. This comprehensive approach ensures that patients are receiving treatment during home visits. The NPs may better promote physical and mental health in the local language within a supportive healthcare environment, as they are familiar with the culture, customs and beliefs. They can

explain which practices are good for health and which are not. As the public can trust them, a healthy relationship is built with patients, which helps enhance physical and mental health outcomes.

Challenges and Opportunities

Despite their positive contributions, NPs face challenges in promotive health in the community. In remote areas, transport facilities, road infrastructure, climate and safety issues are major concerns. Additionally, they have limited authority in treatment and management compared to physicians. There is no global policy or uniform rules; different countries have different policies. These barriers also hamper their full integration into public health care. While community-based interventions effectively manage multiple chronic conditions, more rigorous research is required on outcomes and cost-effectiveness to guide sustainable healthcare policies.⁸ The NPs are essential and growing in the field, as the doctor-to-population ratio is low. Nowadays, they also undergo specific courses in telehealth. These advanced and digital technologies have made remote consultation, health education and follow-up care easier. They can collaborate with physicians and patients for better outcomes.

Evidence indicates that nurse practitioner-led telehealth improves access, enhances patient engagement, and increases satisfaction. Community-based therapies also demonstrate success in managing chronic conditions like hypertension and type 2 diabetes. Peer support programs, in particular, help improve self-management and dietary habits. However, logistics, cultural relevance, sustainability and practical evaluation must be addressed for lasting impact and integration.^{9,10}

Conclusion

Nurse Practitioners play an important role in screening, prevention and management of chronic conditions in the community. They can vital role in assessment of mental health using standardized tools, non-pharmacological interventions like yoga, community health talks and community engagement for socio-cultural

practices. Their close interaction with patient-centred approach helps both immediate and long-term health improvements. They play a crucial role in improving quality care in the community by collaboratively with physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, and other health professionals and can maximise the output using advanced digital technologies like telehealth. There is a need to establish norms, rules and regulations, and have policies to support them for in healthcare delivery, especially in community engagement.

Author contribution

Concept and design: JS, GSC; Literature search-EK, GSC, JP; Data analysis: All; Draft manuscript: All; Final manuscript and accountability: All

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