Nurses’ clinical judgment in palliative care

Mahvash Salsali¹, Seidi J² and Alhani F³
¹Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Iran
²Sanandaj University of Medical Sciences, Iran
³Tarbiat Modares University of Medical Sciences, Iran

Nurses’ clinical judgments and decisions have the potential to help health care systems distribute resources efficiently, prevent harm, and promote health achievement and patient benefit. The core characteristics or competencies of nurses included are: clinical judgment, advocacy and ethics, collaboration, professionalism, communication, cultural components, as well as facilitation of learning. Clinical judgment is one of the key attributes of professional practice. It is a prerequisite for establishing professional identity and is mainly based on nurses’ knowledge and experience as well as their reasoning, intuition, clinical thinking, and evidence-based practice skills. Evidence from healthcare systems around the world suggests that judgments made by nurses could be improved and we need to know more about nurses’ judgments, the interventions likely to improve their decisions, and outcomes. In this qualitative study we aimed to explore the process of Iranian nurses’ professionalization in clinical judgment. The data were collected based on semi-structured interviews and the study included 24 participants. Data analysis was carried out concurrently with data collection using the grounded theory method. The study findings revealed that the participants employed different strategies for becoming professional in clinical judgment development. These strategies constituted the core category of the study, which was ‘struggling for becoming professional in clinical judgment’. To the best of our knowledge, none of the previous studies had explored the process of professionalization in clinical judgment. However, several studies have reported some of the properties and strategies of professionalization in clinical judgment. The findings provided critical information about nurses’ professionalization in clinical judgment. Accordingly, the participants adopted different strategies to develop their clinical judgment ability. Integrating these strategies into nursing theory and clinical education can improve nurses’ clinical judgment ability especially in the field of palliative care.

The role and function of nurses in the transforming work of Mercy Ships

Sonja Dawson
Avondale College of Higher Education, Australia

Recent estimates by the WHO state that although more people have access to basic health care than any other time in history, over 400 Million people are still lacking access to one of the seven essential services (World Health Organization 2015). An inability to access health care contributes to feelings of powerlessness, ridicule, despair and even death. Nurses and other health professionals are engaged with both governmental and non-governmental organisations to provide care within international humanitarian relief and development contexts as a compassionate response. Mercy Ships, an international, non-governmental organisation exists to that end, using ocean going to bring hope and healing. Urgent needs of the forgotten poor are addressed through surgery in this unique hospital setting, including those needing reconstructive procedures for head and neck tumours, burn contractures, congenital defects, eye disease, and injuries sustained through obstructed labour. The concept of care, which is intricately interwoven into nursing, fundamentally seeks to improve the quality of life by extending compassion, promoting dignity, and to nurture and empower both individuals and communities. Volunteer nurses with Mercy Ships administer holistic care of body, mind and spirit to begin the process of transformation of the ‘human condition’ which often fulfils one’s need to be loved, to feel valued and to function within the environment in a healthy, whole and meaningful way.