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Community nursing: Leadership in a transitioning healthcare environment

Statement of the Problem: The increase in the burden of disease and associated costs are unbaiting globally. The current healthcare systems and financing models of most countries are unable to deal with this crisis. The increasing healthcare problems require a new breed of leaders from all sectors and stakeholders in healthcare. The purpose of this presentation is to illustrate how the community nursing fraternity should take up the challenge of providing leadership in an ever changing and transitioning healthcare system.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: The study highlights trends in the global healthcare delivery systems that are moving towards a community health approach. The disease burden and escalating costs are illustrated – using South African data as examples. The current South African National Health Insurance Bill is summarized into a framework to identify areas requiring Community Nursing skills and leadership. The shortcomings in healthcare delivery systems are discussed with a view to community nursing leadership qualities and skills required to meet the current challenges. Examples from UK NHS experience are shared illustrating how significant legislative changes were made over time to enhance the role of nursing in general to meet the prevailing challenges of healthcare.

Conclusion: The healthcare delivery challenges experienced globally require that nurses; particularly the community nursing fraternity steps up to the challenges and provide leadership by influencing events and policy to ensure that healthcare is improved or reformed to meet the healthcare needs of most of their country populations; particularly the most poor and vulnerable.

Biography

James Arens currently works as an independent consultant in the healthcare industry in South Africa. He has vast experience in both the public and private healthcare systems both as clinician and executive manager. Whilst working as a lecturer at the University of Cape Town, Pharmacology department, he published 6 academic papers in local and international reputable journals - including the Cochrane Review. The last twelve years has been spent in the private healthcare sector at senior and executive management levels as well as consulting. His focus is on conceptualizing sustainable strategies and operations in the healthcare sector.

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