

## **A Review of the Implementation of Nursing Process in Hospitals in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria: Focus on the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo**

**GE Peters<sup>1\*</sup>, Ekpeyong AU<sup>1</sup>, Moffat BE<sup>2</sup> and Ben UU<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Nursing Science, University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria*

<sup>2</sup>*Nursing Services Department, University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo, Nigeria*

**\*Corresponding Author:** GE Peters, Department of Nursing Science, University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria.

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### **Abstract**

A retrospective review of the implementation of nursing process in Akwa Ibom State hospitals was carried out with particular focus on the university of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. This review was done using unstructured interview and interface with the various cadre of nurses. The review centred on the acceptability and level of implementation of nursing process tool in the hospital by the nurses working in the hospital. The findings showed that so many nurses were still reluctant in the implementation and not willing to adapt readily to the changes of using nursing process as a tool for nursing care because of various reasons sited by the nurses. The factors elicited from the nurses as major constraints include the following: that it is too cumbersome, time consuming and moreover there is lack of enough manpower and lack of adequate support from hospital management amongst others. It is recommended that the heads of nursing services in the various hospitals should organise mandatory workshops and seminars on nursing process implementation for their nurses aimed at updating their knowledge regularly. Similarly, management of all health institutions in the state should also provide necessary support needed to successfully implement the nursing process in the various hospitals in the state. Reward mechanisms and incentives should be introduced to further motivate the nurses in the adoption of nursing process implementation as a tool in the hospitals.

**Keywords:** *Review; Nursing Process; Implementation; Hospitals; Uyo; Nigeria*

### **Introduction**

Nursing is an independent profession that is concerned about the client's total need and is accountable to the consumers of health care. In order to fulfill this responsibility and ensure consumers satisfaction, there was a need to develop a systematic and rational pattern for the practice of nursing.

Adopted initially from the general system theory, nursing process was developed and implemented in the field of nursing education. With the increasing demand for accountability in every health institution, therefore there is need to implement nursing process in practical care in these institutions.

Toney and Thayer [1] reported that, Ida Jean Orlando in 1958 started the nursing process that still guides nursing care practice today. This is defined as a systematic approach to the care that uses the fundamental principles like critical thinking, client centered approaches to treatment, goal oriented tasks, evidenced based practice recommendations in nursing institutions [1]. These thematic areas provided the basis for compassionate, quality-based care, holistic and scientific postulates that are integrated in the care.

Nursing process is therefore a standardized applicable characteristic tool used as a framework for nursing care plan in healthcare setting within the setting of all age groups [2].

The setback for its implementation has always been the perception that it is time consuming and impracticable. Nurses may continue to practice on the basis of medical diagnosis rather than on rational nursing process steps if it is devalued and not used by nurses [3].

According to Parida [4], the standard of practice which was first published by the American Nurses Association (ANA) in 1975 included eight standards which are now included in the nursing process. More so, the Canadian Nurses Association in 1987 also had a standard that required the effective use of nursing process in the practice [5]. Nursing process is also required by the joint commission on Accreditation of health care organisation in the documentation of nursing care. Currently the nursing process steps which include: Assessment, diagnosis, outcome identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation are quite implementable in hospital settings.

The use of nursing process in clinical setting facilitates high quality nursing care, improve clients health outcome and promotes nursing as a professional scientific discipline [6].

According to Adraro, *et al.* [3], the implementation of nursing process among nurses was affected by their working experience and level of education. In their study in Ethiopia, nurses who had five years working experience and above were 1.79 times, 95% more likely to implement nursing process than those who had less than five years [7]. The implementation of nursing process among nurses with bachelor of science was 73.9% greater than nurses with diploma. Similarly, in Kenya 33.1% of nurses implemented the nursing process [8], and 57.1% in Nigeria [9]. They also noted that the important factors influencing the implementation of nursing process include low educational qualification, lack of adequate training and non-supportive hospital administration coupled with the fact that it is considered to be time consuming.

Foluso, *et al.* [9] stated that inspite of the benefit of using nursing process in patient care delivery and efforts made by conducting sensitization updates and the inclusion of the programme in training curricula of nursing, quite a number of nurses are still unaware of the existence of dynamic nursing process steps and these have led to the poor utilization of nursing process in clinical setting.

It is against this backdrop that the researcher decided to review the implementation of nursing process in hospitals settings in Akwa Ibom State, with particular reference to university of uyo teaching hospital, Uyo.

### **Implementation of nursing process in university of Uyo teaching hospital, Uyo**

The institution which was established by the Akwa Ibom State Government in 1994 was initially named Sanni Abacha Specialist Hospital and was later renamed Federal Medical Centre in 1997, following the successful takeover of the institution by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The institution became a full-fledged university teaching hospital in 2008 following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the federal Ministry of Health and the University of Uyo for the training of Medical Students from the College of Health Science of the University in the hospital. The hospital serves as a treatment and referral centre to the adjoining states in South-South and South-East geopolitical zone of the country and offer services to over 6 million people. It has a bed capacity of over 500 and currently has about 450 trained nurses of various cadres working in the hospital.

The implementation of nursing process in University of Uyo teaching hospital became quite imperative and necessary to help nurses operate at par with nurses at other tertiary health institutions in the country.

It was introduced in 2012, when then head of nursing department set up a committee to explore the possibility of the introduction of nursing process practice in the hospital and this eventually led to the compilation of the first nursing process booklet. This was done by getting the required inputs from other teaching hospitals and then adapted to suite its use in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital. The action was promptly given approval by the management for its implementation in the Hospital and subsequently, permission was given to print enough copies for use at all times in the Hospital. The nursing department also obtained management approval to include the nursing process booklet in the hospital's approved stationary list which has continued till date. However, the implementation process in the hospital still faced a daunting task as there was initial reluctance on the part of the nurses to fully embrace its implementation in the Hospital. The initial process of implementation was not smooth with the Nurses and therefore experienced some challenges as the mind set of the nurses was still far from making it a reality even though they had an idea about its implementation.

Furthermore, in the year 2014, the glamour for a new face of nursing profession emerged with the compulsory acquisition of bachelor of nursing science degree, steered the nurses up to embrace the new knowledge and innovation. The management then invited erudite scholars from other tertiary health institutions in the country to further enlighten the nurses on the ease of implementation of the tool and the need for nurses in the institution to adjust to the new nursing status.

Since then, different heads of nursing and continuing education units have also contributed to the smooth adaption to the innovation by organizing and ensuring that nurses attend weekly seminars, provision of materials for documentation by the hospital management, appreciating outstanding units for the implementation and enforcing its implementation by all nursing workforce. Gradually, it has come to stay and has become a part of nursing tools in the institution.

### **Factors affecting the implementation of nursing process in the hospital**

Though a veritable tool for the implementation of nursing services, nursing process implementation in the hospital was not accepted without its challenges as highlighted below. These challenges flows from the more elderly nurses who had little or no knowledge about nursing process and therefore found it more difficult to adapt to the new tool, to the younger nurses who were made to implement it while on duty and they embraced it readily since they could easily adapt to these changes.

However, there were some major setbacks that emanated from the attitude of nurses towards the new tool as some experienced difficulty in understanding of the basic rudiments of the tool. Following a thorough unstructured interview and interface with a cross section of the nurses in the Hospital on the perceived challenges, it was discovered by the researcher that the issues were really multifactorial in nature. Difficulty in understanding the concept of nursing process resulted from perceived lack of early exposure of some nurses to the nursing process curriculum during their period of training in basic nursing science. Other factors that contributed include, lack of interest, and the difficulty in adapting to the changes, different views and dynamics in nursing process.

Some of the notable complaints of nurses in the hospital were that the nursing process is time consuming and that there is lack of enough man power to have it fully implemented in the hospital. They equally suggested that some units that are too busy should be excluded from the implementation e.g. accident and emergency, labour ward and children emergency units. The nurses who were opposed to the implementation further stated that it is not costed along with other services rendered in the hospital, so it is worthless and should be discontinued. They also noted that it is too cumbersome and time consuming to implement and as such will interfere with their routine nursing work, while some complained of lack of sufficient nursing process booklet in stock. These challenges are in support of the work of Elianu [10] who identified the following as constraints to the implementation of nursing process; work overload among nurses, poor knowledge of nursing process especially among elderly nurses and its effective use, and availability of materials for documentation.

This is also in support of the work of Adaro., *et al.* [3] who in their study noted that the important factors influencing the implementation of nursing process include low educational qualification, lack of training and non-supportive hospital administration coupled with the fact that it is considered to be time consuming. This view was further corroborated by Moghadas., *et al.* who stated that factors that affect the implementation of nursing process are indeed varied and the nurse educators should endeavor to remove various barriers encountered in the implementation [11]. However, Isaibo in her paper stated that excess work load on the part of nurses had negatively affected the implementation of nursing process by nurses [12]. Similarly, Alemu and Kebeke noted that the organizational factors had the most important influence in the implementation of nursing process in various hospitals [13]. Thus, as highlighted from the above findings of the study, several factors have greatly influenced the smooth implementation of the nursing process in Hospitals in Akwa Ibom state particularly in the University of Uyo teaching hospital. These findings is also in consonant with the findings by other researchers regarding the factors affecting the implementation of nursing process in several Hospitals in Sub-Saharan Africa [14,15]. Furthermore, suggested approach in tackling these factors as highlighted below were also enunciated by these researchers. It is hoped that this strategy will greatly assist the various hospitals in the successful implementation of the nursing process policy in the hospitals in order to ensure a safe nursing practice.

### **Approach in tackling the challenges in the hospital**

The approach in tackling the challenges of implementation of nursing process in hospitals were as follows:

1. Training of staff through seminars and continuing nursing education programmed to simplify it's implementation.
2. Organisation of mindset re-orientation programme on nursing process implementation and documentation.
3. Introduction/use of current North American Nursing Diagnosis Association International (NANDA I) booklet to guide in making nursing diagnosis.
4. The implementation was enforced and heads of units were held responsible for the failure of their units to implement the nursing process.
5. Presentation of awards given to units adjudged as the best in nursing process implementation as a mark of motivation and further boost the implementation.
6. Supervision of the implementation carried out by staff of continuing education unit by going around the wards/units on a regular basis to monitor and enforce the implementation.

### **Conclusion**

Nurses all over the world are expected to use the nursing process tool, because it is the concept in practice which allows for the provision of individualized evidenced-based nursing care. There is a growing emphasis on the application of nursing process in patients care and therefore aptly applies with the implementation of the nursing process at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital which is not be left behind. Although, the introduction of nursing process took a slow and gradual process, because of some challenges highlighted in the study, similar situation is also experienced in other hospitals in the state. The change in hospital policy to include nursing process tools as part of hospital working instrument and requirements, on the job training for nurses, updates, re-orientation of nurses mindset and motivation of nurses facilitated the full implementation of nursing process in the institution.

## **Recommendation**

To successfully achieve the implementation of nursing process in hospitals in Akwa Ibom state, the heads of department of nursing services in the various hospitals should organize mandatory workshops and seminars on nursing process implementation for their nurses to sufficiently update their knowledge regularly.

Similarly, the management of health institutions in the state should also provide the necessary support needed to implement the nursing process in their various hospitals in the state. This will enable the nurses to render quality nursing care services to the patients in all hospitals in the state. It is also recommended that a reward mechanism and incentives should be put in place in various hospitals to further motivate and boost the moral of the nurses in the adoption of nursing process implementation in their respective health institutions.

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