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RESEARCH ARTICLE

PERCEPTION OF HOLISTIC NURSING CARE AMONG NURSES WORKING IN A SELECTED HOSPITAL AT PATHANAMTHITTA DISTRICT, KERALA.

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Abstract

Holistic nursing give prime importance to health promotion by treating the individual as a whole and it identifies and implements the principles and techniques of holistic care into day today life and clinical practice. It motivates the nurse to integrate self-care, self-responsibility, spirituality and reflection in their lives. The present study was conducted to assess the perception of holistic nursing care among nurses and the factors influencing it. A qualitative phenomenological design was used for the study. The study participants (10) were selected using purposive sampling technique. The data was collected by in-depth interview by using an open ended semi structured interview schedule. The results revealed that 80% of participants were having a clear concept of holistic nursing care. The results also revealed that certain factors influence the provision of holistic nursing care – workload, professional experiences, mismatch between clinical performance and academic learning, personality traits and input sources. It was concluded that integration of holistic nursing care – mind, body and spirit is essential to improve the quality of nursing care.

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Introduction:-

Holism refers to healing the whole person – body, mind and spirit- rather than solely focusing on the physical suffering and treatment of a disease or condition.¹ Holistic healing is the creation of harmonious healing balance among the body, mind and spirit of each patient to achieve health for the entire being.² Holistic nursing care is defined as a philosophy of nursing practice that takes into account the total practice care considering physical, emotional, social, economical and spiritual needs of patients, their responses to illness and the effect of illness on patient's attitude.³ The importance of holistic care decreased with the rise of the scientific revolution. In ancient times it was believed that the body and mind were separate entity and each of them can be finely understood by separation, rationalization and reasoning. In modern nursing spirituality and science were combined and this was practiced as holistic nursing care.^{4,5}

Holistic nursing give prime importance to health promotion by treating the individual as a whole and it identifies and implements the principles and techniques of holistic care into day today life and clinical practice. It motivates the nurse to integrate self-care, self-responsibility, spirituality and reflection in their lives. The holistic nurse aims in becoming a partner in patient healing process.

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Studies conducted in USA revealed that 67% of American patients in hospitals do not perceive holistic care.⁶ A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted in Egypt to explore nurses' perception of the meaning of holistic nursing care in wards and critical care units. A total of 100 nurses working in working in wards and critical care units were selected randomly and assessed with a standardized questionnaire. Results revealed that 89.7% of nurses in critical care units and 73.8% of nurses in wards had high perception about holistic nursing. In both departments the majority (80%) of studied nurses had high perception and only 20% of them had low perception regarding holistic nursing care.⁷

The main problems in providing holistic nursing care were lack of knowledge and experience in providing psychological and spiritual domain oriented care, poor patient centered care activities, lack of freedom for nurses to perform their task independently, increased workload and increased nurse patient ratio. In India, the attempt to research in the field of holistic nursing is minimal.

Considering the above facts, the investigator felt that there is a strong need to assess the perception of holistic nursing care among nurses and the factors influencing it.

Statement of the problem

The holistic approach to care is based on the premise that caring for the whole person constitutes the body, mind and spirit. Many nurses have difficulty to understand and integrate holistic approach to care. Holistic care aims at the early recovery of patient in physical, emotional and psychological aspect. Inappropriate theoretical and practical knowledge skills results in inadequate delivery of care to patient, and it comes as a barrier in the standard of nursing care. A good perception in holistic nursing care reflects the quality of care rendered. If nurses have knowledge on holistic care and concept related to holism, this will contribute to the application of an integrated approach and increases the quality of care delivered as nurses comprises the largest group of health care providers and are legally liable and morally responsible for the quality of care they provide to patient. This study will benefit nurses to develop insight about the needs and importance of holistic nursing care to be included in their care. So this is a descriptive study on the perception of holistic nursing care among nurses working in a selected hospital at Pathanamthitta District, Kerala.

Objectives of the study

To find out the perception of holistic nursing care among nurses work in a selected hospital and the factors influencing it.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of nurses regarding holistic nursing care?
2. What are the factors which influence holistic nursing care?

Operational definition

Perception of holistic nursing care:

It is the way in which one recognizes and integrates body-mind-emotion-spirit-environment principles and modalities in daily life and clinical practice and assists with recovery from illness as measured by semi-structured interview schedule.

Assumptions

1. Nurses may vary in their perception regarding holistic nursing care.
2. Appropriate perception of holistic nursing care by nurses enhances the standard of nursing care.

Method:-

This qualitative study was conducted on 10 nurses (females) working in a selected hospital in Pathanamthitta District, Kerala, India in 2019, using phenomenological methodology. The study population was selected using purposive sampling technique and data was collected using face to face in-depth semi-structured interviews.

The inclusion criteria were: a minimum of six months of clinical work experience and willingness to participate in the study. The participants who were unwilling to continue participating in the study were excluded from the research.

The study received ethical approval from the Institutional Ethics Committee. Prior to the study, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and ensured regarding the confidentiality of their identity and data. In order to record the interview data, an informed verbal consent was obtained. The participants were free to leave the interview or narrate their experiences. With prior coordination, interviews were conducted at nurses' workplace during their rest time in order not to disturb the process of nursing care delivery.

The participants' demographic characteristics were recorded during the interview. The interview was initiated with raising questions about the provision of holistic care for patients, for example

1. "What do you understand by holistic nursing care?"
2. "How do you provide holistic nursing care for your patients?"
3. "What are the factors which influence holistic nursing care?"
4. "What difficulties/barriers do you experience while providing holistic nursing care?"
5. "How do you handle the identified difficulties/barriers?"

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the concept and encourage the interviewee to give further explanation, the researcher engaged the participants with some probing questions, such as "...Please further elaborate." or "What do you mean by saying that?" Data collection was continued until data saturation. The interviews lasted about 50 – 60 minutes.

The researcher carefully listened to the interviews several times to obtain a deep understanding of the materials. The data analysis was done by using Colaizzi's phenomenological methodology. During the phenomenological data analysis oral descriptions given by the participants were read separately to immerse into the data and ensure familiarity with the content. Significant statements and phrases about the objectives of the study were identified. Meanings were formulated from these significant statements and phrases. The formulated meanings were then organized into clusters of themes. Common themes were created by merging similar statements for every category. From the formulated meaning of those statements, three main themes and six sub themes emerged. Finally, validation was secured by returning the results to the participants for review and the confirmation of the findings were received. No relevant additional data emerged from validation.

Results:-

Regarding the demographic characteristics of nurses, Among 10 samples, four (40%), were in the age group of 25-29 years and all samples were females. Out of 10 samples, most of the nurses (60%) were working in wards and the remaining (40%) were working in critical care areas. 40% of nurses had 5-9 years of experience, (30%) of them had 1-4 years, (20%) had 10-15 years and one subject had more than 15 years of experience. Out of 10 samples, most of the nurses (60%) were working in wards and the remaining (40%) were working in critical care areas. 40% of nurses had 5-9 years of experience, (30%) of them had 1-4 years, (20%) had 10-15 years and one subject had more than 15 years of experience. None of them had undergone any training in holistic nursing other than their nursing curriculum. Out of 10 samples, (90%) of nurses were not exposed to abroad clinical experience.

From the formulated meaning three main themes and six subthemes emerged.

Category 1:

Perception of holistic nursing care

Main theme: concept of holism

Sub Theme – Comprehensive care.

Eight participants described holistic nursing care as the total care of patients comprising – physical, mental, social and spiritual care.

1. "According to me, holistic nursing care means complete care of a patient including spiritual, mental, and physical care." S1
2. "I think that, holistic nursing care means, providing excellent care to the patient. It ensures quality and at same time it should be affordable to them." S3
3. "I am not sure that whether it is right or wrong, according to me, it means, providing care to the patient based on the theoretical aspects." S4
4. "In my concept, holistic nursing care refers the complete care of the patient and it includes all aspects of care." S5

5. "I don't know the exact meaning of holistic nursing care in my view it refers the care of a patient in all aspects." S6
6. "According to me it means that, meeting all the needs of a patient." S7
7. "Holistic care or holism refers to the total care of the patients." S8
8. "In my concept, it means that, the total care of the patient." S9

Sub Theme – Spirituality in Nursing Care

Two participants described holistic care as care with emphasis mainly on the spiritual aspects.

"In my point of view, holistic care is a total care which we provide to the patient, especially spiritual care." S2

"I think that, holistic care is a complete care of the patient mainly spiritual and physical care." S10

Among 10 samples, 80% of participants are having a clear concept about holistic care and they appreciated the importance of holistic nursing care to improve and upgrade the effectiveness of delivered care.

The results of the study also revealed certain factors that affect holistic nursing care provision and the main theme emerged were professional environment and motivational factors. The professional environment consists of workload, professional experience and mismatch between clinical performance and academic learning. The motivational factors are personality traits and input sources.

Category-2

Factors influencing holistic nursing care

Professional environment

Work load

Heavy workload was explained as a reason influencing holistic care negatively by nine participants where as less numbers of patients were reported as a factor that promotes holistic care. (One participant).

1. "I am working in a crowded and busy ward I know the patient having different needs. But I don't have the time to take care of them due to my busy schedule." S1
2. "Due to the heavy work in the clinical area, I am not able to meet all aspects of care in my patient." S2
3. "If the number of patients is more, the quality of care decreases. I give more importance to physical aspects of care." S5
4. "Increase in the number of patients is preventing me from providing quality care." S4
5. "In my ward, the numbers of patients are less so I am able to provide better care to the patients and their needs." S7
6. "Patient assign to me are more so I am not able to meet all the needs of the patient .I am having only the time to meet the physical needs." S3
7. "Due to my heavy work load, I am not able to meet total care of the patients." S6
8. "If there is staff shortage, all aspects of care is not met for the patient." S8
9. "Sometimes the number of patients is more, and there will not be enough staff in the ward. S9
10. "I am working in critical area, and usually we will be assigned to one patient. So I can provide care in all aspects" S10

Professional Experiences

Five participants described professional experience as a factor helping them to meet all aspects of care to the patients.

Two participants admitted that less years of professional experience as a limitation in giving holistic care.

Two participants explained that change from the current working area inhibit the provision of holistic nursing care to patients.

One participant admitted that busy schedule and clerical works of the ward is a hindrance in providing holistic nursing care, even though she has professional experience.

1. "I think my years of experience matters in providing complete care to my patients" S1
2. "Even though I am having experience, the busy schedule and clerical works will not allow me to focus on every aspects of care" S2

3. "I am working in this area for more than one year; I am able to meet all aspects of care. But if I get a change from the current working area, I am not sure whether I will meet all the needs in a proper way." S4
4. "I am having 1 ½ years experience so I am not getting satisfaction while providing care to my patients and cannot meet the other aspects of care." S3
5. "I am having 10 years of experience, so I can meet all aspects of care to my patients." S5
6. "I am currently working in neuro ward. Sometimes patients from other units will be admitted here. In such situations I am not confident in meeting all needs of the patient." S6
7. "Years of experience will help to provide a comprehensive nursing care to patients and it will improve the quality of care." S7
8. "I joined here as a staff nurse eight months before. I take help from other senior staffs to meet all aspects of nursing care provided to my patients." S8
9. "It is difficult for me to work in the current area, because the area was changed after my leave and I joined here one week before." S9
10. "With regard to my experience, I think senior staffs are more able to provide comprehensive care to the patients." S10

Mismatch between clinical performance and academic learning

Five participants admitted that they were not following sterile techniques during emergency situations when the ward is busy which they consider as a barrier in providing holistic care.

Two participants described that even though they studied about holistic nursing, they find it difficult to perform in the ward.

One participant admitted that there is a discrepancy in the way they studied and the way in which holistic nursing care is followed in the clinical areas.

1. "I am not able to follow aseptic techniques in my clinical settings all times. In emergency situations I am forced to neglect some objectives of a procedure which causes less harm to the patients." S7
2. "Due to my busy schedule I can't maintain sterile principles while doing all procedures. When compared with the theories, it is not applicable in the clinical settings. Some factors act as a barrier to maintain proper care." S9
3. "In emergency situations, it is difficult to follow the steps of the procedure as I learned." S1
4. "The way the procedures are performed in the ward is different from the way I learned it during my training period." S2
5. "I studied about holistic nursing in my course. When it comes to the clinical area, I find difficulty in performing it." S3
6. "During emergency situations, I am not able to provide comprehensive care." S4
7. "It is difficult to perform all procedures in the way it was taught." S6
8. "Sometimes the ward is too light. During this time I am providing all aspects of care by following the scientific principles." S5
9. "Emergency situations will not allow me to provide holistic care to the patients." S8
10. "I am working in critical care area, and we are providing the care in a holistic way." S10

Motivational Factors

Personality traits

Six participants identified that their loving, sociable nature and ability to see patient as a family member as a factor enhancing holistic care.

One participant admitted that lack of her communication skill as a limitation in providing holistic care.

Two participants described that their religious belief and guilt feelings act as a motivating factor in providing holistic nursing care.

1. "I am quite emotional and love to help others and I feel good when my patients are satisfied." S4
2. "My sociability has helped me to realize the importance of knowing about and satisfying the patients' needs." S2
3. "I am not able to communicate with the patients effectively, so I give importance to the physical aspects of care." S3
4. "My religious beliefs help me to consider my patient's various needs despite the problems at work." S5

5. "I usually greet my patients warmly, I am sure that it will help them to trust me and cooperate." S6
6. "Neglecting a patient's needs makes me feel guilty, and I try to keep my conscience clear by satisfying my patients' needs." S7
7. "I love the patients and I always cherish the moments I spend with my patients." S8
8. "I always consider the patient as my family member it help me to provide standard and quality care to my patient." S1
9. "I am highly sociable and make sure to greet my patient warmly so it will improve our relationship and got desired outcome." S10

Input sources

The participant said that input into holistic care by a nurse is seen as a result of insight about the nature of patient care (it is not a performance of routine task and involves much more).

"I try to perform my duty in a best way. I think our duty is not limited to some routine task. I am sure that my patient got adequate care, no external factors came as a barrier while providing care." S4

Essence of the phenomena

After the data analysis, we have got the essence of perception of holistic nursing care among nurses. Majority of nurses perceived (8 participants) holistic nursing care as comprehensive care. There are certain factors which influence the provision of holistic nursing care – workload, professional experience, mismatch between clinical performance and academic learning, personality traits and input sources.

Discussion:-

The purpose of the study was to describe the perception of holistic nursing care among nurses in a selected hospital in Pathanamthitta District Kerala and to find out the factors influencing it.

Section A: Discussion of the baseline variables of nurses.

Among 10 samples, four (40%), were in the age group of 25- 29 years and all samples were females. Majority of nurses (40%) completed BSc Nursing course and (70%) of them were married. Out of 10 samples, most of the nurses (60%) were working in wards and the remaining (40%) were working in critical care areas and (40%) had 5-9 years of experience. None of them had undergone any training in holistic nursing other than their nursing curriculum. Majority of the nurses (90%) were not exposed to abroad clinical experience.

The findings of the present study corroborates with a study conducted by VahidZamanzadeh et.al in Iran to find out the factors influencing holistic nursing care and the sample ranged 23 – 49 years.¹³ The findings of the present study was similar to the findings of a study conducted by Mervat Ebrahim et.al in Egypt to explore the perception of holistic nursing care among nurses and it was found that majority of nurses were females, who completed bachelor degree and majority of them were married.¹²

Section B: Discussion of perception of holistic nursing care among nurses and the factors influencing it.

After data analysis, we are able to reach a conclusion that majority of nurses focused in their perception of holistic nursing mainly on comprehensive care. The findings of the present study was congruent with a study conducted by Volland et.al in America to overview the emerging research evidence of new approaches to primary care among critical ill patients, who reported that holistic approach is comprehensive. The similarity in the study findings may be due to the content of the educational programs which includes the philosophy of holistic care, and it will enable student nurses to address various needs of the patients and provide holistic care.

The results of the study also revealed certain factors that affect holistic nursing care provision and the main theme emerged were professional environment and motivational factors.

Professional environment

The provisional environment consists of workload, professional experience and gap between clinical performance and academic learning. These results compare well with the study findings of Vahid Zamanzadeh et.al in Iran who explored the effective factors in providing holistic care.¹³ The researchers also came across other studies which also revealed that the effects of workload prevent nurses from considering the various needs of patients' and provide holistic care. The similarities in these study findings may be due to frequent turnover of nurses for better prospects.

Motivational factors

The findings of the study revealed that motivational factors like personality traits and input sources are influential in identifying various needs of the patient. The findings of the present study were parallel with the study which was carried out by Vahid Zamanzadeh et.al in Iran to explore effective factors in the provision of holistic care.¹³ Several studies also revealed that nurses who are temperamentally sociable and emotionally stable are more capable in identifying the patients' needs.

Conclusion:-

The results of the study revealed majority of nurses focused in their perception of holistic nursing mainly on comprehensive care. Study results also revealed two main factors that affect holistic nursing care provision were professional environment and motivational factors. The professional environment consists of workload, professional experience and mismatch between clinical performance and academic learning. The motivational factors include personality traits and input sources. Researchers conclude here, to develop holistic care it is necessary to attach more importance to motivational factors, compatibility between nurses' personalities and their profession, improvement of nurses' communicative skills and encouragement of commitment in practising nurses and nursing students.

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Conflict Of Interest

Nil

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