

EDITORIAL

Nursing interventions and outcomes to ensure patient's safety

Visionary people are admirable human beings who are ahead of their time. Their innovative ideas and premises remain updated for many generations and captivate our admiration and respect. Florence Nightingale was one of such visionary people. She was a woman with ideas ahead of her time that transformed nursing and developed new ways to provide safer health care. Her ideas have been documented in memorable publications such as the one documented in 1959 – the first duty of the hospital is “do no harm.”

More than a century later, in 1999 the evaluation of several epidemiological studies lead to the publication of “To Err is Human: Building a Safer Health Care System in the United States,” which reported that even with huge investment in healthcare, medical errors were common and caused harm and even death to thousands of patients in healthcare organizations throughout the united States. Today, there is a need to recognize that the even in the most well designed and structured healthcare system that provides preventive, rehabilitative, and curative services, medical errors and adverse events are likely to occur. Therefore, patients and their families had been at risk for medical errors and adverse events in those healthcare systems.

Operational deficiencies of the healthcare system affect patient safety and good health outcomes. These require nurses to expend energy in correcting deficiencies, preventing them from providing the types of nursing care that they learned and that have served as an ideal for their patients. Thus, nurses have not been able to focus entirely on integral and individualized care to their patients, activities that distinguish nurses from other healthcare professionals. This situation can result in loss of professional identity and may affect optimum delivery of nursing care to attend the patient needs and preferences. Intermediating between the biological and human sciences, nurses are agents who interconnect the healthcare system and the patient, and they are in a unique position to promote patient safety with focus on patient care and not on the correction of deficiencies of the healthcare system.

As one of the major workforces in healthcare, nurses must be visionaries and must assume a vanguard position for the development of new ideas to modify the actual healthcare system. In this premise, researchers from the “Escola de Enfermagem da Universidade Federal de São Paulo – School of Nursing of the Federal University of São Paulo” were invited by the “Conselho Regional de Enfermagem de São Paulo – Federal Nursing Council of São Paulo” to develop and coordinate a research project to do just that. Collaboration was established between the “Rede Brasileira de Enfermagem e Segurança do Paciente – Brazilian Nursing Net and Patient Safety” and several nursing leadership organizaitons that include the “Escola de Enfermagem da Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo – School of Nursing of the University of São Paulo at São Paulo” and the “Escola de Enfermagem da Universidade de São Paulo de Ribeirão Preto - School of Nursing of the University of São Paulo at São Paulo at Ribeirão Preto. The

main objectives of the project have been on nursing research to develop interventions and outcomes that can stimulate nurses to articulate and be pro-active in promoting changes of the healthcare system, especially promoting patient's safety.

Mavilde da Luz Gonçalves Pedreira, PhD, RN

*Associate Professor and Vice-Coordinator of the Nursing Graduate Program at the "Escola Paulista de Enfermagem da Universidade Federal de São Paulo - School of Nursing of the Federal University of São Paulo
Leader of the Research Group "SEGTEC- Segurança e Tecnologia - Safety and Technology"*