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Introduction to Nursing

Nursing Foundation

Definition, meaning, history, evolution of nursing, aims, objectives, scope and principles of nursing.

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01. INTRODUCTION TO NURSING

1. Introduction

Nursing is a healthcare profession concerned with promoting health, preventing illness, caring for sick and injured individuals, supporting rehabilitation and providing compassionate end-of-life care.

Nursing combines scientific knowledge, clinical skills, ethical principles and interpersonal abilities.

2. Meaning and Definition of Nursing

The word nursing is derived from the Latin word nutrire, meaning to nourish.

Nursing involves assisting individuals, families and communities in maintaining, restoring and improving health.

Florence Nightingale's Concept

Nightingale emphasized placing patients in the best possible environmental conditions to support recovery.

Virginia Henderson's Concept

Henderson described nursing as assisting individuals in performing activities that contribute to health, recovery or a peaceful death, helping them achieve independence whenever possible.

3. Nature of Nursing

- Nursing is both an art and a science.
- It is a professional healthcare discipline.
- It provides holistic and individualized care.
- It is based on scientific evidence.
- It involves independent and collaborative responsibilities.
- It emphasizes disease prevention and health promotion.
- It requires continuous professional development.

4. History and Evolution of Nursing

Ancient Period

Nursing care was primarily provided by family members, religious groups and traditional healers.

Medieval Period

Religious institutions and charitable organizations provided care to sick and vulnerable individuals.

Modern Nursing Period

Florence Nightingale established a scientific foundation for modern professional nursing.

5. Florence Nightingale

Born: 12 May 1820 Died: 13 August 1910

Major Contributions

- Improved sanitation during the Crimean War.
- Promoted ventilation, hygiene and patient nutrition.
- Used statistics to study healthcare outcomes.
- Published Notes on Nursing.
- Established the Nightingale Training School in London in 1860.
- Promoted systematic nursing education.

She is widely known as the founder of modern nursing.

International Nurses Day is observed on 12 May.

6. Development of Nursing in India

Year	Development
1871	Early formal nursing training at Government General Hospital, Madras
1908	Establishment of the Trained Nurses' Association of India (TNAI)
1946	Introduction of university-level B.Sc. Nursing programmes at institutions in Delhi and Vellore
1947	Enactment of the Indian Nursing Council Act
2021	Notification of the revised B.Sc. Nursing curriculum

Indian nursing education subsequently expanded into undergraduate, postgraduate, specialty and doctoral programmes.

7. Aims of Nursing

The four fundamental aims are:

1. Promotion of health.
2. Prevention of illness.
3. Restoration of health.
4. Alleviation of suffering.

8. Objectives of Nursing

- Maintain optimal health.
- Meet physical and psychological needs.
- Prevent disease and complications.
- Assist patients during illness.
- Promote independence.
- Provide health education.
- Support rehabilitation.
- Maintain dignity during terminal illness.
- Improve quality of life.

9. Scope of Nursing

Area	Nursing activities
Medical nursing	Care of patients with medical illnesses
Surgical nursing	Preoperative and postoperative care
Paediatric nursing	Care of infants and children
Obstetric nursing	Maternal and newborn care
Psychiatric nursing	Mental healthcare
Community health nursing	Health promotion and disease prevention
Critical care nursing	Care of critically ill patients
Emergency nursing	Immediate assessment and emergency care
Geriatric nursing	Care of older adults
Nursing education	Teaching and clinical training
Nursing administration	Management of nursing services
Nursing research	Development of evidence-based practice

10. Principles of Nursing

- Respect the patient's dignity.
- Provide individualized care.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Follow infection-prevention principles.
- Ensure patient safety.
- Meet basic human needs.

- Promote patient independence.
- Maintain effective communication.
- Use scientific and evidence-based methods.
- Evaluate patient responses.
- Maintain accurate documentation.

11. Roles of a Nurse

Role	Responsibility
Caregiver	Provides direct patient care
Communicator	Exchanges information effectively
Educator	Provides health education
Advocate	Protects patient rights
Counsellor	Provides emotional support within professional competence
Coordinator	Organizes multidisciplinary care
Leader	Guides and supports healthcare teams
Researcher	Contributes to evidence-based practice
Rehabilitator	Promotes functional independence

12. Qualities of a Good Nurse

- Clinical competence
- Empathy
- Patience
- Honesty
- Accountability
- Observation skills
- Effective communication
- Emotional regulation
- Critical thinking
- Professional discipline

13. Holistic Nursing Care

Holistic nursing considers all aspects of patient well-being:

- Physical
- Psychological
- Emotional

- Social
- Cultural
- Spiritual

Important Examination Questions

1. Define nursing and explain its aims and objectives.
2. Describe the historical development of nursing.
3. Discuss Florence Nightingale's contributions.
4. Explain the scope and principles of nursing.
5. Describe the roles and qualities of a professional nurse.

Quick Revision

- Founder of modern nursing: Florence Nightingale.
- International Nurses Day: 12 May.
- Nightingale Training School: 1860.
- Four fundamental aims: health promotion, illness prevention, restoration of health and alleviation of suffering.

Conclusion

Nursing is a scientific, ethical and patient-centred profession dedicated to promoting health, preventing illness, supporting recovery and maintaining human dignity.

Quick Revision

- Nursing promotes health, prevents illness, supports recovery and alleviates suffering.
- Nursing combines scientific knowledge, clinical skills, ethics and interpersonal abilities.
- Nightingale emphasized the patient's environment and established her training school in 1860.
- Henderson emphasized assistance with essential activities and patient independence.
- Nurses act as caregivers, educators, advocates, communicators and coordinators.
- Holistic care considers physical, psychological, emotional, social, cultural and spiritual needs.

Practice questions

Choose one best answer. The answer key and explanations follow the questions.

1. Which nursing theorist emphasized environmental conditions that support recovery?

A. Dorothea Orem
B. Florence Nightingale
C. Hildegard Peplau
D. Sister Callista Roy

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2. A nurse protects a patient's rights during care planning. Which professional role is this?

A. Educator

B. Coordinator

C. Advocate

D. Researcher

3. What is a central aim of Henderson's concept of nursing?

A. Achieving patient independence whenever possible

B. Directing nursing administration

C. Classifying diseases

D. Developing hospital statistics

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Answer key and explanations

1. B - Florence Nightingale

Nightingale emphasized a recovery-supporting environment.

2. C - Advocate

The advocate role protects patient rights.

3. A - Achieving patient independence whenever possible

Henderson emphasized assistance that promotes independence.

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