Nurses and Nursing

The Person and the Profession

Edited by Pádraig Ó Lúanaigh



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NURSES AND NURSING

This textbook draws on international contributors with a range of backgrounds to explore, engage with and challenge readers in understanding the many aspects and elements that inform and influence contemporary nursing practice. With a focus to the future, this book explores the challenges facing health services and presents the arguments for a nursing contribution and influence in ensuring safe and quality care.

Readers are supported to explore how, as individuals, they can shape their personal nursing identity and practice. The structure of the text is based on the belief that an individual nurse's professional identity is developed through an interaction between their personal attributes and the influences of the profession itself. Reflecting this approach, the authors engage in a conversation with the reader rather than simply presenting a series of facts and information.

Organised around a series of topical and pertinent questions and drawing on perspectives from policy, education and practice, the book explores a diverse range of topics such as:

- how historical and popular media representations of nursing hold back nursing practice today;
- the opportunities presented through education and nursing role development to increase the nursing contribution to health services;
- the economic and political influences on nursing and health care;
- how the professional regulation of nurses and core values informs your practice;
- ways to define and develop your own strong nursing identity.

Central chapter questions provide ideal triggers for group discussions in class or online and equally as discussion topics between colleagues to support ongoing professional development.

There is an emphasis throughout *Nurses and Nursing* on challenging thinking to recast nursing practice for the future by encouraging the reader to explore and create their emerging nursing identity or re-examine previously long held views. This text supports the reader to better understand health care, nursing and most importantly themselves as nurses.

Pádraig Ó Lúanaigh is Deputy Director of Nursing, Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals Foundation NHS Trust, Norwich, UK. With over 28 years' experience of working within health and higher education, Pádraig has a broad and integrated range of experiences gained from working in organisations across the UK, Australia and New Zealand.

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He mihinui mahana ki a koe. Ko Ngāpuhi raua ko Ireland and France oku iwi. Ko Ngati Hineira raua ko Te Uri Taniwha oku hapu. Kia ora!

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Tena koe, tena koe, tena ra tatou.

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FOREWORD

The relationship between the nurse and the patient, relative, resident, user or carer defines the health service. Nurses work at the frontline, in the shop window, at the beginning, the middle and the end. The work of nurses is not just in 'our hospital' or practice; their work is international. Nurses see us at our lowest and highest. Frightened and euphoric. Nurses are, also, much more than a soothing hand or a friend in need. They are, increasingly, technocrats, specialists and experts in their work.

This book is long overdue; it examines the relationships, the personal attributes and influences on the profession that are redefining the profession. Not least the interface between the nurse, other professionals and patients. Written in a refreshing style the book creates a dialogue between the reader and the contributors and asks some tough questions. We all know without nursing our health and care services have no future but what, in the context of health technology and workforce pressures, is the future for nursing?

What do nurses think about their future? More of the same or more of something quite different?

Nursing is international. We have seen that at home; the pressures of poor workforce planning and demand for more nurses means the NHS has looked overseas to find new personnel. It might be fair to say the authorities have been surprised at the skills and training of nurses from parts of Europe, their language skills and their willingness to be mobile.

It is the pressures for more nurses that may have more of a defining hand than we thought. Is it sustainable to expect all nurses to be degree trained? For years voices, the voices saying close the door to those able to bring vocation, care and compassion to their work but not academia, are voices we ignore at our peril.

Pressures of social media and technology put nurses in the frontline of delivering a very different health system. Improvements in health technology have opened the way to nurse consultants and practitioners.

For most of us it is the interface between nursing and patients that defines the quality experience. Spectacular quality failures in the English NHS system have been laid at the door of nursing. It is probably true that nurses should have been more vocal but fear and the memory of the fate of previous whistle-blowers proved a discouragement. This begs the question: what was the role of the regulator in the care and safety of the public? The conclusion is the regulators failed. Is there a role for regulation in nursing? Beyond a register of accreditation and competency can regulators hope to make complex healthcare safer? The evidence would appear to say no.

What works and what doesn't, where can we look for best practice and avoid reinventing the wheel? This fascinating book draws on international best practice, research, commentary and common-sense.

Essential reading.

Roy Lilley London, England. October 2016

PREFACE

The idea for this textbook was born on a lazy Sunday afternoon as I was thinking about and questioning where nursing was going and what nursing would be in the future. An unusual thought possibly, but it resulted from a conversation I had with nursing colleagues as we contemplated what the next 20 years of our careers held for us. I was frustrated and concerned that I was struggling to think or picture what the future of nursing would be. The result of my inability to imagine the future of nursing is this book.

I have been fortunate to have met and worked with many true professionals during my career and these are the people I have turned to for help in capturing what nursing is and what the future may hold for nurses. The authors who have contributed to this book have found time in their busy lives to share their experience and knowledge and this collection of nursing experience provides the reader with a rich mix of nursing perspectives and ideas.

As I planned this book to explore nursing, it became obvious to me very quickly that the future of nursing will be determined by individual nurses themselves – nurses *are* nursing and just as we, as people bring to nursing our personal qualities we also *become* nurses as our professional lives shape us as individuals.

Often when I sit down to read a book I am still excited by the expectation of 'getting knowledge' and finding out what I need to know. However, the reality is that in terms of professional nursing practice, we must each individually create our own practice knowledge and understanding. Each chapter in this book has identified reflection sections; places where you are encouraged to stop, reflect and think about what you think. Having invested your money purchasing and time reading this book, I would encourage you to honestly and actively make use of the reflect moments since this is where the real learning and understanding is in this book. I see nursing practised every day and when I see nursing done well it is truly

beautiful and each chapter in this book is intended to help you think about and define your own practice to become the nurse you want to be.

This book is split into three parts and while designed to be read in a structured way from chapter 1 to 11, each chapter may also be read on its own.

Part I has four chapters that will provide you with a foundational understanding of nursing and provides you with an opportunity to think about the kind of nurse you are or want to be.

Part II consists of three chapters that are designed to help you think about yourself and provides you with knowledge and skills to develop you own nursing practice.

Finally, Part III concludes the book and the focus for the four chapters broadens out from individual nursing practice and looks at the wider contexts that have both direct and indirect impact and influence on your practice.

At times the content of this book may appear negative, and frequently the contributors have made reference to 'scandals' in health where nursing was severely criticised. It is precisely for this reason that this book is so important now. As individual nurses and as the profession of nursing, we must have the clarity of expression, vision and confidence to demonstrate and describe the difference that quality nursing practice makes to the health of individuals, communities and global populations. This book is designed to challenge you, provide some of the evidence and support you to develop your own convincing argument for what nursing is.

Nursing is complex and the environments we work in are ever-changing and present on a daily basis challenges and competing demands which cause us stress, frustration and at times despair.

Equally, I am reminded when reading this book that when nurses work together, question and think about what they do, the result is something of value that supports safe, positive and quality patient and client experiences – the beauty of nursing. I hope this book supports you to understand and enhance your own beautiful nursing care.

Pádraig Ó Lúanaigh Norwich, England October 2016

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