

23Rd WORLD NURSE PRACTITIONER CONFERENCE

September 28-29, 2017 Dubai, UAE

Nurse practitioner program in a developing country congenital cardiac surgery program

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Background: In the developing world, Advance Nurse Practitioners (ANP) have an established role and their role in pediatric cardiac critical care is increasing day by day. They are the mean to provide continuous patient care and assist physician in performing different patient care related task including procedures.

Objectives: To describe the experience of developing a nurse practitioner program in a developing country.

Methods: The idea of developing this program was taken to the Dean School of Nursing and later on also approved by the hospital administration. Initially five nurses with at least 5 years of experience in a cardiac surgery intensive care unit were identified and recruited. The initial plan is to complete on job training and certification in 1 year. Educational component included a 10 day course in blended learning, participation in cardiopulmonary and pharmacology module of school of medicine along with a series of didactic lectures designed specifically for ANP. They were also required to participate in mortality-morbidity meetings of department as well as in journal club. Training component included active participation in daily rounds, different bedside procedures like chest drain insertion etc. These procedures and competencies were documented in log book and signed by a supervisor.

Results: The program ran well for initial six months after which there was drop out of two nurses. With the passage of time, service became busy and heavily dependent on ANP, so their training was hampered. So it was decided to prolong the training to two years and it is running well. While the impact of it will be clear after these ANP pass out and come into practice. There were many hurdles in this process which included proper registration and certification by a licensing body, adequate time distribution between learning and service delivery and drop out.

Conclusion: Developing an ANP program can help improve the patient outcome especially in a congenital cardiac surgery program in a developing country but there are hurdles which can hamper the speed of the process and prolong its implementation and effects.

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