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Legal obligations of nurses in the medical service acts and educational objectives for nursing students in South Korea

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Background: Good regulation is important to the public safety and quality assurance in health care through licensure and disciplinary action as required. From 1962, a system for Korean nursing licensure was implemented under Medical Service Acts, which was revised annually and has expanded legal duties and responsibilities of nurses.

Aim: This article aims to examine the revision of Medical Service and to seek core educational objectives in regulations that are directly or indirectly related to nursing practice.

Methods: A descriptive, interpretive law design was used to examine the legal obligations and educational core objectives found in documents: Korean Medical Service Act and Regulation for registered nurses.

Results: The findings indicate that 23 objectives (directly related to nursing practice) and 7 objectives (directly related to nursing practice) appear in study. Furthermore, it shows 11 educational objectives related to health policies affecting nursing care.

Conclusion: Although most of the legal obligation and educational objectives aren't changeable, this study shows, despite significant challenges, the clear regulations to know for nurses and the range of legal duties is gradually strengthening and expanding for patient safety in South Korea.

Biography

Kim Ki Kyong is a Professor at University of Yonsei, Wonju College of Medicine, School of Nursing. She has completed her PhD in Law from Yonsei University and was a Visiting Scholar at University of North Carolina, USA. She has published more than 30 papers in reputed journals and has been serving as an Editorial Board Member of Korean Association of Medical Law.

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