

6th World Nursing and Healthcare Conference

August 15-17, 2016 London, UK

Current status of the integrated community care of rural clinic nurses

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The population of rural areas in Japan is aging rapidly and few social resources are available. To allow the inhabitants of rural areas to live in their hometowns until the end of their lives, it is essential to establish integrated community care through collaboration among medical facilities. Therefore, this study was conducted to clarify the current status of the integrated community care of rural clinic nurses. Questionnaires were sent to 100 rural clinics in Japan (including 2-3 from each prefecture). Data were collected using an anonymous questionnaire on the attributes of the rural clinics and open-ended questions about nursing and collaborations. Thirty-one clinics responded. The population of the medical care zone was rated as “≤1000” by 38.7%, “1001-2000” by 29.0%, and “≥2001” by 35.5%. Clinic staff included nurses at 30 clinics (96.8%) and doctors at 31 clinics (100%). In terms of location, 19 clinics (59.4%) were in mountainous areas, 11 clinics (35.5%) were in areas with heavy snowfall, and 8 clinics (25.8%) were on islands. While 15 clinics (46.9%) practice integrated community care, 15 clinics (46.9%) do not because the staff are unfamiliar with its implementation and there is a shortage of experts. The clinics with integrated community care share information with a community general support center and a social welfare council. They improve inhabitants’ awareness about cooperation that allows them to live in their hometowns until the end of their lives. This awareness helps inhabitants to live a full life including hobbies, going out, and being friendly with other people.

Biography

Mariko Hyakutake completed her MNS from Gifu College of Nursing. She is a Research Associate in the Department of Management in Nursing at Gifu College of Nursing, Japan. She is a qualified RN and PHN.

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