

# Florence Nightingale-Pioneer in Research & Statistics in Nursing

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## Abstract

The Character Sarah Camilton in this story is fictitious and bears no resemblance to anyone. The famous nurse theorist, Dr. Sarah Camilton was invited to address the student nurses in Sri Lanka at the celebration of International nurses' day on 1930. She was a member of the team of nurses sent to the Crimea during the year 1854. She had delivered her speech as a story which included Florence Nightingale's research and statistical works.

**Keywords:** Florence Nightingale • Statistics • Nursing

## Introduction

Words of Florence Nightingale were written in Italic letters and foot notes were added to add in-depth explanation of some facts. Nobody comes into our life without a purpose.

From the time we are born, until we pass on everyone we meet in this life is bound with us by an invisible thread. I have been bound with a thread of friendship with very special woman in the history.

She is known as the founder of modern nursing. Her name is, 'Florence Nightingale'.

But as a close companion I have defined her competency in several fields related with nursing [1].

## Materials and methods



I have worked with Florence during the period of Crimean War, in 1854. There were 38 of us leading by Florence who were set off to Turkey to nurse injured soldiers. I can still remember her blistering

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voice that addresses me before leave for the humanitarian service in the nursing history [2].

“Sarah, I have called upon the God, he asked me, would I do good for him alone without the reputation ...I thought many many times how I would fulfill his ambition. So, I think this is golden opportunity to me for serve the God [3].”

Her eyes were glistened by the determination. She gave me a cue that she is going to be a immortal figure in nursing arena. She makes us to sign contract and gave uniforms. We set off to Scutari in Turkey to Barrack Hospital. The hospital environment was not completely in satisfactory level. My friend, Florence was very ambiguous about the environment which those wounded soldiers were laying (Figure 1). She observed their basic sanitary facilities, ventilation of the hospitals and their nutrition [4].

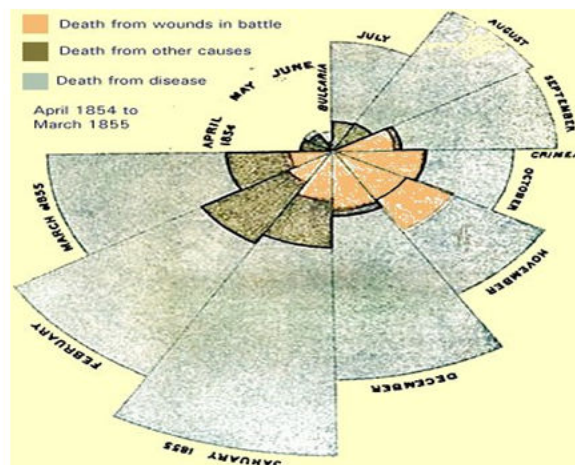


**Figure 1:** One evening Florence called me.

“Sarah, come here, I think that poor ventilation, poor personal hygiene and altered nutrition of these soldiers interfere with their recovery. I have gathered information regarding this matter. Here they are.....have a look....study these documents” [5].

She gave me some papers. I was surprised. She has nicely illustrated her findings as a charts and diagram-Coxcomb (Figure 2). She has nicely document her findings including medical data she has collected in hospital. She asked me;

“Keep these documents for me dear. This will help me to find solution for future health problems of the innocent people”.



**Figure 2:** Mortality and morbidity distribution shown by Coxcomb.

At that time I wouldn't know that this diagram illustrate useful statistical data related to morbidity and mortality rated of the soldiers of Crimean war. In 1856, after the disasters of the Crimean war we have returned to the country. Florence has become a passionate campaigner from improvements in the health of the British army. In 1857, the government established “Royal Commission” to investigate the disasters of the Crimean war. Florence writes and compiles facts, statistical graphics about the war and sends them all to the commission. Without doubt I have identified her as a great data journalist!

After return from Crimea, she developed the visual presentation of information including the pie chart gave to me at the Barrack hospital in Turkey. Once I asked her to explain about that polar- diagram, she explained about the diagram step by step to me. She used colored wedges represent deaths from contagious diseases such as Cholera and Typhus, pink wedges deaths from wounds and gray wedges deaths from other causes.

She found her report in need of more significant statistical analysis. For this analysis she works with William Farr, the inventor of the field of medical statistics. This documents of Florence, illustrates how the sanitary commission sent out in the middle of the war, drastically reduced the death rate. In 1856, summer evening I met her at the residence in Downvalley. She had visited to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert to talk about her war experiences. Her voice was cheerful.

“Sarah, I have discussed and they agreed upon a need to correct wrongs during the war. This will lead better future of the citizens....”

I agreed with her, and she asked me to help her in writings and publications, because was not in good condition after the return from Crimea\*. That was great honor to me , work with her in her research and statistical works.

She has published a book Notes on matters affecting health, efficiency and hospital administration of the British army (1858). This book provided statistical evidence that showed just how much of the mortality was due to the conditions of the hospitals. In 1859, Florence published her book Notes on Nursing. This book itself describes uniqueness of her nursing career and the only wage she ever earned in her life was her royalties from this book. Once I asked her, that why

she use word 'Notes' in her books. She never answered the question, but later, I have found that because, those books were small collection of her thoughts.

Meanwhile, Sepoy Rebellion in India calls her to sanitation problem and begins a life-long project to sanitize the country. She had done this as a research work. She had published the 'Observation' concerning sanitation problem in India. In 1860, she wrote a paper on hospital statistics for the 4th international Statistical Congress in London. I was surprised to find that she used statistics not only to learn about how many people died during wartime, and why, but also as a way to visually persuade people of the need for social change. She has done many many works related with nursing in her later life.

Florence has collect data on mortality and morbidity of native children in colonial schools. She analyzed the collected data and made recommendations, which result in improved administration. She was very clever in her paper works and posted a paper to the International Statistical Congress in Berlin, 1863. Florence spent most of her time for research works and statistical analysis. As a result of this exhaust her with many health problems.

## Results and discussion

For the contribution to army statistics and comparative hospital statistics in 1860, she became the 1st woman to elect a fellow of the 'American Statistical Association'. At that time I said to her that this will definitely give more fame to her. She smiled at me and replied;

"I never expect fame for my works. Only I do, what God told me to do.....that's all"

In 1871, she published another book named Notes on lying-in institutions are as much as attractive with a holistic philosophy as Notes on Nursing. As time pass on, my friend, great philosopher, pioneer of nursing became weak for writing. By the year 1902, she can no longer read or write. In, 13th August, 1910 she fell asleep about noon and did not awake again.

She was not only a friend of mine; she was a great philanthropist, teacher, good leader and hearted lady. Florence Nightingale was got to know by people as "Lady with the lamp" was also a "Lady with powerful ideas" with the commitment and passion to put them into practice afterwards. This is a story of a great woman, and the lamp on her hand will lighten the future of nursing research and statistics.

## Conclusion

Florence Nightingale came to this world to serve the god, and she did. Although she buried in the family grave at the east wellow, definitely she is with the God, in the heaven. It was my honor to speak few words about your enormous service to the entire world, through future nursing buds.

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