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**ASSESSMENT OF NURSING AND MID-WIFERY QUALITIES SERVICES: THE PROSPECT AND CHALLENGES FACED IN NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study was carried out to assess nursing and midwifery qualities services, the prospects and challenges faced in Nigeria. Nurses and midwives form the largest group of staff in Health and Social Care and are a crucial part of the healthcare team. They play a critical role not only in delivering healthcare to millions around the world but also in transforming health policies, promoting health in communities, and supporting patients and families. The study concluded that globally, nurses and midwives represent half the professional health workforce. They are at the centre of almost every healthcare team and make an enormous contribution to health. Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups, and communities, sick or well, and in all settings. One of the recommendations made was that the government should provide hospitals with modern and adequate facilities to ensure quality health services and meet patients' expectations.*

**KEYWORDS: Nursing and Midwifery Qualities Services, Prospect, Challenges and Nigeria**

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**Introduction**

Nurses and midwives play an important role in primary health care because they are frequently the first and, in some cases, the only health professionals that people see, so the

quality of their initial assessment, care, and treatment is critical. They are also a part of their community, with its culture, strengths, and weaknesses, and can shape and deliver effective interventions to meet the needs of patients, families, and communities. Nurses and midwives



make up the majority of Health and Social Care staff and are an essential part of the healthcare team. They work in a variety of health settings, from emergency rooms to patients' homes, with people of all ages and backgrounds.

The quality of nursing and midwifery education varies greatly, and many are not prepared to meet these challenges. As a result, their potential to contribute to the improvement of people's health and care when they are ill is not being realised. The urgent need to improve nursing and midwifery education was the driving force behind the development of the WHO European Strategy for Nursing and Midwifery Education (WHO 2000a), which deals with initial education of nurses and midwives, which must prepare them to be "fit for purpose," i.e., competent to practise as a qualified nurse or midwife, but must also lay the groundwork for subsequent continuing professional development.

The government's increase in enrolment necessitates a greater concern for quality in nursing and midwifery education. To ensure quality supervision and regulation of nursing and midwifery education in Nigeria, the Nigerian government established the Nurses and Midwives Council (NMC) in 1972 to regulate nursing and midwifery training and practise in the country.

## Concept of Nursing

Nursing is a health-care profession that focuses on the care of individuals, families, and communities in order for them to achieve, maintain, or recover optimal health and quality of life. They also play critical roles in education, assessing situations and providing assistance (Claar & Claar, 2015). Nurses differ from other types of health care providers in their approach to patient care, training, and scope of practise. Nurses practise in a variety of specialties, each with varying levels of prescription authority. Nurses make up the majority of the workforce in most healthcare settings (Maymoun, 2020). However, there is evidence of a global shortage of qualified nurses. Many nurses provide care under the supervision of physicians, and this traditional role has shaped the public perception of nurses as caregivers (Fort, 2017). Nurse practitioners are nurses who have completed a graduate programme in advanced practise nursing. Most jurisdictions, however, allow them to practise independently in a variety of settings (Haczyński, 2017).

Since the postwar period, nurse education has evolved toward more advanced and specialised credentials, and many traditional regulations and provider roles are changing (Dunphy, 2011). Working collaboratively with physicians, therapists, the patient, the



patient's family, and other team members, nurses develop a plan of care that focuses on treating illness to improve quality of life. Clinical nurse specialists and nurse practitioners in Nigeria diagnose health problems and prescribe appropriate medications and other therapies based on state regulations.

Nursing encompasses the autonomous and collaborative care of people of all ages, families, groups, and communities, whether sick or well, and in all settings. Nursing encompasses the promotion of health, the prevention of illness, and the care of the sick, disabled, and dying. Advocacy, the promotion of a safe environment, research, participation in shaping health policy and the management of patients and health systems, and education are all important nursing roles (ICN, 2002).

### **Concept of Midwifery**

Midwifery is a health science and a health profession that deals with pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period (including newborn care), as well as women's sexual and reproductive health throughout their lives (International Confederation of Midwives, 2018). Midwifery is a medical profession in many countries (special for its independent and direct specialised education; should not be confused with the medical specialty, which depends on

previous general training). A midwife is a professional in the field of midwifery.

According to a 2013 "Cochrane" review, "most women should be offered midwifery-led continuity models of care and women should be encouraged to ask for this option," though caution should be exercised when applying this advice to women with significant medical or obstetric complications. The review discovered that midwifery-led care was associated with fewer epidurals, fewer episiotomies or instrumental births, and a lower risk of losing the baby before 24 weeks of gestation. Midwifery-led care, on the other hand, was associated with a longer mean length of labour in hours (Sandall et al., 2013). However, midwifery possesses a distinct body of knowledge, abilities, and professional attitudes derived from disciplines shared by other health professionals, such as science and sociology, but practised by midwives within a professional framework of autonomy, partnership, ethics, and accountability. Midwifery has been practised for millennia all over the world, and its features and qualities have evolved differently depending on local or regional cultural and social traditions and expertise. This document provides a universal description of the philosophy and model of midwifery care without sacrificing local or regional



midwifery care characteristics (ICM, 2018).

### **Nursing and Midwifery**

Nurses and midwives make up the majority of Health and Social Care professionals and are an essential part of the healthcare team. They operate in a variety of health settings, from emergency rooms to patients' homes, with people of diverse ages and backgrounds.

Nurses and midwives are crucial to the advancement of universal health coverage (UHC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They play an important role not just in providing healthcare to millions of people worldwide, but also in changing health policy, promoting health in communities, and assisting patients and families. The major priority of the World Health Organization (WHO) is to assist nations in strengthening their health systems, particularly their health workforce and service delivery methods (Buchan, Dhillon, & Campbell, 2018). Nurses and midwives account for more than half of the health workforce in many countries, and they work in practically every service delivery environment. Nurses and midwives play an important role in primary health care since they are frequently the first and, in some cases, the only health professionals that people encounter, therefore the quality of their

first assessment, care, and treatment is critical. They are also a part of their community, with its culture, strengths, and weaknesses, and can create and provide successful interventions to meet the needs of patients, families, and communities. Nurses and midwives are not only important in providing health care; their experience and skills are also key assets in creating health policy, and their opinions should be heard at the policymaking table.

Nurses and midwives are vital in primary health care because they are typically the first and, in some circumstances, only health professionals that individuals encounter. As a result, the accuracy of their initial assessment, care, and therapy is important. They are also a part of their community, with its culture, strengths, and weaknesses, and they can design and deliver effective interventions to address the needs of patients, families, and communities. Nurses and midwives have a vital role not just in providing health care, but also in developing health policy, and their perspectives should be addressed at the policymaking table.

### **Component of Nursing and Midwifery Qualities**

Nurses and midwives must develop certain knowledge, abilities, and qualities in order to provide effective treatment in a variety of non-specialist



settings (Jenkins et al., 2001). Identifying and fostering specific nursing and midwifery qualities will aid in the development of hospitals and health systems.

- **Caring:** A nurse who has a natural predisposition to actually care about how their patients feel (and thus how effectively they perform their job) will have a substantial impact on their nursing success, making caring a key indication of a nurse's success. A nurse demonstrates care by listening, building relationships, reducing suffering, touching, and going above and beyond the scope of the nurse's work (Cornell, 2020).

- **Communication Skills:** A nurse's ability to communicate effectively is essential. The capacity to effectively interact with other nurses, physicians, and disciplines across other units, patients, and their families is critical to a nurse's position.

- **Sense of Humour:** Nurses who can find time for a laugh in such a psychologically and physically demanding vocation are often more effective in their roles. Because nurses are subjected to varied degrees of high-stress circumstances, taking advantage of downtime and adopting a cheerful mood can bring immense stress relief. A good sense of humour also aids in the dissemination of positivity to other

nurses, patients, and their families. One of the attributes of a nurse leader is a good sense of humour.

- **Optimistic:** Successful nurses approach their work with a positive attitude. They can look on the bright side of things and support their patients who are on the mend. While this profession can be emotionally draining at times, exceptional nurses know how to stay cheerful and focused on serving others. Furthermore, nurses with a positive attitude can serve as role models in their practise, influencing others to be optimistic as well (Grand Canyon University, 2021).

- **Compassionate:** Compassion is one of the most vital characteristics of a good nurse. Nurses will witness patients suffer throughout their careers. They must be able to demonstrate sympathy for patients and their families in addition to merely providing a solution. As a result, they are able to build genuine relationships with their patients.

- **Even-Tempered:** Emotional stability is required for empathy. No matter how bad the day has been, it is critical not to get outwardly angry or agitated with patients. Healthcare is an emotionally taxing industry, with daily highs and lows of joy and grief. Nurses must be able to moderate their reactions to tough events in order to address difficulties and focus



on the health and safety of their patients.

### **Roles of Nursing and Midwifery**

Midwife nursing care is provided by nurses and midwives to expectant mothers. Nurses and midwives instruct and educate new moms on breastfeeding, washing, and clothing babies, as well as other baby healthcare issues (Lalonde & McMullen, 2009). Nurses and midwives are the primary providers of nursing and midwifery services; in many countries, they constitute the majority of frontline professionals who provide both preventive and curative care in the community. When nursing and midwifery personnel's abilities and expertise are maximised, they can make a major contribution to improved health outcomes. For generations, nurses and midwives have provided critical care. They make up the vast bulk of health-care workers in numerous nations around the world. Their importance has been recognised by WHO from its very beginning.

Nurses and midwives help mothers and babies in a variety of ways, including lowering maternal-fetal mortality rates and boosting overall health. Midwife and nursing associations can provide infrastructure by acting as education advocates, ensuring human/health resources to access adequate education

levels, establishing political lobbies to determine health care agendas, ensuring the allocation of financial resources to support this process economically, and providing public awareness and social knowledge through awareness campaigns (Chamberlain, McDonagha, Lalondeb, & Arulkumaranc, 2003).

Midwifery associations can raise maternal and infant health awareness by lobbying and advocating at the public, government, and international aid organisation levels on the principles of effective health services for women and newborns; ensuring interdisciplinary professional interaction; assessing maternal-fetal and neonatal health; and educating midwives and the society to which they provide services.

### **Regulatory bodies to Nursing and Midwifery**

#### ***Nigeria***

The Trade Unions (Amendment) Act of 2005 recognised the National Association of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives (NANNM) as a professional-based trade union organisation. It is one of the nursing and midwifery regulatory bodies. It is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation that is authorised to organise all professional nurses and midwives in Nigeria who have been trained, registered, and licenced to practise nursing at all levels of the



healthcare delivery system, both public and private.

The National Association of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives (NANNM) was established as a unified body representing all nurses and midwives in the country. The NANNM Constitution, as updated in 2018, outlines the organization's goals and objectives. These are in relation to:

- a) To organize all registered Nurses and Midwives in Nigeria who are qualified for membership to form a trade union and a professional organization.
- b) To provide a forum or avenue where Nurses speak with one voice.
- c) To set and improve the standard of services which the Nurses give to the general public.
- d) To improve Nursing Education at all levels throughout the federation.
- e) To set and improve the standard of services which the Nurses give to the general public.
- f) To participate in planning, policy-making, and administration of health care delivery services at all levels of government.
- g) To raise the status of the profession, obtain just and proper remuneration, hours of work and other conditions/schemes of service that will enhance the dignity of the profession and generally protect the

professional and socio-economic interests of members.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria is a branch of the Federal Ministry of Health that was established by Decree No. 89, 1979, which is now known as the Nursing and Midwifery (Registration, etc.) Act. Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, Cap. N143. The Council is a legal entity with perpetual succession and a single seal. It is the only legal, administrative, corporate, and statutory body charged with carrying out specific functions on behalf of the Federal Government of Nigeria in order to ensure the safe and effective delivery of nursing and midwifery care to the public through quality education and best practises. The Council is mandated by law to regulate the standards of nursing and midwifery education and practise in Nigeria and to review such standards from time to time to meet the changing health needs of society.

### ***South Africa***

The nursing and midwifery professions in South Africa are primarily controlled by the South African Nursing Council (SANC), a professional body tasked with setting and maintaining nursing education and practise standards. The Nursing Act established the SANC as an autonomous statutory agency. It is self-sustaining because it is funded by



licencing, registration, and accreditation fees paid by nurses and nursing education institutions. The South African Nursing Council governs the nursing profession in the following ways:

- Development, maintenance, promotion and control of standards in nursing education and training
- Registration of different categories of nurses and midwives in the country and
- Monitoring the ethical and professional conduct of nurses and midwives

The Nursing Amendment Act of 1995 (Act 547 of 1995), enacted by the new democratic South African government in 1994, provided unified regulation of nursing in the Republic. This Act, among other things, formed the South African Interim Nursing Council and abolished the different nursing councils of the self-governing homelands established by the apartheid government under section 26 of the Self-Governing Territories Constitution Act, 1971 (ACT No. 21 of 1971). The councils that were abolished included the Bophuthatswana Nursing Council, established by section 53 of the Health and Related Act of 1985 (Bophuthatswana); the Ciskeian Nursing Council, established by section 2 of the Ciskei Nursing Act (Act 13 of 1984); and the Transkei Nursing Act, established by section 2 of the Transkei Nursing Act of

1978 (Act No. 6 of 1978) (Nursing Amendment Act, 1995).

The Nursing Amendment Act of 1995, like its predecessors, was intended to support the universal norms and values of the nursing profession by emphasising professional practise, democracy, transparency, equity, accessibility, and community involvement in accordance with the legislative goals of the newly established democratic order. The Act, however, did not repeal the provisions of the Nursing Act of 1978 (Act No. 50 of 1978), which continue to allow the nursing profession self-regulation authority.

### **The Challenges in Nursing and Midwifery**

Many countries are experiencing a lack of midwives and require midwives to provide effective midwifery services to pregnant women. According to Breier, Wildschut, and Mggqolozana (2009), many nurses left their home country to seek better working conditions elsewhere. Worldwide, a shortage of midwives and bad working conditions are frequent (Hassan-Bitar & Narrainen, 2009). Some nurses around the world find themselves working in disadvantaged or low-resource situations (Jones & Bartlett, 2010).

Nurses and midwives are frequently overlooked and discriminated against throughout their academic and professional lives (Sheikh, 2012).





Several obstacles confront Nigerian nursing and midwifery education, including a shortage of trained lecturers, a mismatch between theory and practise in learning, a lack of opportunities for practise, and gender-based discrimination and stigma (Mayra, 2020). Gender roles in nursing and midwifery are not well understood in India (Reynolds et al., 2013). The regulation of nurses' and midwives' migration is unclear; practise control is poor; and there is a failure to increase education quality, primarily in the private sector. Another difficulty is the uneven distribution of nursing institutes, and the commercialisation of education has resulted to a lopsided production of human resources for health (HRH) (Rao, 2011).

According to a global systematic study of midwifery care in low and middle-income countries, social, economic, and professional variables create hurdles to providing adequate midwifery care (Filby, 2016). These barriers result in feelings of tiredness and moral distress, which have an impact on the quality of care offered. Poor working circumstances, a lack of status, and a perceived lack of education are the three main challenges to providing adequate midwifery care in a country.

However, midwives and nurses play an important role in reproductive and maternal health care. To govern

education and practise, as well as to ensure qualified nurses and midwives in the Nigerian health workforce, a comprehensive and effective regulatory structure is required. The International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) has established functions that regulating entities must adhere to. The International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) and State Nursing Councils (SNC) play important roles in nursing and midwifery education regulation.

### **Effect of Quality Services of Nurses and Mid-Wives on the Health of the Patients**

The goal of health care quality is to achieve the most desirable health outcomes such that the services given are effective, efficient, and cost-effective (Gupta & Rokade, 2016). One of the primary responsibilities of healthcare institutions such as hospitals is to deliver quality services that meet the expectations of patients. To that goal, the quality mindset must first be entrenched inside hospital environments, notably in nursing care. This can shorten hospital stays and increase patient satisfaction. Furthermore, higher service quality correlates to decreased healthcare costs. As a result, given that a big section of a population would often be able to receive hospital care at certain life milestones, nurses must provide high-quality services. Because patients have the most regular interaction with



nurses, some experts ascribe the acceptability of the offered services solely to nurses, and the important involvement of other treatment groups is sometimes disregarded.

All patients have the right to high-quality care, and all compassionate nurses are responsible for achieving this aim. Nursing care and its quality influence hospital accreditation and rating in most countries (Nomura, 2018). Furthermore, nurses must be held legally and ethically accountable for the quality of care provided. The quality of nursing care is defined as the nurse's reaction to patients' physical, psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual requirements, allowing them to return to their healthy and regular lives while also satisfying patients and nurses. Nursing care is critical in health-care systems, and care is a fundamental and crucial fact in nursing. Filby (2016) emphasised the need of quality measurement in today's competitive healthcare industry. On the other hand, due to rising health-care costs, continuous improvement of nursing service quality is required, as is quality control of nursing services to promote patient satisfaction. Given that nurses deliver the majority of medical care services to patients, they play a vital role in enhancing service quality. Patients have a right to adequate and high-quality nursing care. The quality of

nursing services in today's health-care systems faces numerous obstacles.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that nurses and midwives play an important role not just in providing healthcare to millions of people worldwide, but also in changing health policy, promoting health in communities, and supporting patients and families. Nurses and midwives account for half of the professional health workforce worldwide. They are at the heart of nearly every healthcare team and make a significant contribution to health. Nursing involves the autonomous and collaborative care of people of all ages, families, groups, and communities, whether sick or well, and in all settings. Nursing and midwifery encompasses the promotion of health, the prevention of illness, and the care of the sick, injured, and dying.

### **Recommendations**

1. Midwifery associations should raise awareness for the maternal and infant health by making advocacy on the principles of effective and quality health services for women and newborns
2. Government should improve Nursing and midwifery education by encouraging and supporting their educational processes.
3. Government should provide hospitals with modern and adequate facilities to ensure quality health services and meet patients expectation.



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