

Community Health Nursing

CHAPTER

1

INTRODUCTION

Community health nursing is a field of nursing, which is the amalgamation of primary healthcare with public health nursing. The goal is to promote and preserve the health of populations and is directed to communities, groups, families and individuals across their lifespan in a continuous manner rather than as an episodic process. It is concerned not only with individual beneficiaries but also with their families.

DEFINITION

Community health nursing, also called public health nursing or community nursing, combines primary healthcare and nursing practice in a community setting. Community health (CH) nurses provide health services, preventive care, interventions and health education to communities or populations.

PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY HEALTH NURSING

- ◆ Effective health workers, irrespective of position or place of work should function as a team.
- ◆ Health workers are accountable to authorized health agency.
- ◆ Health workers must be nonpolitical and nonsectarian.
- ◆ Health workers must not accept gifts or bribes ever.
- ◆ Teaching is an essential part of all health services.
- ◆ Records and reports are essential to community health services.
- ◆ Community health nurses should be qualified.
- ◆ Professional relationship and etiquette are essential aspects of community health services.
- ◆ The person who works with village people should extend his/her help in carrying out health programs.
- ◆ Evaluation of service is an important factor in planning and implementation of health services.
- ◆ Provision should be made for supervising and directing community nursing services.
- ◆ Professional interests should be developed and maintained.

COMMUNITY HEALTH APPROACH

To accomplish community health goals and aims, the following approaches are to be utilized by the community health professionals.

- ♦ **Persuasive approach:** Persuasive approach implies convincing people through dialogue and educating them to change or modify their health behavior.
- ♦ **Enforcement:** The enforcement implies the use of more coercive measures such as use of legislation, e.g. prohibition of drug abuse, child abuse, immunization as a condition to school admission, etc.
- ♦ **Team approach:** Community health is a problem-solving process and a team approach is a prerequisite to deal with varied and complex health needs and problems at large. It is just not possible for any one profession or discipline to provide such care.
- ♦ **Community involvement:** Health of the individuals living in a defined community is not only their 'right' but also their 'responsibility' to take care of their own health and also of the community at large. Without people's help, participation or cooperation, it is neither possible to make healthcare services accessible and acceptable to them nor it is feasible to achieve community health goals and aims.
- ♦ **Intersectoral approach:** Health of people at large cannot be attained by health sector alone because there are many factors which affect people's health. These factors are not under the purview of the health sector, e.g., food production and distribution, water, sanitation, housing, environmental protection and education, etc. Each one is dealt by separate sector and socioeconomic development and health.