

Editorial Article

Home nursing care

Christopoulou Ioanna
Professor in Nursing Department A', TEI, Athens

Concept

"Home care", "home health care", "in-home care" are phrases that are used interchangeably in English (mainly in the U.S.A.) to mean any type of care given to a person in their own home. Both phrases have been used in the past interchangeably regardless of whether the person requires skilled care or not. More recently, there is a growing movement to distinguish between "home health care" meaning skilled nursing care and "home care" meaning non-medical care. In the U. K. "homecare" (for skilled nursing care) and "domiciliary care" (for non medical care) are the preferred expressions. Home care aims to make it possible for people to remain at home rather than use residential, long-term, or institutional-based nursing care. Home care providers render services in the patients' own home. These services may include some combination of professional health care services and life assistance services.¹

Historical Origins

Early Christian Church: In year 58 after Christ, deaconesses Phoebe and Tavitha are referred to as the first nurses, offered nursing care in the community.

The Company of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul: sometimes simply referred to as **Daughters of Charity**, it was founded in 1633 and devoted to serving Jesus Christ in persons who are poor through corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

Theodor Fliedner: A German Lutheran minister was the founder of "Lutheran deaconess" training. In 1821 he

assumed the pastorate in the poor municipality of Kaiserswerth (now an official region of Dusseldorf).

William Rathbone VI: British politician, noted for his philanthropic and public work. The care of his dying first wife in 1859, by a nurse, prompted him to campaign for a system of district nursing to enable the poor to benefit from similar care.^{1,2}

Stages of Development

In Europe, since 1860, "home care" has developed in three stages:

Stage 1: 1860-1900: Voluntary home health care is organised and offered to the poor (district nursing).

Stage 2: 1900-1970: "Public health" is organised and focuses on the health care of the individual patient, in the context of his own family (public health nursing).

Stage 3: 1970- to date: Home health care focuses on the total of the population of the community, individuals and families (community nursing).^{1,2,3}

The Greek Experience

Unlike other European countries and the U.S.A., home health care in Greece has not been organised in a systematic manner. In 1875, Queen Olga founded the "Nursing Training", which was later known as the "Nursing School" of "Evangelismos Hospital". The main purpose was the training of nurses for home health care. In 1923, The Greek Red Cross trained for six months a group of volunteer nurses in "Public Health", who offered care to refugees' camps. In 1979, the Greek Red Cross began offering home nursing care for elderly in some areas of Athens.

From 1990 to date, the Greek Red Cross has organised his service, and offers home care for all cases of patients. In 1979 a pilot program of "home care" service at "Metaxa" Piraeus hospital was initiated, to provide nursing care to cancer patients in the area of Piraeus. In 1986 a similar program started at General Hospital for Cancer "Aghioi Anargyroi. Both programmes have been operating to date. In May 2001 started a program of home care services in General Hospital of Patision.^{1,4}

Nowadays the Greek society has understood the need and the importance of this service and a lot of private organizations have started such programs and this is very optimistic for the future of the health care system.

In the present and in the future, decision - makers would envision home care as a sustainable approach to prevent the need for the unnecessary acute and / or long-term institutionalization and maintain individuals in their home and community as possible.⁵

Bibliography

1. Christopoulou I. Home nursing: Historical evolution, aim and content. *General Family Medicine*, 183-8: Oct.-Dec., 1993.
2. Rice, Robyn, PhD. *Home Care Nursing Practice: Concepts and Application*, 3rd ed. St. Louis, MO: Mosby, 2001.
3. Home - based and long term care: home care issues and evidence. Geneva, WHO, 2008
4. Community home-based care in resource-limited settings: a framework for action. Geneva, WHO, 2002.
5. Turner J. G. *Community Health Nursing*. Lippincott company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1988.