***(Established by Nursing & Midwifery Registration etc. Act. Cap. No. 143 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004)***



***A PAPER PRESENTED BY THE REGISTRAR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY COUNCIL OF NIGERIA AT THE INTERNATIONAL NURSES WEEK CELEBRATION ON 18TH MAY, 2011***

***TOPIC: NURSING EDUCATION REFORMS: A PIVOT TO***

***QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY***

PROTOCOL

**INTRODUCTION**

I must first of all thank the National Executive Council of NANNM and the Planning Committee of this scientific workshop for organizing this programme.

The topic of this paper, “Nursing Education Reforms: A Pivot To Quality Service Delivery”, is an issue of top priority to the Board and Management of the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria.

This to my mind may have informed the decision of the Planning Committee of this Scientific session to assign this presentation to the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria.

**KEY TERMS**

It will be necessary to identify and analyse the key terms in this topic before going into the discussion.

* **Reforms** – refers to changes leading to a permanent improvement in the quality or function of something.
* **Pivot -** a support upon which something rest on or revolves around.
* **Nursing education reforms** – refers to changes and re-

organization of the conventional system of nursing education in

line with the National Policy on Education with the ultimate aim of

improving the quality of Nursing education and competences of practitioners for effective delivery of quality care to the populace as a co-factor to poverty reduction effort of government.

**NEED FOR NURSING EDUCATION REFORMS**

Nursing Education Reform is based on the Health sector reform in Nigeria which is also based on the global health reform. As stated by the Health Minister (FMOH 2004), the Health Sector reform is a broad based purposeful and sustainable fundamental change in function, structure and performance of health system in order to deliver efficient, quality, affordable accessible, effective and equitable health care services to the populace and ultimately improve the health status of the people.

The Current Nursing education reform therefore is a response to the changes needed in the function, structure and performance of Nursing education and practice in Nigeria so as to provide high quality care to the society.

Rao (2007) stated this basic fact, ***“there is no educational system in the world that has not undergone some reforms and restructuring”.***

The truth is that the more pragmatic the reforms embarked upon, the more dynamic the educational system that evolves.

Brief history of Nursing Education in Nigeria reveals that formal Nursing education in Nigeria started in 1930 (Adelowo, 1988).

This system was bequeathed to the country by the British Colonial Administrators, in fashion with what was operated in Britain at that time. This was the apprenticeship type of training obtained from hospital based of training post.

This system of Nursing education metamorphosed from the apprenticeship type of training to tertiary education in hospital – based Schools of Nursing, Midwifery and Post Basic Nursing programme (Ndatsu, 1999; Adelowo, 1988)

Nursing education in Nigeria is eighty one (81) years old and therefore is overdue for re-organization and restructuring.

The weaknesses of this conventional system of Nursing education necessitating reforms are as follows:

1. The students are not issued with any academic certificate from

the Nursing educational institutions but only receive their professional certificates of registration from the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria on passing the Council Final Qualifying Examination. This situation can engender a feeling of inadequacy in the professional nurses thereby affecting the confidence and output of the practitioners.

1. Academic progression along already established educational line is

long and complex.

1. Is not in line with the National Policy on Education.
2. Employers have difficulty placing and remunerating nurses and

midwives because of system of education.

Preparation of student nurses and midwives in an educational system whereby the graduates are awarded academic certificate provides the following advantages:

* Promotes confidence of the professionals
* Guides employers on proper placement and remuneration of the nurse practitioners thereby promoting job satisfaction and better productivity.
* Promotes academic progression thereby helping the practitioners to develop additional knowledge and skills in already established education system, which are pre requisite for quality service delivery.
* Promotes quality of education of nurses:

Prior to the Nursing reforms the conventional system of nursing education depended on tutors with Diploma as the highest qualification. This was a great variance with education in tertiary institutions where M.Sc. degrees are the acceptable entry point for lecturers.

Recently the Federal Government of Nigeria quantified the General Nursing (RN Certificate) and the Basic Midwifery (RM) Certificate as equivalent to HND, for employment purposes. If this is the situation, it therefore follows that the qualifications of core nursing tutors as well as other lecturers in any Nursing institution must be reviewed upward. This is logical since an educator must have a higher qualification than the students he or she teaches. The quality of educators has direct effect on the quality of the professionals produced while the quality of the professionals ultimately determines the quality of service delivery. It is therefore part of the Nursing education reforms that core nursing tutors in schools of nursing , midwifery and post basic nursing programmes must have at least first degree in Nursing while Heads of such institutions should have higher qualifications. This will ensure that these educators have the broad base of nursing knowledge, concepts and theories to teach. However to ensure also that the teachers know how to pass the knowledge across to the students, it is a requirement for them to have a training in education. To further assist in the education of qualified educators, the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria in collaboration with the Department of Hospital Services, Federal Ministry of Health set up a sub-committee of nurse educators and experts in education to develop a curriculum for Post Graduate Diploma in nursing education (PGDNE). The aim of this programme is to boost the availability of competent nurse educators for the Nursing institutions. This curriculum has been accepted by the National Universities Commission (NUC) and is already for implementation by interested Universities.

The Nursing educational system will withstand the test of time if it is reorganized to meet the national policy on education, needs and expectations of nurses, the labour market and the society, hence the need for Nursing education reforms.

The focus of a sound Nursing educational system should be:

* Optimum academic and professional development of nurses who are equipped to build a strong and virile profession.
* Effective and efficient health care delivery.
* Maximum satisfaction of societal needs and expectations.

A well structured Nursing education system will not only eliminate difficulty in academic progression of nurses but will also promote job satisfaction, build competence and confidence of practitioners; thereby promoting quality nursing care delivery.

It is however worthy to note that the goal of nursing education reforms is not just to produce nursing practitioners with educationally acceptable academic qualifications, degrees and higher degrees. Higher or nationally accepted nursing qualifications in itself alone cannot guarantee excellent nursing care.

The unique objectives of Nursing education reforms therefore are to equip individuals with:

* General and specialized nursing knowledge
* Scientific and practical skills required for excellent Nursing care.
* The age long ideals, virtues and attitudes that will enable them to render professional nursing care to patients and clients with a passion.

According to Leininger (1991) care is the essence of nursing while Watson (2003) describes Nursing as a human science with the major focus being the process of caring for individuals, families and groups. This means that no nursing reforms will be complete if it does not translate into better patient care. A successful nursing education reforms should translate into more humane, more caring and mre conscientious nurses.

In all health care settings, the success of care is directly related to the quality of Nursing care.

Sick people are usually anxious, afraid and suspicious even if they do not show it and reactions to illness are not always logical or rational.

It takes a skillful and caring nurse to:

* + - evaluate circumstances critically
    - bring to bear the needed inter personal skills required to keep the patient in a relaxed state for treatment and care.
    - Adopt the most suitable attitudes in order to ensure the patient/client receives effective, efficient and safe Nursing care at all settings.

From the foregoing it is necessary to look at the various aspects of Nursing education reforms and how these can translate into quality nursing care delivery.

* + - **Review of entry requirement/qualification into Nursing**

**educational institutions:**

Entry requirements for nursing and midwifery education at all levels is five O level credits in English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics at not more than two sittings. This took effect in November 2006, for General Nursing and March 2006 for Basic Midwifery institutions.

Higher and better entry qualifications into nursing institutions ensures that the students admitted are trainable. Everything being equal, better quality of student intake will lead to better quality of professionals turn out and ultimately better quality of nursing care.

* + - **Movement of nursing education into the University:**

The Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria in its position paper on Nursing education reforms stated clearly that quality health care, client satisfaction through utilization of evidence based practice, support for research and research utilization among other things can be possible if nursing education is moved into the University. This is so because university nursing education is designed to produce polyvalent nurses who are equipped through high standard of education to render effective and efficient health care to patients/clients. The aim of the programme is to improve the quality of Nursing care to citizens.

* + - **Upgrading of Nursing institutions into full fledge**

**Monotechnics:**

The National Policy on Education categorises Schools of Nursing as Monotechnics. Such schools are designed as financially and administratively autonomous tertiary institutions with the objectives of preparing professionals to meet the manpower needs of the country. It can be appreciated that this system has many merits. For one thing the structure is clearly defined and academic progression is easier. The schools that are accredited by the regulatory organ of the Federal Government are authorized to issue academic qualifications to the graduates. The Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria is working with the relevant agency of the Government and stakeholders to ensure this aspect of the reforms is embarked upon smoothly for better nursing education to be achieved. This is expected to lead to better job satisfaction and increased output.

* **Accreditation of Nursing Training Institutions and Areas of**

**Clinical Practice.**

The Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria as part of its Nursing education reforms has embarked upon series of accreditation and re-accreditation exercises to ensure Nursing educational institutions have adequate physical and human resources to meet the required standard for education of nurses and midwives.

Emphasis is placed on the standard of the School because it has a direct correlation with the performance and competence of the professionals that graduates from such Nursing institutions.

* **Review of the curriculum**

As part of the current reforms the various curricula for Nursing and Midwifery education have been reviewed and updated in line with current trends in the health care delivery system. The review takes cognizance of new trends in the clients/patients care, national health care needs and demands and as global best practices. This aspect of nursing education reforms is very critical for producing competent nurse practitioners who are equipped to render qualitative Nursing care in a dynamic society like ours.

* **Manpower Development and Capacity Building**

As part of nursing education reforms the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria has:

-Collaborated with various local and international agencies/organizations for capacity development of nurses and midwives in areas geared towards better service delivery. Among these areas are: Obstetric Emergency Care /Life Saving Skills, Integrated Management of Childhood Illness, use of Anti-Pneumatic Anti Shock Garment in the management of post partum haemorrhage, HIV testing and Counseling, Infant and Newborn Feeding, etc.

- The Council is also exploring ways of further parthnership aimed at boosting nursing manpower capacity development particularly in area of preparation of Nursing lecturers/tutors. This is critical for qualitative service delivery because the various nursing and midwifery schools and departments need highly qualified educators if competent professionals are to be produced.

The Council has also encouraged more nurses to undertake degrees and higher degrees in Nursing. This is not necessarily for teaching in schools alone but also for the clinical areas. Nursing is a practice profession, full impact of higher education in Nursing will be felt when nurses with degrees and higher degrees in Nursing work hand in hand with other health care professionals in the clinical setting to render care to patients/clients. Currently the nursing profession is rated by the input of the nurses at clinical areas of which majority are Diploma holders.

* **Internship Scheme for Nurse graduates**

The Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria as part of the Nursing education reforms is working with all stakeholders to ensure that internship scheme for fresh Nurse graduates is commenced in Nigeria. This is necessary to improve the competence of these new nurse practitioners thereby contributing to excellent Nursing care. This is necessary because in University based education there is demand for liberal knowledge acquisition from undergraduates and they are usually under intense learning pressure with inadequate time for integration of theory and practical knowledge. The period of internship will therefore help to strengthen the skills of the practitioner leading to quality service.

* **Mandatory Continuing Professional Development**

Learning is a lifelong process, therefore for quality Nursing care to be maintained the Board of the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria has directed that nurses must keep up to date with current trends through mandatory continuing professional development programme. This form of education is part of the Nursing reforms which is required from the nurses in order to ensure competence is maintained. Nursing is the art and Science of using clinical judgment and the provision of care to promote, improve and maintain health. Caring is the fundamental and critical component of nursing practice. It is accomplished with wisdom, knowledge, compassion and competence. These knowledge, virtues and attitudes cannot all be acquired in school but must be while in professional practice. It is based on this that from January 2012 evidence of attendance of MCPDP shall be required for renewal of licence.

**CONCLUSION**

The quality of nursing is dependent on the quality of education given to nursing students. A poorly educated nurse cannot provide the quality health care needed for the highly technological health care system and complex society of today. It is on this note that the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria is committed to implementation of the Nursing education reforms. This will surely not only promote excellence in Nursing practice but will stimulate the much needed growth and development of the Nursing profession in Nigeria.

Thank you for listening.

**References**

Adelowo E. O. (1988) The Nursing Profession In Nigeria. Lagos: Lantern Books.

Bryan Brown, C. & Dracup, K. (2003) Professionalism, American Journal of Critical Care, 12 (5), 394.

Federal Ministry of Health (2004) Health Sector Reforms.

Leininger M. M. (1991) Culture Care Diversity and Universality: A Theory of Nursing. National League of Nursing Press New York.

Ndatsu, P. N. (1999) Practicing Nursing andc Midwifery in Nigeria (Ordinances and Laws 1930 -1992) Lagos: Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria.

Rao, E. (2007) The Sociology of Education. London: Oxford University Press.

Watson J. (2003) Jean Watson and the Theory of Human Caring.