

# ROLE OF NURSE IN MIDWIFERY AND OBSTETRICAL CARE

## Abstract

The role of a nurse in midwifery and obstetrical care is crucial in providing comprehensive healthcare services to women during pregnancy, childbirth and the post partum period. Nurses play a vital role in providing care during adolescent, antenatal intranatal and postnatal period. Nurses act as advocates for women in midwifery and obstetrical care settings. They ensure that the patient's rights are respected. They also play a key role in health promotion and education within the community. They contribute to the physical, emotional and educational well-being of women, ensuring the best possible outcomes for both mother and baby.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The process of child bearing right from the time of conception from the womb till delivery can be divided into **4 stages**. It begins with **adolescence** when the girl child has to be given proper education and **counseling** regarding **marriage, sexuality and motherhood**. Specifically **after marriage** a pregnant women undergoes **3 specific stages** i.e., the antenatal, intranatal, postnatal. The nurse has specific roles in each of the different phases.<sup>1</sup>

## II. NURSES ROLE IN ADOLESCENCE PERIOD

During adolescence period nurses play a crucial role in promoting and supporting the physical, emotional and social wellbeing of adolescents. Nurses provide education to adolescents and their families on various health topics, including puberty, sexual health, hygiene, nutrition, substance abuse, mental health and healthy lifestyle choices. They offer accurate information and guidance to help adolescents make informed decisions about their health. Nurses promote preventive health care measures such as vaccinations, regular check-ups and screenings for conditions like obesity, hypertension and sexually transmitted infections. They also emphasize the importance of healthy behaviours, such as exercise, healthy eating and avoiding risky behaviours.<sup>1</sup> Adolescence can be challenging time for mental health, with increased vulnerability to stress, anxiety, depression and other mental health issues. Nurses provide counselling, support and referral services for adolescents who may be experiencing emotional difficulties. They may work in collaboration with mental health professionals to assess and provide appropriate interventions. Nurses create a safe and non-judgemental environment where adolescents feel comfortable discussing sensitive issues. They maintain patient confidentiality and build trust, which is crucial for effective communication and providing appropriate care. Some adolescents may have some chronic health conditions such as diabetes, asthma or epilepsy. Nurses help these individuals manage their conditions by providing education, medication management and support for self-care practices. They also assist in the transition from pediatric to adult healthcare services. Nurses also play a vital role in educating adolescents about sexual and reproductive health, including contraception, sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy preventions. They offer guidance on healthy relationships, consent and responsible sexual behaviours. Adolescence is a time when experimentation and engagement in high risk behaviours may occur, such as substance abuse or unsafe sexual practices. Nurses provide information, counselling and resources to help adolescents understand the risks and make healthier choices. Nurses collaborate with other healthcare professionals, educators and community organizations to promote adolescent health and address specific issues affecting this population. They advocate for policies and programs that support the well-being of adolescents and ensure their voices are heard.<sup>2</sup>

## III. NURSES ROLE IN ANTENATAL PERIOD

The nurse functions in the antenatal period many care-taking roles. They includes:

- 1. Care Giver:** Nurse gives antenatal care to the women or pregnant mother in each trimester efficiently. They assess every antenatal mother attending healthcare institutions by history collection, physical examination and lab reports and identify the fetal wellbeing. They also assess the mothers for any risk of pregnancy in the mothers and

identify the complication in pregnancy, delivery and the antenatal period. They educate the mother regarding warning signs of labour.

2. **Clinician:** Nurses assess the antenatal mothers during admission. Expected date of delivery, measures to be taken to diagnose pregnancy. They perform adequate examination during each antenatal visits. Also provides therapeutically based nursing measures for the mothers in the ward. As a clinician nurse gives awareness regarding the antenatal measures that has to be taken by the mothers and give proper care during the case of risk pregnancy.
3. **Teacher:** Nurses assist pregnant mothers about the general information regarding pregnancy labour and the child birth. They help the mother take the best possible decision for the care of themselves or their children. Nurses also act as a role model for the technical care of clients or their infants and with supportive teaching can assist even the most anxious, or unknowledgeable client to learn how to provide safe care.
4. **Health Educator:** As an educator nurses educate the mothers regarding importance and essentials of nutrition during the antenatal period, knowledge regarding the warning signs of the labour and also regarding the physiological changes during the pregnancy, minor disorders and coping with the discomforts during the pregnancy, emotional response in the pregnancy.
5. **Counselor:** Nurses provide counseling regarding the family planning, spacing of the pregnancy, temporary and permanent methods, care of the newborn and immunization of the newborn.
6. **Advocator:** Nurse has to act as a role of advocator she has to support the antenatal mothers in all aspects of care giving. They also have to support the antenatal mothers during all procedures and inform the mother about the benefits and harm.
7. **Communicator:** Nurses are the link between the couple and the doctor. They also communicate with the expectant mother regarding various aspects of motherhood.<sup>3</sup>

#### IV. NURSE'S ROLE IN THE INTRANATAL PERIOD

1. **Novince:** They are the **beginners** having **no experiences** with the care of the woman in labour. Nursing students are not only the novince, those who are new to the clinical area of practice or one who is returning to the practice of nursing action.
2. **Advanced beginner:** Once students have had **some actual experiences** with clients under the guidance of instruction and perception they can begin to synthesis clinical findings. They synthesizes the roles.
3. **Competent nurses:** Nurse who had a **few years of full time nursing on a busy labour unit** are able to more quickly establish priorities of need among the various clients.
4. **Proficient nurse:** Nurse with **many years of experiences** are able to select the key components. They grasp the heart of the matter, they can move backward or forward to focus on providing holistic care.
5. **Expert nurse:** As one who has an **enormous background of experiences**.<sup>4</sup>

## **V. ROLE OF MIDWIFE NURSE IN THE POSTNATAL PERIOD**

In the postnatal period, which refers to the time immediately after childbirth, nurses play a critical role in providing care and support to both the mother and the newborn. Nurses monitor the mother's physical recovery after childbirth, including assessing vital signs, wound healing and post partum bleeding. They provide pain management, assist with breastfeeding and offer guidance on postpartum self-care, including hygiene, nutrition and exercise. Nurses provide comprehensive care for the newborn, including assessing vital signs, monitoring feeding and elimination patterns and ensuring proper bonding and attachment between the mother and baby. They assist with newborn screening tests, administer vaccinations and educate parents about newborn care such as bathing, cord care and safe sleep practices. Nurses play a crucial role in promoting and supporting breastfeeding. They assist mothers with positioning and latching techniques, educate them about the benefits of breastfeeding, address common breastfeeding challenges and provide guidance on expressing and storing breast milk.<sup>2</sup> They also ensure that newborns are adequately feeding and gaining weight. The postnatal period can be emotionally challenging for mothers as they adjust to their new roles and cope with hormonal changes. Nurses offer emotional support, actively listen to their concerns and provide reassurance and encouragement. They may also screen for postpartum depression and refer mothers for appropriate mental health support if needed. Nurses educate mothers and families about infant care, safety and the signs of normal newborn development. They provide information on recognizing signs of illness in the baby and when to seek medical attention. Nurses also help facilitate a smooth transition from the hospital to home by coordinating follow-up appointments and connecting families with community resources for ongoing support. Nurses involve and engage the family in the care of the mother and newborn. They encourage family bonding, provide opportunities for family members to participate in the care routines and offer support and guidance to partners and other family members in adjusting to their new roles. In cases where complications arise during the postnatal period, such as postpartum hemorrhage, infections or neonatal health concerns, nurses are responsible for recognizing the signs, initiating appropriate interventions and collaborating with the healthcare team to provide timely and effective care. Nurses promote healthy lifestyle choices and provide guidance on contraception and family planning to help mothers and families make informed decisions about their reproductive health and spacing of pregnancies.<sup>5</sup>

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

The role of a nurse in midwifery and obstetrical care is crucial in providing comprehensive and compassionate healthcare to women during pregnancy, childbirth and the post partum period. Nurses play a vital role in supporting and assisting women throughout the entire childbirth process, working closely with obstetricians, midwives and other healthcare professionals to ensure the well-being of both the mother and the newborn.

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