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Review Article

Forensic nursing in India-importance of introducing forensic nursing in Indian scenario

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ABSTRACT

The most modern idea in forensic services is forensic nursing, which has only lately been implemented in India. This idea unites resources from criminal justice, forensic science, and healthcare with a shared concern for the suffering of crime victims, accused people, and their families. Nursing professionals and nursing students are currently bursting with excitement about becoming forensic nurse examiners. Police organizations and forensic medical specialists will directly benefit from this advancement. With competent forensic nursing colleagues, forensic pathologists and forensic medical examiners (FME) will be able to carry out their professional responsibilities more effectively. Direct services from forensic nursing specialists, who are specially trained to work with people who are traumatized by crime or who have been falsely accused of crimes, will be beneficial to society. Experts in building relationships with these particular clientele, forensic nurse examiners are able to effortlessly clarify legal needs and complexities. Better forensic nurses are those who can conduct sympathetic, in-language interviews with patients. This abstract provides a brief overview of the topic, including its relevance, current status, challenges, and potential future directions, while also hinting at the key findings and recommendations of the paper.

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1. Introduction

Forensic Nursing is the application of nursing science to public or legal proceedings and it expands the concept of holistic nursing body, mind, and spirit. It's a part of the multidisciplinary investigative team.¹

In India, the demand for forensic nursing services has been steadily increasing, driven by factors such as rising awareness of legal rights, changes in legislation, and heightened public consciousness about issues related to violence and victimization and most importantly the increase rate of crime creates opportunities for more forensic professionals in which role of nurses are of great value due to their strong affinity towards wrong and

illegal manipulated things. moreover they are the pillars of every health care institutions.²⁻⁴ Forensic nurses play a crucial role in providing healthcare services to victims of violence, abuse, and trauma, while also collecting evidence and assisting in legal proceedings. However, despite its significance, forensic nursing in India faces several challenges, including limited awareness, inadequate training, and lack of standardized protocols. Forensic nursing professionals or forensic experts from nursing specialty are much required professionals in India which is nonexistent till date in the hospitals or institutes like AIIMS Delhi and PGIC Chandigarh. even though nursing professionals are already involved in assisting physicians in management of medico legal cases.

The introduction of Forensic nursing will help in dealing the medico legal cases in an efficient manner leading to

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an effective contribution in justice delivery system.^{3,4} Its implementation in health care system and Forensic medicine practice will impart professionalism.

In India, the emergence of forensic nursing as a distinct discipline marks a significant step towards enhancing the quality of healthcare services and facilitating justice for individuals affected by violence, abuse, and trauma.

1.1. Need of forensic nursing professionals (FNP)

Forensic Nursing professionals can impart knowledge and provide education related to aspects of health prevention .community safety measures are also provided and knowledge regarding health concerns. Being a safeguard acts as an experts in matters related to criminal violence and victimization.⁵

1.2. Roles and responsibilities of forensic nursing professionals

1. Safety of living victims and deceased victim's body remains (first priority)
2. Collecting and preserving evidence
3. Performs a medical examination. Law enforcement personnel collect evidence from crime scene while forensic nursing experts collect evidences from the victim.
4. Collecting evidence in an organized and comprehensive manner.
 - (a) Careful search of entire body
 - (b) Without bias and without any injury or damage to deceased victim
 - (c) Without bias and inducing any harm to the victim
 - (d) Documentation

1.3. Interviewing techniques

To victim,suspected perpetrators,convicted perpetrator,family,friends to all those who may add to the investigation.

1.4. Additional roles

1. Violence
2. Disaster
3. Crime
4. Abuse

1.5. Forensic science education^{6,7}

1.5.1. Forensic nursing personnel deals with

Forensic nursing professionals deals with domestic violence,sexual assault,religion,human trafficking, accidents or injury,neglect,unacceptable treatments and medication,management,homicides or suicides,suspicious or accidental deaths,mass disasters,automobile or pedestrian

accidents,traumatic injuries,suicide attempts,disasters,work related injuries,forensic mental health,correctional nursing,legal nurse consulting,public health hazards-drug alcohol abuse ,food, drug tampering,illegal abortions practices,tissue organ donation,epidemiological issues,environmental hazards.^{7,8}

2. Introduction of Forensic Nursing in India under Ministry of Home Affairs

Previously forensic nursing started in India with a diploma course but eventually it didn't work due to lack of awareness. In 2023 Forensic Nursing again started with a bang on in *National Forensic Sciences University Gandhi Nagar Gujarat Campus under the Ministry of Home Affairs*. It started a master's programme. But now nursing professionals are taking much interest in MSc forensic Nursing.And INC has introduced forensic nursing in BSc curriculum also.MSc in forensic nursing is two year full regular programme which includes a thesis dissertation. The internal assessment exam can be conducted at the end of each semester, and the final exam can be performed at the end of the each semester, which includes both theory and practical. B.Sc. nursing student or professionals having 50% marks in bachelor degree from any recognized university/autonomous college /Institute of National Importance and be registered in the Nursing Council of India like another specialty of the nursing branch are eligible for applying in this course.After qualifying entrance examinations shortlisted candidates takes admission in the programme.^{7,8} University is providing a great exposure to the students in forensic field which is requirement of current situation in India.

2.1. Development of forensic nursing education in India

India's forensic nursing field has grown gradually as a result of a number of factors, including developments in healthcare, legal reforms, forensic science, and societal shifts in the perception of crime and victim care.⁴ Despite the increasing acknowledgment of forensic nursing as a specialist subject worldwide, its development and expansion in India has been comparatively slower than in Western countries.^{9,10} Nonetheless, in recent years, interest and awareness have grown. The following are some significant facets of the growth of forensic nursing in India.^{11,12}

1. **Knowledge and Education:** Increased knowledge regarding the importance of forensic nursing in addressing healthcare requirements of victims of violence, abuse, and trauma has led to the integration of forensic nursing principles into nurse education and training programs. Some nursing schools and institutions in India are beginning to provide courses or modules on forensic nursing.

2. **Training and Certification:** To give nurses the information and abilities needed to manage forensic cases successfully, efforts are being made to offer specific training and certification programs in forensic nursing. These courses address topics like gathering evidence, recording, supporting victims, and the legal ramifications of nursing practice.
3. **Cooperation with Legal System:** Forensic nursing cannot function effectively without cooperation between legal authorities, law enforcement, and healthcare facilities. In order to enhance the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases as well as the provision of medical care to victims, efforts are being made to fortify the relationships that exist between the legal system and nursing experts.
4. **Research and Advocacy:** Studies in India on forensic examination procedures, violence prevention techniques, and the psychological effects of trauma on victims are among the subjects that are progressively gaining traction in the field of forensic nursing research. The nation's understanding and progress of forensic nursing are also being aided by the advocacy efforts of stakeholders in the healthcare system and professional nursing organizations.
5. **Policy and Law:** The building of a strong forensic nursing framework in India depends on the creation of policies and laws that address concerns pertaining to forensic nursing practice, such as standards of care, confidentiality, and ethical considerations. There is continuous advocacy for legal changes that would strengthen the position of forensic nurses in the court system.
6. **Professional Networking and Collaboration:** Professional associations and networking opportunities are essential for forensic nurses to collaborate, share expertise, and advocate for the field's progress. Exchange of ideas and best practices among practitioners is facilitated through participation in conferences, workshops, and seminars.¹³

2.2. Challenges in establishing role of forensic nursing professionals in hospitals settings and dept. of forensic medicine

It might be difficult to define the function of forensic nursing specialists in forensic medicine departments and hospital settings for a variety of reasons. The following are some major obstacles.¹⁰

1. **Lack of Knowledge and Understanding:** It's possible that many members of the medical community, such as hospital managers and colleagues in forensic medicine departments, are unaware of the extent and function of forensic nursing. Gaining support for the inclusion of forensic nurses into healthcare teams requires educating stakeholders about the special contributions that these nurses make to the treatment of victims of abuse, trauma, and violence.
2. **Inadequate Infrastructure and Staffing:** Hospitals and forensic medicine units in India may experience insufficient infrastructure and staffing, as well as insufficient equipment and amenities. Investment in training programs, specialized tools, and infrastructure—such as forensic nursing-specific examination rooms and documentation systems—is necessary to establish forensic nursing roles.
3. **Opposition to Change:** The integration of forensic nursing professionals may be hampered by resistance to change in forensic medicine departments and healthcare organizations. In order to encourage cultural change and acceptance of new positions, it may be necessary to confront traditional hierarchies, professional boundaries, and resistance from current employees through effective communication, leadership support, and cooperative efforts.
4. **Legal and Regulatory Barriers:** Forensic nurses may face difficulties in complying with the legal and regulatory frameworks that control healthcare practice, evidence gathering, and paperwork. Preserving the integrity of forensic evidence and defending the rights of both victims and offenders depends on ensuring compliance with legal requirements, confidentiality standards, and chain of custody rules.
5. **Interdisciplinary Cooperation:** A successful investigation and prosecution of crimes depends on the efficient cooperation of forensic pathologists, law enforcement, forensic nurses, and legal authorities. Divergent viewpoints, priorities, and communication styles might make it difficult to create interdisciplinary collaboration mechanisms, develop trust, and break down professional silos.
6. **Stigma and Social Attitudes:** Creating a conducive atmosphere for forensic nursing professionals requires addressing the stigma attached to violence, abuse, and trauma as well as society attitudes toward victims. To fight stigma and create an environment of empathy and respect in healthcare settings, advocacy initiatives are required to dispel myths, increase knowledge, and support victim-centered care models.

2.3. Future of forensic nursing in India

Given the growing recognition and momentum in the area, forensic nursing in India has a bright future. There are several reasons for this optimistic perspective.¹²

1. **Growing Awareness and Demand:** There will probably be a higher need for forensic nursing services as people become more conscious of the significance

of attending to the medical requirements of victims of abuse, violence, and trauma. The growth of forensic nursing positions and prospects in India's healthcare settings may be fueled by this rising need.¹⁴

2. **Improvements in Education and Training:** More nurses will be prepared with the information and abilities needed for forensic practice when forensic nursing principles are included into nursing education and training programs. Further advancements in the creation of seminars, certification programs, and specialized courses will raise the proficiency of forensic nurses in India.
3. **Technological Advancements:** The practice of forensic nursing is anticipated to become more efficient in the gathering, recording, and sharing of evidence thanks to technological innovations including telemedicine, digital documentation systems, and forensic examination instruments. With the help of these advancements, forensic nurses will be able to offer excellent care and successfully participate in court cases.
4. **Research and Evidence-Based Practice:** By stepping up research in the forensic nursing area, more data will be produced to back up best practices and guide policy choices. The field of forensic nursing in India will grow with the help of research projects on subjects including violence prevention techniques, victim advocacy, and forensic examination protocols.
5. **Collaboration and the multidisciplinary Approach:** The multidisciplinary approach to forensic nursing practice will be strengthened by collaboration between law enforcement, legal authorities, healthcare institutions, and other stakeholders. Improved collaboration and communication between experts from many fields would help provide victims with all-encompassing care and boost the efficiency of forensic investigations.
6. **Advocacy and Policy Reforms:** The development and acceptance of forensic nursing in India will depend on persistent support for legislative changes that enhance the function of forensic nurses in the legal system. The future of forensic nursing in the nation will be shaped by initiatives to set standards of care, encourage moral behavior, and defend victims' rights.

3. Conclusion

All things considered, forensic nursing in India has a promising future full of chances for growth, impact, and innovation. India can enhance the quality of life for victims of violence and trauma by increasing the number of forensic nurses in the country and investing in research, education, technology, and advocacy. It will also create professionalism

in all aspects of hospital settings.^{15,16}

4. Source of Funding

None.

5. Conflict of Interest

None.

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