

Enhancing Holistic Nursing Care with the 3Ps

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NURS- FPX4015- Pathophysiology, Pharmacology, and Physical Assessment

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In the contemporary healthcare environment, effective nursing goes beyond just treating the symptoms; it calls for a holistic care approach incorporating knowledge and empathy. The 3Ps of nursing (pathophysiology, pharmacology, and physical assessment) are an integral part of holistic care. These fundamental disciplines empower nurses with the scientific understanding and clinical knowledge needed to assess, treat, and support a patient holistically.

Holistic Nursing Care

Holistic care is an important aspect in nursing practice as it underscores treating the patient as a whole and not just symptoms. It is complete care that considers the physical health, social circumstances, spiritual beliefs, emotional, cultural background, and economic needs of a patient (Ambushe et al., 2023). Instead of just doing their clinical responsibilities, holistic nurses are present with their patients, listen actively, and provide care that addresses the unique needs of each patient. They combine pathophysiological insights to determine why a condition occurs, use pharmacological knowledge to guide the selection of intervention, and conduct physical assessment to determine what is happening in real time. This enables a comprehensive, holistic, responsive, evidence-based patient-centered care.

This approach is beneficial to patients because it leads to greater satisfaction with care received, stronger adherence to treatment plans, and enhances emotional coping, ultimately leading to better health outcomes (Alzeer, 2023). Besides, the approach offers emotional rewards and supports the emotional well-being of nurses. According to research conducted by Hilcove et al. (2021), nurses who practiced holistic care often experienced lower rates of burnout and

showed more fulfilling professional relationships. Precisely, holistic care improves the patient experience and helps nurses stay connected to the heart of their profession.

Role of Pathophysiology in Nursing Practice

Pathophysiology is the study of changes that occur within the body due to an injury or a disease. According to Schwinger (2021), it entails understanding the underlying processes and mechanisms that lead to signs and symptoms of various health conditions. Learning pathophysiology helps nurses to recognize signs and symptoms of various diseases and injuries, create and implement care plans for treating these conditions, educate patients about their conditions, and monitor patients' responses to treatment. For instance, understanding that heart failure leads to poor circulation could help a nurse expect signs like swelling, fatigue, and shortness of breath. It could also help a nurse comprehend how the condition affects an individual's daily life and mental health.

A good understanding of pathophysiology enhances decision-making and empowers nurses to provide more specialized care (Cook et al., 2022). It also helps nurses to effectively communicate with patients and their families, as this is a critical aspect of holistic care. According to Ambushe et al. (2023), nurses with this knowledge demonstrated improved critical thinking and clinical judgement in their practice.

Pharmacology and its role in Nursing practice

Pharmacology is the study of the effects of drugs on the body and their mechanism of action (Drenth-van Maanen et al., 2020). It provides nurses with the tools to comprehend how medications work, how to safely administer them, and how to monitor their side effects. However, holistic care means observing beyond patients beyond their prescriptions. It entails comprehending how medications affect the patient's lifestyle, social life, mental health, physical

body, spiritual well-being, and cultural beliefs. For instance, if a patient is prescribed antidepressants, a holistic nurse not only checks the dosage but also the patient's perception about taking the medications, whether they fear being judged, or if they have experienced side effects that affect their quality of life. Drenth-van Maanen et al. (2020) established that nurses with a wealth of knowledge in pharmacology skillfully and compassionately guided their patients through their unique needs. Furthermore, nurses are well-positioned to detect when a patient might benefit from non-pharmacological alternatives, especially when managing patients with long-term illnesses or geriatric patients taking many medications at the same time.

Physical Assessment and Its Role in Nursing Practice

The physical assessment is one of the most significant uses in the modern world despite the advanced diagnostics. Nurses utilize their senses, such as seeing, listening, touching, and asking the right questions, to collect critical information about the patient's health status. Physical assessment is not just checking the vitals or listening to the lungs, but an observation of how a patient walks, talks, interacts, and expresses emotions (Pearce, 2022). For instance, a nurse might notice poor blood circulation when assessing a diabetic patient and take time to understand whether the patient struggles to afford medications, finds it hard to exercise, or has a problem accessing healthy foods. This kind of a profound, contextual assessment is a strategic focal point of holistic nursing. Hilcove et al. (2021) noted that nurses who conducted comprehensive assessments on their patients encouraged better diagnosis and facilitated patient-centered care.

Examples

Scenario 1

In the management of a patient with chronic obstructive Disease (COPD), a nurse utilizes pathophysiology to comprehend airway obstruction and how it affects breathing and the knowledge in Pharmacology to navigate through safe use and administration of bronchodilators and steroids to relieve breathing difficulties. Finally, the nurse uses physical assessment to monitor lung sounds and oxygen saturation. Holistic care does not stop there, the nurse goes ahead to check how the condition affects the patient's ability to interact with people, spiritual faith, relationships, sleep, and personal image. The nurse may recommend a breathing technique or even support groups to address the patient's needs holistically. Incorporating non-pharmacological alternatives allows nurses to treat more than symptoms, reduce medication risks, and provide personalized care, leading to improved quality of life (Ambushe et al., 2023).

Scenario 2

An older patient undergoes a hip surgery and is prescribed opioids for pain management. The nurse caring for the patient utilizes pathophysiology to identify vulnerabilities due to the patient's age and applies pharmacology to track the side effects of the medications, such as constipation and drowsiness. Also, the nurse uses physical assessment to evaluate the patient's pain level and mobility. It does not end there, the nurse acknowledges the patient's emotional and social concerns, such as fear of losing independence or feeling isolated. In order to provide holistic care, the nurse utilizes interventions such as involving family in the recovery planning and techniques such as relaxation. Combining pharmacological interventions and non-pharmacological methods improves outcomes and reduces the side effects (Ambushe et al., 2023).

Conclusion

Pathophysiology, pharmacology, and physical assessment lay a solid foundation for holistic care, allowing nurses to deliver personalized, evidence-based care. Through this integrated approach, nurses understand how disease, treatment, and life situations interconnect. By incorporating this knowledge, nurses respond to patients with knowledge, compassion, empathy, and respect, helping patients recover and heal in every aspect.

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