

Interest in Advanced Practice Nursing in Cambodia

Date Updated July 2017

Introductory statement

The Kingdom of Cambodia, with 15 million people, has had a torrid history with several regimes in the 1960's then the bombing associated with the Vietnamese War which was then followed by the Khmer Rouge regime which killed millions of people, leaving the country and the health system in tatters in 1976. By 1979 only 45 medical doctors survived, and of those, 20 left the country. There remained 26 pharmacists, 28 dentists, and 728 medical students. Many of the nurses that worked under the regime were given rudimentary training to deal with the horrors of war in an environment that did not have resources to support it. Nursing has increased and the training in Cambodia's three centres is active.

Today healthcare is one of the government's 4 objectives but it still remains a low percentage, 1.4%, of GDP (WHO 2015).

Critical Mass

There are approximately 15,000 nurses in Cambodia. The ratio of men to women is high and maybe up to 40:60 however there is no evidence to support this.

Protected Titles/Definitions

There are no protected titles in Cambodia. However, there are certain measures that help to protect the titles. The new *Law on Regulation of Health Practitioners* (Nov2016) does not protect the titles of nurses or health professionals per se or provide a mechanism for legal action and penalty in the way we would see it in contemporary health profession regulatory law. But it states:

Article 4 states:

- Health Professional refers to a physician, dentist, midwife, nurse, pharmacist, laboratory specialist, physical therapist, dental specialist, radiologist and other health professional who is registered with relevant Health Professional Council.
- Health Practitioner refers to a health professional who holds a health practitioner license.
- Health Professional Practice refers to the performance of health services that fall within the description of the scope of practice of each health profession.

Chapter 7, Penalties states:

Article 26.

Shall be punishable by imprisonment from 06 (six) months to 02 (two) years and by a fine from 5,000,000 (five million) riels to 10,000,000 (ten million) riels to any persons who is not a health professional and practices the profession.

The *Sub Decree on Code of Ethics for Nurses* provides the following definitions:

Nurse: refer to a legal person who holds diploma of nurse issued by Ministry of Health of the Kingdom of Cambodia or the diploma issued by educational establishment which its education quality is accredited by the Educational Accreditation Committee of Cambodia.

Nursing Profession: refers to nursing services for all ages, family's member and to provide nursing service at the community and health care facility. Nursing care shall include health promotion, prevention of the diseases, taking care of the patients, taking care of disabled person and dying patient before and after dead.

REGULATION

The new *Law on Regulation of Health Practitioners* is very exciting and came into being in Nov last year. Prior to this Cambodia was unregulated although professions had their Councils. –This law covers the 5 professions of medicine, midwifery, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry.

Regulation of education of nurses is undertaken through a Sub-decree 21 (authorised by the Prime Minister) that is managed by the Ministry of Health, Cambodia rather than the Cambodia Council of Nurses.

EDUCATION

1. Educational Institutes

There are 5 regional training centers (RTCs) around the country that deliver nursing training of the Associate degrees and Primary program.

In Phnom Penh, the University of Health Sciences, as the one government university for training health professionals, offers a Bachelor program (as well as an associate degree programs or ADNs) and there are 5 other private universities that also offer BSN programs (as well as the ADN.)

2. Undergraduate Programs

2.1 The Bachelor of Science in Nursing first commenced in 2009 in Cambodia.

Breakdown:

- the number of nurses who have gained a BSN since the first National Exit Exam (graduation) in 2013 is about 400.
- Between 2010-2014, the MOH sponsored 32 nurses to attend a BSN Bridging program at Saint Louis College.
- In February 2013, the MOH commenced the first BSN Bridging program (a 2year bridging program) in partnership with the University of Philippines. They ran a second program in 2015, this time partnered with Ewha Woman's University, Korea . All participants were sponsored by KOICA. Total graduate numbers are estimated at 73 nurses by the end of 2016.
- So total estimated number of nurses who have trained in Cambodia and received a BSN degree is 500. I do not have numbers of the total number of nurses in Cambodia that have a BSN. But there are nurses who have done one through University of Philippines, California University among others. These numbers will not be high.
- In 2015 the University of Health Sciences in partnership with Hebron International (a Korean Health service in Phnom Penh) offered the first International BSN program in English.

2.2 Secondary Nurse Certificate: - The majority of nurses will have trained under the secondary nurses (Registered Nurse) program which was a 3-year program that ran post Khmer Rouge, from 1980 -1995.

2.3 Associate Degree in Nursing: an Associate Degree in Nursing – again a 3-year program, took over from the Secondary Nurse program.

2.4 Bachelor of Nurse Midwife There is a program called the 3 in 1 program that is 3 years nursing and 1-year midwifery with a qualification of a Bachelor of Nurse Midwife, again to address the local need of poor maternal infant outcomes.

2.5 Associate Degree Nurse Midwife: there is also a 1year program to train Associate Degree nurses to function effectively as a midwife.

2.6 Primary Nurse: a 1year Primary Nurse Certificate was first introduced in 2003 in the north-eastern region of Cambodia to address the shortage of nurses. In 2005 it expanded to other northern and eastern provinces. It is run in the government regional training centres

3. Post Graduate Pathway

There is no nursing post graduate pathway in Cambodia as yet. However there are increasing nurses with Masters degrees. In early years nurses would do a business degree – MBA , then when it became available a Masters in Management and Leadership ; also some nurses studied a Masters of Public Health. This is the only health master's pathway available in Cambodia. In

more recent times nurses have received scholarships to do Masters overseas; Thailand, Korea, Philippines, USA-this one is usually online with modules run in Bangkok. And only a couple of nurses are completing PhD.

4. Curriculum

The MOH approves curricula and the nursing curriculum has not been reviewed since first implementation. The American text Perry and Potter (2006) is the basis of the bachelor and associate nursing curriculum.

PRESCRIPTION AUTHORITY

Nurses working in community health clinics are covered by a delegated prescribing that each community health clinic is given approval for. It is not a professional specific prescribing authority. Nurses in Cambodia do not have a specified prescribing authority.

BACKGROUND READING

1. Law on Regulation of Health Professionals
2. Royal Decree on Establishment of Cambodian Council of Nurses
3. PRAKAS on The Roles and Responsibilities of Nurses
4. Guideline for The Standard of Nursing Care, Cambodia
5. Sub Decree on Code of Ethics for Nurses
6. Law on Management of Private Medical, Paramedical and Medical Aides Practice

WEB LINKS

Cambodian Council of Nurses website -

<https://sites.google.com/site/cambodianscouncil/cambodia-nursing-history>

Undergoing re-development by GIZ “Integrating ASEAN Initiative Project”

Cambodian Council of Nurses Facebook -

<https://www.facebook.com/CambodianCouncilofNurses>

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

Facebook – all universities, associations etc. have a page

REFERENCES

Annear PL, Grundy J, Ir P, Jacobs B, Men C, Nachtnebel M, et al. The Kingdom of Cambodia Health System Review. Vol.5 No.2. Manila: World Health Organization, Regional Office for the Western Pacific, 2015.

<https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/health-care-cambodia>.

Retrieved April 2018

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