

Notes On Nursing

by
Florence Nightingale

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Notes On Nursing Pdf

By

Florence Nightingale



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Notes on nursing



Foreword . . .

The International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO) is pleased to provide this Foreword to *Notes on Nursing*, the International Council of Nurses' guide for today's caregivers, and to reinforce the essential partnership between patients and caregivers. Caregivers provide a personal approach to healthcare, integral to a patient-centered system. This publication provides useful information on managing patients' daily needs and guidance for supporting patients in participating in their own care.

IAPO's Declaration on Patient-Centred Healthcare (2006)¹ outlines five principles of patient-centered healthcare which are relevant to the role of carers. These are respect, choice and empowerment, patient involvement in health policy, access and support, and patient information. In order to achieve patient-centered healthcare for patients with chronic conditions, these principles and the relationships between caregivers and patients are of paramount importance.

Chronic conditions often continue for many years and affect all aspects of a person's life. The goal for patients is to manage their condition so that they can participate in life as fully as possible. Caregivers play an important role by understanding patients' emotions, wishes and needs, and helping communicate these to others.

The updated *Notes on Nursing* supports effective dialogue between patients and caregivers to promote mutual understanding and respect, each contributing to achieve a good quality of life as defined by the patient.

Joanna Groves
Chief Executive Officer
International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO)

¹Available online at www.patientsorganizations.org/declaration

The International Council of Nurses has a long history, a worldwide membership, and an increasing number of diverse activities. But from its foundation in 1899 to the present day, its first objective has remained simple and unchanged. Briefly, this is to help in maintaining the highest standards of nursing in those countries which are in membership, and in helping those countries not yet in membership to improve their nursing care by education, legislation, and through professional organization.

International Council of Nurses



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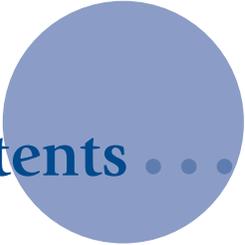
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Preface . . .

Florence Nightingale prepared her *Notes on Nursing* (see Figure 1.1) specifically for use by caregivers in the home. She knew that the lessons she had applied in nursing would also help equip providers of care in the home with methods and guidance to enhance the health of their patients. It was the women in families who were the main providers of care in her time, and so it was primarily to them that she offered this guidance.

Much has changed for caregivers and those they care for since that time. It is remarkable, however, how much of the advice in *Notes on Nursing* remains relevant. The approach to caregiving contained in the original *Notes* is timeless, even though the science and practice of healthcare have greatly evolved since its initial publication. It is for this reason that the International Council of Nurses and the Florence Nightingale International Foundation (FNIF) have prepared this modern edition of the *Notes* on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the creation of the FNIF and 150 years after its original publication.

The intention has been to retain segments of the original work by Florence Nightingale that remain particularly relevant for caregivers today, while adding new information based on current medical knowledge and practice. In doing this, the ICN has been conscious that, although caregivers around the world are characterized first of all by the love and devotion they feel for those in their care, the reality is that they may work under conditions that are vastly different.

Some situations do not change, or only change slowly. The disparities in access to medications, professional services and

expertise can be very different from one country to another, or even within regions of the same country. Many caregivers today will often be working under conditions that resemble those of their predecessors in Florence Nightingale’s time, in terms of access to clean water, sewage treatment and lighting, as well as the layout of houses and rooms, and access to health professionals. Those fortunate enough to enjoy the “modern” amenities of life will find that some of the advice in *Notes* does not suit their circumstances. Their counterparts in less fortunate material circumstances will, however, benefit from their utter applicability to maintaining health and well-being in the world as they know it. In both cases, the advice provided for caregiving based on compassion and empathy, still constitutes a valuable source of personal support and comfort for caregivers in fulfilling their demanding role.

The role of the caregiver remains an essential element of every country’s system of care; all societies rely on the ability and willingness of individuals to provide personal care for those they love. In the industrialized economies this need is growing as increasing proportions of the population become old. It is estimated that, by 2050, more than 25% of the population in rich countries will be over 65 years old, compared to about 15% today. This aging of the population will also be felt in emerging economies. It is estimated that the percentage of the population of India and China that is over 65 years old will also have risen dramatically by 2050. Although public and private health-care services have an important role in ensuring the quality of their lives, many of the elderly in all societies will continue to depend upon family members and friends for care.

Other tragic realities underline the continuing importance of caregivers in our societies. For many patients suffering from AIDS and other diseases in developing countries, hospital care is not always affordable or accessible, and home-based public and private care services rarely exist. Therefore, most often the care for these patients falls on family members, especially on women. A United Nations

report on Southern Africa revealed that two-thirds of caregivers in the households surveyed were female, and almost a quarter of them were over 60 years old. Home-based care is, by necessity, a strategy.

The advances in healthcare science and practice that have occurred since *Notes on Nursing* was written are not always available in every circumstance. There are many countries where knowledge of disease and how to deal with it exists, but where sanitary conditions, and access to health professionals and medication are often inadequate. It is with this unfortunate truth in mind that the modern edition of *Notes on Nursing* includes advice that Florence Nightingale offered at a time when living conditions in Europe were more difficult than they are now. Much of what she had to offer about sources of water, bedding, drainage, cleanliness and proper nutrition remains relevant for caregivers in many rural and remote parts of the world.

For the modern edition, ICN has gathered, from a variety of sources, additional information and advice based on developments in healthcare practice. We have included, for example, a section on the nature and treatment of infections. The original *Notes* was written before medical researchers confirmed the link between “germs” and disease. There is advice for caregivers on the use and management of medications, which is necessary in view of the proliferation of the pharmacopeia available to modern medicine.

It is hoped that this modern edition complements the work of Florence Nightingale, extending the reach of her words to new generations of individuals committed to providing care that comforts and relieves the people whom they love.

Hiroko Minami
President of the International Council of Nurses (ICN)
Geneva, 2009



Miss Nightingale with her tame owl Athena, *circa* 1850, after a drawing by Parthenope Lady Verney

Courtesy of the Florence Nightingale Museum Trust