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Critical Care Nursing : Challenges, Resources and opportunities

Osaid Rasheed. RN, CNS, MSN.

Al-Ahli Hospital / Ahli CardioVascular Center Coordinator

CE Coordinator

Al-Quds University / Clinical Instructor

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Introduction

Factors such as **economic changes**, including high levels of poverty, unemployment and insufficient financial support; **demographical changes** including high rates of fertility and population growth, and **epidemiological changes** such as the substantial increase in prevalence of chronic diseases are among the major challenges facing the Palestinian health system.

(WHO, May 2008 Health Report to the World Health Assembly)

However, the most important

challenge facing the health sector in the occupied Palestinian territories is the Israeli occupation itself,

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“ ... In spite of the security plan applied by the national Palestinian authorities in many parts of the West Bank, Israeli occupation forces continued their daily incursions in those areas, imposing blockades and curfews on the inhabitants and attacking civilians as well as their private and public

Property... ” (UN , 2009)

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Economic Situation

In 2006, the gross national product decreased by 4.8% while unemployment rose to around 22% .

The poverty level was more than 65% as a result of Israeli practices, making it very difficult for individuals to pay health expenses, **laying yet another burden on the Ministry of Health.**

(*Palestinian Bureau of Statistics , 2008*)

In Year 2007

- ▶ “ In 2007, some 412 Palestinians were shot dead by the Israeli occupation forces, including 53 children under the age of 18... ”
- ▶ “ Most hospital admissions (66% of all injuries) were caused by shrapnel from new types of missiles and bombs, with amputation and severe burning... ”.
- ▶ It was also recorded and documented that 69 pregnant women were forced to give birth at Israeli military checkpoints; thirty-nine of the babies and five of the women died as a result.



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A closer view

Of 78 hospitals in Palestine, 24 are owned and managed by the health ministry (12 in the West Bank and 12 in the Gaza Strip) with a capacity of 2864 beds, representing 56% of total Palestinian hospital capacity. The rate of 13 beds for 10 000 population in Palestine is one of the lowest in the region.

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Critical Care nurses

- ▶ Exact number is unknown, as well as not fixed.
- ▶ No single Governmental ICU has more than 12 nurses working in it.
- ▶ More than 60% of nurses in governmental ICUs are Practical Nurses.
- ▶ More than 50% of nurses in private ICUs in NGOs are RN or BSN nurses.
- ▶ We have 7 or 8 CNS nurses , most of them in working academic positions.

Educational preparedness

- ▶ Almost all Palestinian nurses working in critical care settings had no prior specialized training.
- ▶ ALL Palestinian Hospitals without exception have no specific criteria for nurses who will be hired for critical settings.
- ▶ Governmental hospitals lack educational systems, while some private hospitals succeeded in sustaining educational preparedness for their staff.

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Specialized courses

- ▶ Almost all nurses working in governmental hospitals have no prior certification in BCLS, ACLS, BTLS, ATLS, PCLS, or NRT.
- ▶ Governmental and private hospitals have no investment in the nursing staff working at their critical care settings.

A flash of light ,,,

- ▶ The most effective local training was that of the EN higher diploma and the Neonatal Nursing higher diploma / Bethlehem University.
- ▶ High number of MSN graduates in non-clinical degrees leading to taking more nurses from the bed side.
- ▶ No incentive systems for direct health care providers ; leading to losing nurses from the bed side.
- ▶ (Al- Ahli Experience in developing a clinical ladder in response to the immigration of nurses to the Governmental sector)

Needs ??

- ▶ Commitment from nurses themselves to work towards building their professional body.
- ▶ A more sincere efforts from international donors (Sustainability, show off business, political bias).
- ▶ Emphasizing and building up the professional role of the Palestinian Nursing Union.

- ▶ E- Learning ??
- ▶ Electronic access to journals and e-resources ??
- ▶ Building a more rigorous system for clinical supervision in our hospitals ??
- ▶ Politics and the profession ??

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- ▶ Collaborative approach : actively involving nurses in taking decisions for themselves.

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Summary