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Nursing's Focal Points

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Advanced and Specialist Nursing Practice: Attitudes of Nurses and Physicians in Israel

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Background

With the introduction of new and advanced nursing roles, the nursing profession is undergoing dynamic change. Realizing changes will be easier to accomplish if the nursing community and other healthcare professionals welcome the process. Recently the nursing staff mix in Israel has been undergoing a transformation: encouraging registered nurses to enhance their status by acquiring academic degrees and advanced professional training, and initiating the adoption of new nursing roles.

Objective

Our goal is to evaluate Israeli nurses' and physicians' attitudes to the introduction of new nursing roles and to expanding the scope of nursing practice.

Methods

Two hundred and fifteen nurses and 110 physicians from three large general hospitals and 15 community clinics filled in a questionnaire.

Findings

In general the majority of the nurses supported expansion of nursing practice, and such expansion did not cause significant opposition among physicians. However when the task affected patients' health, physicians were less willing to permit nurses to perform skills previously their responsibility alone. In addition, using multiple logistic regressions, support of the expansion of nursing practice was significantly higher among nurses in management or training positions, and among academically accredited nurses. Support for expanded roles was prominent among hospital physicians, graduates from Israeli schools of medicine, and less-tenured physicians.

Conclusions

We suggest that confirmation by various groups of physicians and nurses of standardized definitions of the new boundaries in the scope of nursing practice roles could successfully promote development of new roles and facilitate integration of the Israeli healthcare system into the global context of change.

Clinical Relevance

Inter- and intra-professional collaboration, agreement, and understanding regarding advanced nursing practice roles and their introduction into the healthcare system might improve the relationship between healthcare professions and ultimately increase quality of care and patient satisfaction.

About the authors

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Figure: Agreement of Nurses and Physicians (Agree and Agree Completely) With Questionnaire's Statements and Pearson Chi-Square Coefficients for the Differences Between Them

Statement	Nurses	Physicians	χ^2 -value	df
Importance of ASNP introduction	86%	72%	12.66*	5
Improving quality of care	74%	58%	11.74*	5
Increasing patient satisfaction	71%	58%	10.1 NS	5
Increasing cost-effectiveness	58%	53%	12.95*	5
Expanding the nursing's scope of practice to...				
Conducting medical evaluations and taking medical history	67%	65%	3.14 NS	5
Diagnosing patients' diseases	43%	12%	42.35**	5
Prescribing medications	66%	43%	25.77**	5
Determining treatments	73%	45%	53.84**	5
Referring/interpreting laboratory tests	74%	48%	28.62**	5
Referring/interpreting diagnostic tests	66%	48%	14.64*	5
<i>Note.</i> NS = nonsignificant; * <i>P</i> value < .05; ** <i>P</i> value < .01				

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