



Development of Japanese Nurses' Global Perspectives

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The number of foreign residents has been rapidly increasing in Japan. In 2016, there were a total of 290 people living with resident visas, which is the highest number since 1956 [1]. Although the majority of foreign residents are Chinese, Filipino, or Brazilian, the number of residents from Vietnam, Thailand, Nepal, and Indonesia has also been increasing rapidly over the last two decades [1]. These residents primarily exhibit health issues that involve non-communicable diseases and occupational health problems, which is occur as a result of the fact that most of them have engaged in extended physical labor and are also senior citizens.

In 2015, the number of children born to foreign residents was almost twice that of 1987, whereas the number of children born to parents who were both Japanese residents decreased by almost two-thirds since 1987 [2]. In addition, foreign residents' mothers integrate their own traditional health behavior into the Japanese lifestyle, not only for the purpose of health promotion and disease prevention, but also to complement the medical services provided in Japan [3]. Thus, Japanese health personnel are required to develop their cultural competencies for foreign residents regarding maternal health care [3].

The International Council of Nursing (ICN) envisions a world in which human rights are respected and protected including the right of present and future populations to a safe, healthy and sustainable environment. The ICN also indicates that they advocate the respect of cultural values, customs, and spiritual beliefs [4]. The Japanese Nursing Association advises that Japanese nurses should develop their ability to understand multicultural diversity for the purpose of providing quality of care to all individuals, irrespective of their cultural background [5].

In 2008, the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare in Japan revised the basic nursing education curricula broaden nursing students' global perspectives. For example, 82% of nursing colleges teach the subject of international nursing, and 25% include an international practicum that allows students to study abroad, including in developing countries [6, 7]. Anywhere between one and 16 students from the colleges that offer this opportunity have participated in such a practicum [6]. Through this, nursing students have been able to learn trans-cultural nursing by means of exposure to real-world, international settings while studying abroad [8]. International practicums have however, been relatively lacking in nursing education programs in Japan. This is not only due to a shortage of nursing educators, but also because

there has been an increasing number of educational institutions developed for nursing professionals (i.e., registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, midwives and public health nurses).

A study revealed that Japanese nurses who have experience in providing care to foreign patients take the time to compromise to understand foreign patients' diverse backgrounds from the perspective of their own culture [9]. While Japanese nurses expect foreign patients to adopt the Japanese culture, they also recognize that foreign patients need time to acclimate to their new situation. Consequently, nurses have made progress in increasing their awareness of cultural differences [9].

Seventeen registered nurses, who participated in an international nursing practicum in developing countries, mentioned that they understood the uniqueness and diversity associated with nursing practice in the host country, which varied based on people's health needs [10]. In addition, they further recognized that the international nursing practicum increased their potential to provide nursing care to foreign patients and also allowed them to engage in nursing activities and research with a global outlook. Moreover, the quality of their nursing practice improved because of their international practicum experience. Registered nurses who have learned the concept of international nursing and who have participated in an international nursing practicum abroad should thus be role models for other nurses [10].

Japan is one of the few countries that developed economically using only the Japanese language. Thus, the majority of Japanese nurses were able to develop their professional knowledge and skills by providing care to Japanese citizens until the 1990s. Although the number of Japanese individuals who studied abroad steadily increased until 2004, it has since decreased drastically [11]. A primary reason for this decline is that younger generations wish to avoid taking risks and are less interested in different cultures. Thus, nursing educators must recognize that the concept of trans-cultural nursing is a subject for nurses who wish to work abroad.

It is necessary that the topic of global health be integrated into curriculum exit standards in basic nursing education programs. The inclusion of an international nursing practicum is of primary importance in allowing nursing students to be exposed to individuals of different cultural backgrounds.

The promotion of study abroad opportunities needs to start early

in academic programs [12] for the purpose of developing and maintaining Japanese nurses' cultural competencies [13]. It is important that nursing education programs provide continuing opportunities for students to interact with different cultures, develop linguistic skills, and provide possibilities for internationalization both at home and abroad [14]. In addition, it is necessary to implement these study abroad programs in other Asian countries, where the majority of foreign residents and tourists in Japan originate, so that nursing professionals can effectively use their experiences to contribute to nursing practice. Moreover, evaluations regarding these study abroad programs should be conducted continually in collaboration with the respective host country. It is also important that cultural competency programs be required as part of on-the-job training. For example, health staff should conduct case conferences regarding foreign patients and discuss pertinent issues with foreign residents to help them develop their knowledge. In order to support the growth of the nursing education system and develop nurses' competencies to provide nursing care to foreign patients, it is important that a strong collaboration between the government, universities, and hospitals be developed immediately.

Disclosure

The author meets the ICMJE criteria for authorship credit (www.icmje.org/ethic-cal_1author.html), as follows:

1. substantial contributions to the study design, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data.
2. drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content.
3. final approval of the version to be published.

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