

Drivers of Home Health Nursing Profession

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Abstract

Introduction: It is important to determine the perceived factors of home health nursing professionals which are the drivers of home health nursing as a profession in developing countries.

Objectives: To identify the variables driving the growth of the home care nursing profession.

Methodology: Responses of 150 home health nursing professionals is processed with factor analysis.

Result: Analysis reveals that the three factors together explained 45.6 percent variation in the data.

Conclusion: The identified factors are “Comparative benefits over hospital care”, “Exclusive benefits of home healthcare”, and “Holistic view linking hospital care and home healthcare.”

Keywords: *Home Healthcare, Holistic linkage between home healthcare and Hospital care, Home Health Nursing.*

Introduction

People tend to use healthcare services when it becomes urgent, as the behaviour of seeking healthcare is at the end of help-seeking behaviour⁽¹⁾. These results in an increased number of chronic diseases and home healthcare are considered as one of the preferred modes of healthcare delivery for patients suffering from chronic diseases. Home Health Care is clinical medical care provided by Doctors, registered nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and other healthcare and allied healthcare professionals at the patient’s home. It is often prescribed as a part of a care plan following a hospitalization. The goal of home health care is to help an individual improve functions and lives with greater independence, promote the clients an optimal level of well-being, and assist the patient to remain at home, avoiding admission to a long term

care institution. Home Healthcare is a relatively newer addition in the assortment of healthcare services in India⁽²⁾. As a matter of fact, in the United States alone home healthcare sector had employed around 1, 10, 000 registered nurses in the year 2008 and this sector was expected to grow by 66 per cent for the next ten years⁽³⁾. However, home healthcare is characterised with many benefits of its own in comparison to institutional care such as lower cost, lower risk of healthcare-associated infection, and increased patient autonomy in terms of allowing the patients to stay with their family in times of sickness⁽²⁾. Considering the benefits of home healthcare, its acceptance in India is also on the rise. However, to meet the healthcare requirements of the home healthcare consumers, there should be an adequate supply of healthcare professionals and especially nurses who were willing to visit the patient’s home to render medical care. Furthermore, there is a huge contrast between hospitals and patient’s home in terms of work settings and this widens the range of risks and hazards which are peculiar to home settings of the patients. An earlier study has identified that hazards associated with slippery floors, and exposure to blood were rated by the Indian home health nurses as the high priority hazards, which required the management attention for risk reduction⁽⁴⁾. Despite these challenges, the number of home health

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care providers are increasing, whereas the number of nurses and midwives ratio was 1.7 per 1000 populations, which is far less than the world average of 3.28 nurses per 1000 populations⁽⁵⁾. Moreover, in the year 2020, the world health organization has suggested that India alone requires 2.4 million nurses. However, with a new job avenue in terms of home healthcare nursing in India, it becomes pertinent to ponder upon what could be the driving factors for increasing adoption of the home health nursing role.

Objectives: The home healthcare sector has started to attract nursing professionals in India. However, the nursing professionals opting for home health nursing profession is still lesser in comparison to nurses opting for the hospitals. This put forwards a major challenge in front of the home health agencies in recruiting and retaining qualified, trained, and committed home health nurses in the organization. However, the numbers are slowly but steadily increasing and hence this raises the research question of what are the factors which drive the home health nursing profession as an option for the nursing graduates. Hence, this exploratory study is conceptualized to capture the perception of working home healthcare nurses towards the home health profession and to summarize these perceptions into the factors. The identified factors will be useful to the home health care providers and the recruitment agencies to attract and hire competent home health nurses.

Methodology

This cross-sectional study is carried out in the city

of Bangalore of Southern India. The home care nurses working in three agencies were contacted. The nursing staff were selected based on systematic random sampling after getting the manpower list from the agency. The selection criteria were home healthcare nurses who have completed one month tenure in the home healthcare profession, as anyone lesser than that duration might not be getting an opportunity to experience the various facets of home health nursing profession. Furthermore, based on the analysis of related literature from the healthcare sector and the opinions of fifteen home health nurses, who were asked a two-part question, which was, what are the good things and the bad things you like in the home health profession and why home health is growing in India? A self-administered questionnaire was prepared, and the content validity of the questionnaire was checked by getting it reviewed from five subject experts with rich experience in the domain of home health nursing. The questionnaire consisted of ten demographic questions together with 15 items to identify the drivers associated with the growth of the home health nursing profession in India from the working home health nursing professional's perspective. Furthermore, and it was pilot tested on around 15 individuals, to assess the suitability of the questionnaire. However, the three items were removed due to low communality value, thus making the final questionnaire consisted of final 12 items. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was checked with the help of Cronbach alpha which came as 0.78, which is higher than the cut-off value of 0.73⁽⁶⁾, See Table 1.

Table 1: Questionnaire

Sr.No.	Items	Cronbach Alpha
1	Facilitates access to preventive health services	0.73
2	Home care is a demanding job and only dedicated personnel must join this	
3	Allows terminal ill patient to pass away in the home environment	
4	Provides psychological support to the family	
5	It provides exclusive care that one will get anywhere else	
6	It is cost-effective than hospital care	
7	Offers a holistic assessment of the patient in the environment	
8	Risk of infection is less than hospital	
9	It should be preferred for a terminal ill patient	
10	Decreases rehospitalisation	
11	Home health care has new job avenues for nursing professionals	
12	It is important thus hospital and home care service providers must work closely	

The data were captured by a survey method where a total of 197 home health nursing professionals, working in the selected three home healthcare agencies of Bangalore City were contacted out of which only 165 nurses have responded and filled the questionnaire, thus making the

response rate 79%. However, fifteen responses were discarded for incomplete information, thus at the end, 150 numbers of questionnaires were finally used for analysis and interpretation. The demographic details of the respondent are mentioned in Table 1, see below.

Table 2: Demographic details of the respondents

Gender (Percentage)	Male	Female		
	48.7	51.3		
Age (Percentage)	20-30	31-40	41-50	51-60
	28.8	41	29.5	.6
Years of experience in home healthcare (years)	0-1	1-3	3-5	More than 5
	24.4	37.2	34.6	3.8
Education (Percentage)	Diploma	Bachelors	Masters	PhD and Above
	29.5	67.9	2.6	Nil
Tenure of work with the current employer (Percentage)	Less than 1	2-5	6-9	9 and above
	45.5	51.9	2.6	Nil

The demographic data reveal that the females were slightly more than males with 51.3 % in the home health nursing profession. Additionally, the largest age group segment belonged to the age group 31-40 years with 41 % and very few were having experience in the home health nursing profession for more than 5 years i.e. 3.8 %. The largest section of the respondents was having a bachelor’s degree in the educational qualification with 67.9 % and almost half of the respondents had an association with the current employer in 2-5 years of work experience.

Data reduction technique factor analysis⁽⁷⁾ is used with extraction method principal axis factoring and rotation method Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Kaiser Mayer Olkin (KMO) test is done for sampling adequacy and it was found to be .729, higher than the cutoff level 0.6⁽⁸⁾, similarly, Bartlett’s test of sphericity also found to be statistically significant $p < 0.01$, implying that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix.

The factors were derived based on the criteria of having eigenvalues greater than 1, the identified three factors explained 45.6 percent of the variance. See Table.

Table 3: Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.883	32.356	32.356	3.329	27.744	27.744	2.698	22.486	22.486
2	1.641	13.675	46.031	1.155	9.626	37.371	1.697	14.138	36.624
3	1.516	12.636	58.668	.995	8.290	45.661	1.084	9.037	45.661
4	1.017	8.474	67.142						
5	.878	7.320	74.462						
6	.691	5.755	80.217						
7	.540	4.497	84.714						
8	.534	4.449	89.163						

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
9	.401	3.339	92.502						
10	.328	2.731	95.234						
11	.309	2.577	97.811						
12	.263	2.189	100.000						

Extraction Method: PAF.

All the items loaded well on the factors with factor loadings higher than 0.5. Hence, it becomes evident that three factors are important contributors for the growth of home health nursing profession in India as perceived by working home health nurses, which are exclusive benefits of home healthcare, comparative benefits over the hospital, Holistic views linking hospitals and home health providers.

Table 4: Rotated Factor Matrix

	Factor		
	1	2	3
Facilitates access to preventive health services	.710		
Home care is a demanding job and only dedicated personnel must join this	.705		
Allows terminal ill patient to pass away in the home environment	.694		
Provides psychological support to the family	.527		
It provides exclusive care that one will get anywhere else	.525		
It is cost-effective than hospital care	.509		
Offers a holistic assessment of the patient in the environment	.458		
Risk of infection is less than hospital		.753	
It should be preferred for a terminal ill patient		.675	
Decreases rehospitalisation		.488	
Home health care has new job avenues for nursing professionals			.708
It is important thus hospital and home care service providers must work closely			.642

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Based on the identified factors, the authors propose to depict the relationship between the three factors in figure 1.



Figure 1: Relationship between the identified Factors

Discussion

This study establishes that home health nursing profession in the organized sector in India is comparatively very new as ninety-six per cent of the home health nurses were having less than five years of work experience in home health nursing profession, this finding supports the postulation of an earlier study which has postulated that home health care is a new service segment in India⁽²⁾. Moreover, this finding also throws light on the attrition problem in the home health nursing profession as the work tenure of less than one-year duration with the current employer is around forty-five per cent, this is on the higher side, however, there is no earlier study to measure the attrition rate of home health nurses in India but this finding is relatable to another third-world country “Kenya” where the attrition rate for community health workers was found to be 33 per cent⁽⁹⁾. Another interesting finding of the study was that around 69% of the home health professionals were lesser than forty years of age. Moreover, only 3-4 % of the home health nurses had a master’s degree in educational qualification, this finding was commensurate with an earlier study⁽⁴⁾ also. Furthermore, the analysis of data reveals that there are majorly three factors which are promoting the growth of home health nursing services and the profession in India, these three factors are exclusive benefits of home healthcare, comparative benefits over the hospital, Holistic views linking hospitals and home health provider. The first-factor exclusive benefits of home healthcare highlight that some aspects of home healthcare are exclusively available with home health services only. This includes aspects such as enabling preventive healthcare in a better way than hospitals⁽¹⁰⁾, home healthcare provides a unique opportunity which allows the terminally ill patients to spend their last times at home peacefully being around the family members, home healthcare also helps to reduce the caregiver burden by providing psychological support to the family members⁽¹¹⁾⁽¹²⁾, home healthcare are more cost-effective than hospital care for chronic disease care⁽¹³⁾ and lastly, home healthcare can provide holistic care to the patient i.e. all the levels of care such as preventive, promotive, restorative care can be provided with home health services. Similarly, nursing professionals also makes a direct comparison between the home health services and hospital care and finds that in some aspects home health is superior to hospital care for example with home healthcare services there is lesser risk of infection⁽¹⁴⁾, it reduces the hospitalization⁽¹⁵⁾ and it should be always preferred for terminally ill patients. Lastly, the third

factor reveals that nursing professional also perceive that home health and hospital services are complementary to each other as this factor covers that home health service opens new job avenues for nursing professionals and both home health nursing professionals and hospital nursing professionals must work in close association in the interest of the patients. Which as a concept is also largely promoted in the earlier studies done in Germany, and these studies have insisted upon the home care integration with other healthcare services at all the levels (primary, secondary and tertiary) levels of healthcare delivery⁽¹⁶⁾.

Conclusion

This study concludes that there is a positive perception of home health nursing professionals towards home health nursing profession and there are majorly three factors driving the growth of home health nursing profession in India, namely exclusive benefits of home healthcare, comparative benefits over the hospital, Holistic views linking hospitals and home health providers. Home healthcare is superior to hospital care in matters related to decreased infection, reduced re-hospitalization, and care for terminally ill patient care. Lastly, Home Health nursing professionals perceive that the home health nursing profession has started a new job avenue for them and it’s important that hospital nursing professional and home health nursing professionals work in close collaboration to get the desired patient outcomes. In cognizance with the identified factors, it can be expected that in the coming years the numbers of nursing professionals opting for home health nursing profession is going to increase.

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