

NATIVE GIRLS and THE NURSING PROFESSION

Increased attention is being given by Government and Hospital authorities to the need for a larger supply of Native nurses, and for further facilities for their training.

Special emphasis has been given to these matters by the reports of certain Government Committees from which the following references are taken:-

Hospital Enquiry Committee (1925):-

Paragraphs 123, 125 and 126 emphasise the need for the training of Native Nurses and Midwives with the same standard as that of Europeans.

Hospital Survey Committee (1927):-

Paragraphs 69-81 recommend a system of graded Non-European nursing and health assistants with central, fully-equipped hospitals to spread modern medical and health measures among the Native people.

Paragraphs 84-87 recommend that proper provision be made for the full training of Non-European Nurses and Midwives.

"Loram" Committee on Native Medical Training (1928)

Paragraph 63 urges that the training of Native nurse-midwives and health assistants should be proceeded with immediately.

Paragraphs 68-73 recommend that Native nurse-midwives should have general and midwifery qualifications, and that provision for training should be made in rural as well as urban hospitals.

The following resolution of the South African Trained Nurses' Association shows how rapidly and how far informed opinion has travelled:-

"This Meeting of the Central Board of the S.A. Trained Nurses' Association strongly urges all Hospital Boards in South Africa, where material for training Non-European nurses exists, to apply without delay to their respective Medical Councils for registration as Training Schools, and that proper facilities be provided for carrying out the Council's regulations, in order that Non-European nurses may be allowed to sit for examination."

It seems that nursing - both general and midwifery - is likely in future to offer greater prospects of a career for Native young women. Heads of Native Institutions, and those concerned with the education of Native girls, are urged to turn the attention of suitable pupils to this promising field of service.

Many Native girls in the upper classes of Native schools, and some who fail their teacher-training examinations, express a wish "to be a nurse". Ignorance as to the training required, and of the value of the various nursing certificates, so often results in disappointed hopes, that it may be helpful to publish the following statement for general information.

NURSING QUALIFICATIONS

There are four distinct sections of the nursing profession:-

- (a) Medical and Surgical.
- (b) Mental.
- (c) Nursing of Mental Defectives.
- (d) Midwifery.

The qualifications for the four sections are quite separate and distinct, but all are subject to control by the South African Medical Council.

(It should be noted that this Council came into existence on January 1st, 1929, under the Medical, Dental and Pharmacy Act of 1928, and took over the powers and functions of the four provincial Medical Councils, which no longer exist.)

1. MEDICAL AND SURGICAL:

Certificates are granted by the South African Medical Council to nurses who have been trained in the Medical and Surgical wards of recognised training schools, and who have passed a recognised examination.

Pupil Nurses: No person shall be admitted for training in a training school recognised by the Council unless -

- (a) (i) she produces a certificate of having satisfactorily completed the seventh standard; or
- (ii) a certificate of a higher standard;
(Should she possess neither of the above, she shall be required to pass an examination in general knowledge conducted by the hospital authorities equal to that prescribed for the seventh standard at a primary school.)
- (b) she produces proof that she has reached the age of at least 18 years;
- (c) she produces a certificate of good health;
- (d) she submits a certificate of good character signed by two responsible persons to the satisfaction of the training school concerned.

Training: If the training school has a minimum daily average of 40 occupied beds, the period of training required is 9,040 working hours but not more than 10 hours in any one day.

If the training school has a minimum daily average of 15 occupied beds, the period of training required is 11,296 working hours but not more than 10 hours in any one day.

Exemption from Training: A pupil nurse being a registered mental nurse shall be exempted from 50 per cent. of the training required by these rules, provided the matron or assistant matron under whom she trained to qualify as a mental nurse was registered as a medical and surgical nurse. Otherwise she shall be exempted from 25 per cent of her training.

A pupil nurse being the holder of a certificate as a children's nurse recognised by the Council shall similarly be exempted from 50 per cent of the training required by these rules.

2. MENTAL:

Certificates are granted by the South African Medical Council to nurses who have been trained in the mental wards of a recognised training school and who have passed a recognised examination.

Pupil Nurses: No person shall be admitted for training in a training school recognised by the Council without submitting:-

- (a) (i) A certificate of having satisfactorily completed the seventh standard of a primary school; or
(ii) a certificate of higher standard.
(If unable to submit either of the above, an applicant for admission shall be required to pass an examination in general knowledge conducted by the hospital authorities equal to that prescribed for the seventh standard of a primary school.)
- (b) Proof of having reached the age of at least eighteen years.
- (c) A certificate of good health and fitness for the work of a nurse.
- (d) A certificate of good character signed by two responsible persons to the satisfaction of the training school concerned.

Training:

The period of training for candidates for the certificate of competence in mental nursing shall be 9,040 working hours.

Exemption from Training:

A pupil nurse registered as a medical and surgical nurse or as a children's nurse, shall be exempted from 50 per cent of the training required by these rules, and shall only be required to pass the final examination in mental nursing.

A nurse who holds the certificate in the nursing of mental defectives shall be eligible to sit for the final examination in mental nursing provided he has completed one whole year of training and attendance at lectures in an approved institution for the treatment of mental disorder.

3. MENTAL DEFECTIVES :

Certificates are granted by the South African Medical Council to nurses who have been trained in the mental defectives' wards of recognised training schools and who have passed a recognised examination.

Pupil Nurses: Rules for admission to training schools similar to those required for Mental Nurses.

Training: The period of training for the certificate of competence in the nursing of mental defectives shall be 9,040 working hours.

Exemption from Training:

A pupil nurse registered as a medical and surgical nurse or as a children's nurse shall be exempted from 50 per cent. of the training required by these rules, and shall only be required to pass the final examination in the nursing of mental defectives.

A nurse who holds the certificate in mental nursing shall be eligible to sit as a candidate for the final examination in the nursing of mental defectives provided that he has completed one whole year of training and attendance at lectures in any approved institution for the care and treatment of the mentally defective.

4. MIDWIFERY:

Certificates are granted by the South African Medical Council to nurses who have been trained in midwifery at recognised training schools, and who have passed the necessary examination.

Pupil Midwives: No person shall be admitted for training in a training school recognised by the Council unless -

- (a) (i) she produces a certificate of having satisfactorily completed the sixth standard of a primary school; or
- (ii) she produces a certificate of higher standard; (Should she possess neither of the above, she shall be required to pass an examination in general knowledge conducted by the hospital authorities equal to that prescribed for the sixth standard of a primary school.)
- (b) she produces proof that she has reached the age of 21 years;
- (c) she produces a certificate of good health;
- (d) she submits a certificate of good character signed by two responsible persons to the satisfaction of the training school concerned.

Training: The period of training of candidates for the certificate of competence shall be -

- (a) six months for a candidate already registered as a medical and surgical nurse;
- (b) twelve months for all other candidates.

NOTE 1. It should be clearly understood that all the foregoing conditions are minima, and that hospitals differ as to further educational requirements, the character of the further training given and the length of the period of training.

2. Wherever possible, Native girls intending to become nurses should be encouraged to stay in school until they pass the eighth standard, as there is every likelihood of this becoming the minimum entrance qualification. Equivalent qualifications, such as Teachers' and Industrial High School Certificates, are, however accepted.

3. Wherever possible, Native girls should be encouraged to obtain the Medical and Surgical Certificate before entering on a Midwifery Course.

HOSPITAL CERTIFICATES:

Some hospitals for Natives issue Hospital Certificates to nurses trained by them. These are not recognised by the Medical Council, but are useful to those looking for employment in Municipal Locations, etc.

Collection Number: AD1715

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974

PUBLISHER:

Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

©2013

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document forms part of the archive of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), held at the Historical Papers Research Archive at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.