



FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM FOR NURSES AND MIDWIVES: ACTION PLAN FOR QUALITY HEALTH CARE DELIVERY IN GHANA

Bringing New Players On Board To Develop Specialist Nurse/Midwife Professionals

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Background

- Ghana College of Nurses and Midwives (GCNM) is an agency of the Ministry of Health, a statutory Professional College in Nursing and Midwifery with a mission to;
 - promote specialist education,
 - continuous professional development and postgraduate nursing,
 - midwifery and related programmes
 - contribute to formulation of policies to improve health
- Established by Act of Parliament in 2011.

Aims

To produce:

Cutting-edge cadre of nurses and midwives with specialist competencies who are motivated in leading and developing the future of nursing and midwifery *as:*

specialist clinicians,

Academicians,

researchers and

managers

in Ghana, Africa and beyond

Problem statement

Despite current trends in health care towards specialized care, the Ghana healthcare delivery system and nursing have suffered inadequate specialized education and practice.

The inability to achieve the MDGs 4 and 5, with persistent high maternal and child mortality rates and the Ministry of Health's indication for the need to provide specialized care to populations made it imperative that nurses and midwives be given opportunities to specialize in fields of interest in nursing and midwifery.

The Ghana College of Nurses and Midwives seeks to address these.

METHODOLOGY

This included the adoption of an evidenced-based approach:

- Assessment of specialized nursing and midwifery needs
- Developing competency-based curricula through assessment of global and regional best practice perspectives and on needs and Ministerial Program of Work of Ghana.
- Clinically focused programs, comprising 70% clinical practicum and 30% theory delivered through competency-based teaching approaches
- Programs duration - 3 years fulltime education delivered in 6 blocks .

METHODOLOGY

Rolling out of 2015-2016 Academic Year Programs

Nursing

- Neuroscience Nursing
- Paediatric Nursing
- Accident and Emergency Nursing
- Palliative Nursing
- Oncology Nursing
- Haematology Nursing

Paediatric Associate Membership Program

Midwifery

- Neonatal Intensive Care
- Women's Health

Results

Ongoing:

- Residents successfully gone through year one of the programs.
- Received 2 blocks of theory and clinical exposure a strong 4-member education team providing clinical teaching and mentoring and evaluation by OSCEs in the various specialty areas.
- Clinical practicums have been successful, with residents feeling confident and showing signs of leadership and motivation to care for patients and families.
- The programs are gaining popularity among nurses.
- Ministry of Health and Ghana Health Services are looking forward to their graduation and placement in the various specialty areas to foster sustainability of the programs.

Challenges

- Full time faculty for the various programs
- Lack of experienced specialized nurses and midwives to function as preceptors and mentors
- Inadequate resources for the new programs
- Lecture halls and residential accommodation for residents
- Power cuts interfering with library work.

Conclusion

- Specialist training through Fellowship Professional Colleges creates opportunities for professional nurses and midwives to develop themselves into high level clinicians and academicians through mentoring and competency-based educational programs.

Lessons learned

- Fellowship specialist programs must be backed by strong political will and institutional commitment to drive concept into reality, coupled with strong leadership.
- In developing new programs, access to fully committed faculty is challenging in developing countries like Ghana because of the lack of experienced mentors.

Recommendations

- **For Research**

Assessment of impact of care by specialized nurses and midwives and implications for continuing academic development

- **For Practice**

In order to develop strong nursing and midwifery specialists, competency based approaches to teaching and a clinically focused curricula are critical for success.

References

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