

Research Report

Revision of nursing curriculum and an analysis of 'Table 4'

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Abstract

A group of nurse-teachers including the author surveyed the process of the revision of nursing curriculum following WW II. The purpose of this study is firstly to check the curriculum changes over the past 60 years and secondly to use these results to analyze.

'Table 4' which has been applied to assistant nursing school. About the results of the survey the curriculum revision was carried out after an interval of 20 years. The impact of the rapid increase of the collegiate education of nursing for the past 10 years, the credit system introduced in 1997. Regarding the assistant nurse curriculum of 'Table 4', the first revision was not carried out for 39 years. The 2nd revision in 2000, the increased study hours from 1500 to 1890, influenced the sudden decrease of schools. The 'Table 4' remains without any change in the study hour system in spite of the nursing curriculum development by the credit system. Because of the increase of students in assistant nursing school who graduated from high schools, junior colleges, colleges or universities, the study hour system should be changed the credit system and the nurse-teachers' discretion about the curriculum development should be expanded by their own initiatives. The author proposes an example of 'Table 4' for assistant nursing schools by the credit system.

Key words: assistant nursing school, curriculum revision, credit system

Introduction

Nursing education in Japan is controlled by The Public Health Nurse Midwife Nurse Law. Based on this law, the establishment of nursing schools is permitted by the Japanese government.

The history of nursing education in Japan dates back 120 years starting in the 18th year of Meiji-1885. Thirty years later, the system ruling the operation of nursing schools commenced nationally in the 4th year of Taisho-1915.

Recently our group of nurse-teachers conducted a survey and checked the process of the revision of nursing curricula following World War II.

The purpose of this study is as follows: Firstly to check the curriculum changes over the past 60 years and, secondly, as to use these results to analyze 'Table 4' which has been applied to assistant nursing schools revised during the past 54 years.

1. The process of the revision of the rules regulating nursing schools

The committee of the curriculum survey was formed in May, 2005 and summarized the findings in Nov. of the same year.

The nursing system, including the definition of the nurse and the nursing education at the national level, dates from June 30, 1915-Taisho 4.

It states that the minimum age requirement was 18 years old and that the license was valid while working in hospitals or clinics. Following acceptance by the district agency, assistant nurses were given recognition and authorized at the same time.

After World War II, Japan was occupied by the Allied Forces from 1945 to 1951 and many nursing officers from USA came to Japan to supervise the re-building of the nursing and health care system based on the American model.

The major points of this system were a

minimum age of 18 for admission to nursing colleges and the requirement of a senior high school graduation certificate. The newly established law in 1948 included 2 levels of nurses: the first level being 'Kou-shu' (RN-Registered Nurse) and the second level 'Otsu-shu' (LPN-Licensed Practical Nurse). 'Otsu-shu' was not permitted to take care of patients in serious condition. Both levels were licensed by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The framework of the curriculum for 'Otsu-shu' was shown in Table 1 at that time.

In 1951 (Showa 26), the term 'Otsu-shu' was changed to 'Jun-kan' and they are now licensed by the district agency (prefectural government) (Table 1). These changes came about following pressure from the JMA-Japanese Medical Association and their supporters in the National Diet.

In the 20 years following the beginning of assistant nurse education, the economy of Japan developed rapidly. The number of hospitals spiraled and not only the number but also the size of them expanded to 500, 800 and 1,000 beds. Of course, as a result of this phenomenon, a shortage of nurses occurred.

Regarding the supply and high demand for nurses, the short period preparation of assistant nurses was very convenient for the owners of the facilities. The supply of assistant nurses was always greater than that of nurses. In the process of the economic growth of Japan, the nurse-labor strikes occurred

nationwide in 1960-1961. The reasons for this strike were low income, long working hours, suppressed human rights in their living environment and so on.

The first curriculum revision was done in 1968-Showa 43. This revision came 17 years after the original one that started in 1951. There are 5 levels of 'Tables' in the regulation of the curriculum, named 'Table 1' for the public health nurse, 'Table 2' for the midwife, 'Table 3' for the nurse, 'Table 3-2' for the advanced course to be the nurse for the assistant nurse and 'Table 4' for the assistant nurse. At this time 'Table-4' for the assistant nurse was placed outside of the discussion. Others were carried out depending on the proceeding of the study of nursing such as from the nurse and the public health nurse and the midwife year by year. So it took 4 years to complete the revision.

In the medical service world at that time, there occurred an enthusiastic survey of comprehensive medicine and nursing.

This concept inspired the core of the new nursing curriculum. The framework of the study subjects contained, for example, from "Internal medicine and nursing", to "Nursing for the adult" or "Nursing for children", emphasizing the word "nursing". So the concept of nursing was thought to be standing on a very wide and humanistic idea.

In the curriculum of the assistant nurse education that was not revised at this time, the

Table 1 Process of Revision of 'Table 4'

Process of Revision	'Table 4'	Lecture	Nursing, itemized	Practice		Study Hour
				Clinic	Ward	
	1947 (S22. Nov. 4) Reg. by MHW for Otsu-shu	730	460 (63.0%)	62 weeks (work)	40 weeks (work)	730+102 weeks
	1949 (S24. May. 20) Reg. by MHW, ME for Otsu-shu	590	340 (57.6%)	12 weeks (work)	50 weeks (work)	590+62 weeks
	1951 (S26. Aug. 10) Reg. by MHW, ME for Jun-kan	555	345 (62.2%)	13 weeks (work)	54 weeks (work)	555+67 weeks
	1967 (S42. Nov. 30) Reg. by MHW, ME 1968 (Except 'Table 4' adapted)	No change about 'Table 4'				
	1989 (H1. Mar. 29) Reg. by MHW, ME 1990 (adapted)	905 205 (Basic) 245 (B of Professional) 455 (Professional)	455 (65.0%)	595 (45.9%)		905+595=1500
	1999 (H11. Dec. 27) Reg. by MHW, ME 2000 (adapted)	1155 105 (Basic) 385 (B of P) 665 (P)	665 (63.3%)	735 (43.6%)		1155+735=1890

clinical practice was described as "working in the ward and the clinic" counting by weeks.

The second revision of the nursing curriculum was in 1990-Heisei 2, 22 years after the first revision. The curriculum for the assistant nurse was revised for the first time in 39 years. This gave us a quite big surprise as one of the historical events in nursing education in Japan.

The revised nursing curricula started in the same year. Anticipating the advent of the aged society in the 21st century, the curriculum introduced the new subject of "Nursing for the aged" as an urgent demand from the aging society. The correlation between the course of the assistant nurse and the advanced course for them was arranged clearly from the viewpoint of both educational purposes. The assistant nurse education changed to total 1,500 hours and the word "work" was removed from 'Table 4'.

The third revision was performed in 1997-Heisei 9. The first stage of this revision was for 'Table 1', 'Table 2' and 'Table 3'. The second stage was for 'Table 3-2' in 1999, and the last one in 2000-Heisei 12, created a new course for the nurse 'Table 3-3' for the 5 years high school nursing course. They can become a nurse at the age of 1 year younger than the nurse educated by 'Table 3'.

'Table 4' was also revised in 2000 with a 26% increase in study hours, that is from 1,500 to 1,890 hours.

Excepting 'Table 4', the credit system was introduced for the first time in the regulation system of the nursing education in Japan. This reflected the rapid rise of the collegiate education in nursing and the expansion of the 4 year program of colleges under the control of the Ministry of Education and Science.

2. The revision of the assistant nurse education curriculum 'Table 4'

'Table 4' was first introduced for the curriculum of the second level (Otsu-shu) nurse in 1947-Showa 22, before the Public Health Nurse Midwife Nurse Law was established in 1948-Showa 23.

In 1951 the name of 'Otsu-shu' (second level) nurse changed to the name of the Jun-kan (assistant) nurse.

In the curriculum at the time the new second level or assistant (Jun-kan) nurse was established, the practice was the work itself in the

hospital or the outpatient clinic.

The practice period in the ward was 54 weeks and in the clinic was 13 weeks.

The first revision of 'Table 4' curriculum started in 1990. From this time all the subjects in the curriculum were counted by hours, that is, for lectures 905 hours and for practice 595 hours.

Being caused by the strong repercussion of the shortage of nurses, the assistant nursing high school was introduced in 1964-Showa 39. Because the credit system of the high school was fixed at 35 hours per 1 credit for both subjects of the lecture and the practice, the assistant nursing high school adapted the credit method, but the assistant nursing school used the study hour method, totally counting 1,500 hours.

The newly emerged professional named 'care worker' was trained by the study hour 1,500, so that it was one of the reasons to settle the hour for 'Table 4' in the same 1,500.

In the process of the discussion of 'Table 4' in 1999 the JNA proposed a 2,000-hour curriculum. But as a result of the debate the revision committee in the government came to an agreement with the 1,890-study hour requisite. The study hours increased 26%.

As a result of this change of the study hours, the assistant nursing high school had difficulties in maintaining the primary quantity and quality expected in the high school education and closed the assistant nursing study course or continued with intensive study hours or changed to the 5 year course ('Table 3-3' created) leading to the license of the nurse.

The 'Table 4' was applied to the assistant nursing high school and the assistant nursing school. Excepting the 'Table 4', all other nursing curriculum 'Table 1, 2, 3, 3-2, 3-3' introduced the credit system.

3. The point of issue in the process of the nursing curriculum revision

The review of the nursing curriculum shows us the change of the total figure and the partial area of the nursing education in Japan. The results of the curriculum revision for the nurse are as follows.

- ① The curriculum revision was carried out after an interval of 20 years.
- ② Because of the impact of the rapid increase of the collegiate education of nursing for

the past 10 years, the credit system was introduced in 1997.

- ③ Regarding the assistant nurse curriculum of 'Table 4' the results of the survey are as follows.
 - 〈1〉 The curriculum revision was not carried out for 39 years after the assistant nursing system started in 1951.
 - 〈2〉 The curriculum at the time of the 2nd revision in 2000, the study hours increased 26% from 1500 to 1890 hours. This fact influenced the sudden decrease of schools adapting 'Table 4' curriculum.
 - 〈3〉 The 'Table 4' remains without any change in the study hour system in spite of the progress of the nursing curriculum development by the credit system.

4. The discussion of 'Table 4' and strategic proposals

Our curriculum survey group overviewed the changing process of the nursing curriculum in the past 60 years after World War II. Among the problems shown in chapter 3, we concluded that the change of the study hour system to the credit system in the 'Table 4' was the most urgent need to be introduced.

To think of this problem, the background and reasons are as follows.

- ① The necessity of the expansion of the nurse-teacher's discretion

About the 'Table 4' with the 1 credit of 35 hours regulated in the assistant nursing high school has been fixed as the base of the teaching method. They believe that they should keep the hour strictly, but also they are afraid of the fact that the 'Table 4' is too uniform and there is no room for them to expand their discretion by their own idea. They point out that some subjects might not need the study hours regulated, and, of course, the opposite case might occur. So the introduction of the credit system in the assistant nursing school helps them to organize curriculum contents more effectively and attract-

ively in any type of school.

Generally speaking ② The tendency of the increase in highly-educated students.

Among newcomers in the school, over 96% of them are high school graduates.

Recently graduates of junior colleges, colleges and universities are rapidly increasing in admission.

In such a situation the curriculum which is standardized at the level for middle school graduates doesn't match the actual conditions in the school. The accrediting of the credit they acquired in colleges should be introduced and the students should be expected to concentrate on the study of nursing more efficiently.

Table 2 shows the educational background of the admitted students in 2005.

Regarding graduates of the middle school, almost all of them are those who left high school without completion or those, who entered the work force directly. The number of students admitted to the assistant nursing school directly from middle school is very small.

- ③ The concrete proposals about 'Table 4'
 - 〈1〉 Introduction of the credit system in 'Table 4' instead of the study hour system
 - 〈2〉 Introduction of the same total credit number as that in the assistant nursing high school, 54 credits
 - 〈3〉 One credit for the lecture from 15 to 30 hours, and for the practice from 30 to 45 hours
 - 〈4〉 Expectation about the total study hour over 1,700 hours
 - 〈5〉 Focusing the characteristic of the study on the subject "Fundamental nursing" and "Nursing for the adult and for the aged"
 - 〈6〉 Acknowledgement of the acquired credit by the student in previous colleges
- ④ An example of 'Table 4' with the credit system shown in Table 3

Table 2 Educational Background of Admitted Students to 2-Year Course of Assistant Nursing School 2005

Admitted Students	Middle School	New Graduates, High School	Previous Graduates, High School	Junior College	Univ., College
11,370	479 (4.2%)	4,662 (41.0%)	4,868 (42.8%)	826 (7.3%)	535 (4.7%)

Table 3 Example of Curriculum for 2-Year Assistant Nursing School by Credit System 2005 (H17. Nov. 4)

Study Subjects		Hours (present)	Credit System	
			No. of Credit	Hours
Basics	Japanese	35	1	30
	Foreign Language (English)	35	1	30
	Other	35	1	30
	Subtotal	105	3	90
Basics for Professional Field	Function of Human Body	105	5	135
	Formation of Disease	70		
	Food and Nutrition	35		
	Infection and Protection	35		
	Nursing Ethics	35	3	90
	Psychology of Patients	35		
	Organization of Health, Medicine and Welfare	35		
	Nursing and Law	35		
Subtotal	385	11	315	
Professional Field	Fundamental Nursing	315	9	300
	Introduction to Nursing	35	1	30
	Basic Nursing Technique	210	6	210
	Introduction to Clinical Nursing	70	2	60
	Nursing for Adult and Aged	210	6	210
	Nursing for Mother and Child	70	2	60
	Psychiatric Nursing	70	2	60
	Subtotal	665	19	630
	Practice Fundamental Nursing	210	6	180
	Nursing for Adult and Aged	385	11	385
	Nursing for Mother and Child	70	2	60
	Psychiatric Nursing	70	2	60
	Subtotal	735	21	685
Total	1890	54	1720	

1 Credit : Lecture 15~30 hours
Practice 30~45 hours

5. Conclusion

We reviewed the process of the curriculum development in the nursing education in Japan after World War II.

Generally speaking, any kind of curriculum should reflect the present social need and should be a purposeful study guideline for the next generation.

Especially in the academic area of the medical and nursing sciences, the daily progress and development of knowledge, technology and the human sciences offers us the benefits of continuous progress.

It's the nurse teacher's responsibility to make efforts to revise and refine periodically the curriculum contents on the basis of the people's daily life.

Although this study explains the result of a minor analysis and several proposals about

the assistant nursing curriculum, it revealed that the assistant nursing curriculum was changed recently without enough educational and historical examination by nursing professionals. And because of the increase of students in the assistant nursing school who graduated from high schools, junior colleges, college or universities, the study hour system should be changed to the credit study system and the nurse-teacher's discretion about the curriculum development should be expanded by their own initiative.

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