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Key Note

The contribution of nurses in future proof health care

Marieke J. Schuurmans, PhD, RN. Chair Nursing Science University Medical Centre Utrecht and Professor Care for Older People University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, the Netherlands

Correspondence to: **Marieke Schuurmans**, University Medical Centre. Department of Rehabilitation, Nursing Science & Sports, Location AZU W01.12. PO Box 85500, 3508 GA Utrecht, the Netherlands, E-mail: m.j.schuurmans@umcutrecht.nl

Marieke J. Schuurmans, PhD, RN is a nurse and researcher, appointed professor and chair in Nursing Science at the UMC Utrecht and professor of Care for older people at the University of Applied Sciences in Utrecht. Working over ten years as a clinical nurse specialist in geriatric medicine she is an expert on complex nursing care of older people. In her PhD study she developed the Delirium Observation Screening (DOS) Scale, which is nowadays part of regular nursing care in Dutch hospitals and which is translated in numerous languages. Her current research focuses on daily functioning of older people with multimorbidity. Some recent grants in which she is involved as project leader: the TASTE programme, development of a line of research on self-management in multimorbid patients, the HELP study, a multicentre study to evaluate cost-effectiveness of a nurse-led in-hospital program to prevent delirium and the U PROFIT study, a clinical trial in 90 primary care practices to evaluate comprehensive geriatric care in primary practices. Marieke Schuurmans is responsible for the Nursing Science Master Programme of the University Utrecht (annual graduation forty to fifty students) and supervises twenty PhD students. She is a member of the Dutch Health Council, chair of the research committee of the National Association of Nurses, fellow of the European Association of Nursing Scientists and member of Sigma Teta Tau International. She was member of numerous expert committees, is member of several advisory boards as well as member of supervisory boards of health care organisations. She has published over seventy peer-reviewed papers, over forty practice publications and contributed to more than twenty books. She was the lead author of the recent Dutch Professional Profile for Nurses. In the last fifteen years she gave over a hundred lectures on national and international conferences.

Abstract

In all western countries changing demographics combined with growing numbers of patients with chronic conditions lead to extraordinary challenges in health care. More over changing public expectations, advancing information technology and increasing diversity will add to growing needs in health care. To prevent booming health care costs significant changes are needed. International reports emphasise that nurses play a key role in determining the quality of health and social care. They are also vital in improving public health, health promotion and illness prevention— crucial elements of future health care. In the last decades nursing practice has advanced as a result of the growing body of research generating knowledge on specific patient problems on the one hand, and of the enhanced level of education of nurses on the other hand. In patients with chronic conditions the nursing role is complex and vitally important to address unmet patient needs and to provide optimal patient care. To ensure nursing practice matching the needs of patients nurses should

change their practice. The adapted WHO definition of health as the ability to adapt and self-manage in the face of social, physical, and emotional challenges could guide this change. This definition implicates a transition from providing care to enhancing patients' ability to self-manage. In the upcoming decades the nursing role needs to further shift from hospital to home, focusing on prevention of diseases related decline and complications. Giving the increase of diversity in patients and their problems clear clinical reasoning and decision making will be urgently needed. To keep cost at control focus should shift van process of care to results. Transparency on nurse sensitive outcomes is essential. According to nurse leaders to achieve these changes in nursing practice nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and continue to update their education, should be full partners in the interdisciplinary team , data collection and information structures should enhance policy making and workforce planning. Leadership and partnership are key components of on-going development of the nursing profession as part of future proof health care.

Keywords:

nursing, changes in health care, leadership

Presentation available at: <http://www.euprimarycare.nl/istanbul/conference-programme-efpc-2013-istanbul-results>