

THE INCIDENCE AND COSTS OF ILLNESS AMONG NURSES.

A useful and interesting study of the incidence and costs of illness among Nurses has recently been made by a Joint Committee appointed by the American Hospital Association, and National League of Nursing Education, and the American Nurses' Association covering a period of twelve consecutive months from February, 1937, through January, 1938. The Committee obtained records of illness for approximately 17,500 student nurses and 8,800 graduate staff nurses in 223 schools of nursing located in all parts of the country.

The study disclosed in part:—

That in the country as a whole, student nurses had more illness than graduate staff nurses. The annual average number of days of illness per student nurse was 8.3; the average number of days per graduate 6.6.

The average days of illness for both students and graduates were highest in January, February and March, and lowest for students in August and September, and for graduates in June and September.

That the largest proportion of students were ill in February (16 per cent.) and the smallest proportion in September (8 per cent.). Most graduates were ill in January (17 per cent.), and least in June (10 per cent.).

That half of the schools reported from 5½ to a little more than 10 days of illness per student during the year, and half reported from 2½ to 6½ days per graduate staff nurse. One quarter of the schools reported less illness and one quarter reported more illness for each group.

The clinical students were ill more than pre-clinical students. The annual average amount of illness per clinical student was 9.2 days. The annual average amount of illness per pre-clinical student 5.2 days.

(a) That students having experience on the pediatric service had a higher illness record than clinical students on all other services, exclusive of communicable disease. The average annual rate per student on the pediatric service was 10.6 days.

(b) That students having pediatric experience in an affiliating hospital had more days of illness than students having this experience in the home hospital. The average for those on affiliation was 12.2 days compared with 10.4 days for those in the home hospital.

(a) That students having communicable disease experience had a higher illness record than students on all other services, exclusive of pediatrics.

(b) That students having communicable disease experience in an affiliating hospital were ill more than students having this experience in the home hospital. That students on all services in the home hospitals had a higher illness incidence than students on all affiliating services.

That the health records of graduate and student nurses as measured by days of illness were not so favourable as those of college students and women in the clerical, industrial, and teaching fields.

That the cost to the hospitals of illness of students was greater than the cost of illness of graduates. The annual cost of hospitalisation for student and graduate nurses was estimated at three to four million dollars. Of this amount about 22 per cent. was spent on graduates and 78 per cent. on students.

The findings suggest that more emphasis has been put on the programme for students than for graduates.

That the working conditions of pre-clinical students are better than those of clinical students.

That the health hazards for students during their pediatric and communicable disease experience are greater than during their experience on other services.

That the proper precautionary health measures are not

taken before students are sent on the pediatric and communicable disease services.

That aseptic nursing techniques are not consistently practised in hospitals.

Amongst the recommendations made by the Joint Committee in view of the findings in this Report are:

That all schools keep careful records of the illness of both their student and graduate staff nurses.

That efforts be made to find out and to correct the cause of the higher illness record of students on the pediatric and communicable disease services than on other services.

NO NATIONALITY IN NURSING.

"The truth is, nurses enjoy war," said a mother of fighting sons, "they have excitement, change, new sights, new work and alert men about, all most wholesome if taken in the right spirit." We did not deny the impeachment. "And, oh! yes," she continued, "there are honours to be awarded—C.B.E.s and R.R.C.s, not always to the most worthy." We had been reading news of regulars and volunteers, working in Spain and Palestine, longing to learn of the safety of devoted mission nurses in China, now that Canton and Hankow have been evacuated and swept with fire.

From a hospital in Palestine we learned with gratitude that our nurses had followed the flag.

"We arrived here on the 13th," writes one, "and were brought out to this place, six miles from Haifa, on buses with wire netting over the windows and armed guards around us. The hospital was an Agricultural College and is being converted. It's not quite ready yet, but already there are patients waiting to be admitted. We begin with 200 beds, but expect to increase up to 400 in a few months.

"We are in tents, and it seems a glorious picnic at present. So warm and sunny, but maybe things will be different when the rains begin in December! But then we hope to move into a hut. On the centre tower of the hospital is a searchlight which plays on the hills every half hour, all night and the compound is shut in with barbed wire and armed guards. We are not allowed out at all except in special cars with an armed escort, and in any case have to be back by 6 p.m. After this hour we are not allowed near the fence or gates. At nights the Arabs fire on the R.A.F. camp which is near to us. Our first night here two Arabs were caught trying to mine our place.

"How strange it is to think that this land, once trodden by our Saviour, is now full of troops, tanks, machine guns and bombing planes, and daily people are being killed. What must the Prince of Peace suffer as He looks down on Palestine!"

Let us hope that of one thing we may be sure, and that is that the Arabs, if sick and wounded, will receive the benefit of skilled nursing care, together with other nationals. There is no nationality in nursing."

If you wish for kindness—be kind;
If you wish for the truth—be true;
All of yourself that you give you find
Your world is a reflex of you.

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