

CONCEPT ANALYSIS

Fitness Nursing: A Concept Analysis

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Abstract

The concept of fitness nursing has not been fully defined in the nursing profession but has slowly emerged due to the increasing interest of people in physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle. Hence, this analysis aims to add Fitness Nursing to the body of nursing knowledge that is currently undefined. Walker and Avant's framework for concept analysis will be used to discover the concept. Definitions of the concept are presented along with related terms. Antecedents, attributes, and consequences of the concept are presented in detail. Model, borderline, related, contrary and invented cases are presented to provide a rich representation of the concept. Empirical referents and nursing implications are presented. The concept of Fitness Nursing can be defined as the combined science of nursing with the art of personal training that focuses on health promotional activities and disease preventive measures through physical fitness. The defining attributes are physical training and health coaching. The consequence of Fitness Nursing may be presented in two aspects, Individual aspect includes increased vitality, a better body shape, higher self-esteem, better fitness overall, and most importantly, avoidance of chronic illnesses. As for the community, the outcome would be a healthier community with increased productivity and increased lifespan.

Keywords: *Fitness Nursing, Physical Fitness*

Introduction

Exercise is good medicine. Nowadays, physical fitness has become increasingly popular as part of health promotional activities and disease preventive measures due to the rising number of lifestyle-related diseases. Some researches revealed obesity, cigarette smoking, or chronically stressed individuals are more likely to suffer from health conditions such as hypertension, and heart diseases. This posed negative impacts on their well-being. Hence, nurses are given an imperative role to the community to assist them in the performance of those activities contributing to the health and to help them alleviate occurrences of illness or injuries through physical fitness. Many people think nurses are limited in the type of work they do. Some believe that nurses only take vital signs or run routine check-ups with patients. However, a wide variety of exciting options are available to nurses today like the freshly emerging concept of Fitness Nursing.

The nursing profession has yet to officially develop a specialty in "fitness nursing" or "sports nursing" on either the professional or academic level. But a growing number of nurses are becoming involved in these areas (Minority Nurse, 2015). Nurses are in a unique position to become part of this growing practice. By combining the art and science of nursing, this new career path offers nurses the opportunity to draw upon their knowledge and

skills. That way, they effectively assist patients in meeting and achieving the goal of living a healthy lifestyle (Llewellyn, 2014).

This analysis of Fitness Nursing will add to the body of nursing knowledge that is currently undefined. The aims of this analysis comprise of identifying possible uses of the concept, antecedent, attributes, definitions, and consequences, and constructing model, borderline, related, and contrary cases. Walker and Avant's framework for concept analysis was used. Empirical referents and nursing implications were presented.

Definition and Uses of Concept

Physical fitness is a set of attributes that people have or achieve. Being physically fit has been defined as "the ability to carry out daily tasks with vigor and alertness, without undue fatigue and with ample energy to enjoy leisure-time pursuits and to meet unforeseen emergencies". The health-related components of physical fitness are a) cardio-respiratory endurance, b) muscular endurance, c) muscular strength, d) body composition, and e) flexibility (Caspersen et al., 1985).

Whereas nursing includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled, and dying people. Advocacy, promotion of a safe environment, research, participation in

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shaping health policy and patient and health systems management, and education are also key nursing roles. (ICN, 2002). Further, nurses are cognizant of factors that influence physical health as they provide care to support the optimal physiologic function of the patient. Efforts to restore, maintain or improve function include measures that address a client's need for nourishment, comfort, and activity (Kozier et al., 2004). According to Guide to Nursing Degree (2016), a fitness nurse is someone who recognizes a strong connection between physical fitness, a state of wellness, and the prevention of disease.

On the other hand, sports medicine is a sub-specialty of orthopedic medicine, largely involving injuries or traumas suffered as a result of training for or competing in an athletic event. Sports medicine nurses are typically nurse practitioners that help physicians care for patients experiencing various musculoskeletal injuries, including muscle strains, joint sprains, torn ligaments, bone fractures, and dislocations (Collora, 2016).

Antecedents

The following are the identified antecedents based on the reviewed literature: a. Health Promotion/Awareness; b. Health Consciousness; and c. Patient's willingness to achieve fitness. WHO defines health promotion as the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. Nursing is an appropriate profession to implement health promotion which is the basis of the first antecedent, the Health Promotion/Awareness. According to Kempainen et al. (2012), nurses can be considered general health promoters, with their health promotion activities based on sound knowledge and giving information to patients. Nurses can use their medical knowledge and clinical skills in providing nutritional education, information, and sessions of physical activity during exercise or sports, and holding workshops on effective stress management techniques.

In fitness nursing, nurses predominantly focus on encouraging and ensuring adherence to regular exercise, proper diet, and healthy lifestyle. Similarly, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (1999), mentioned that "health care settings offer an opportunity to individually counsel adults and young people about physical activity as well as other healthful behaviors, such as dietary practices."

Prevention is better than cure denotes the second antecedent which is being health conscious. The fitness nurses in preventative health care are tasked with improving the health of patients through evidence-based recommendations while encouraging individuals to receive preventative services such as screenings, counseling, and precautionary medications. The fitness nurse may play the part of an educator that offers information and counseling that encourage positive health behaviors, provides regular screening of patients to develop, and

provide an appropriate routine exercise. They are also tasked with helping individuals execute a fitness care plan and make any additional behavior modifications necessary to improve conditions. Patients' conditions and their responses to the exercise or dietary regimen are monitored by the fitness nurse. Another antecedent is the patient's willingness to achieve fitness. The patient shows interest and readiness to achieve fitness and communicates with the fitness nurse regarding lifestyle changes and physical exercises. People nowadays are getting more health-conscious, and are aware that getting fit can help decrease the occurrence of lifestyle-related illnesses.

Critical Attributes

For the critical attributes, engagement in Physical Training and provision of health coaching was identified as important characteristics to understand the concept of Fitness Nursing. The first attribute is Physical Training which involves the systematic use of exercises that promotes bodily fitness and strength with the assistance of the fitness nurse. The overall condition of the patient is assessed first such as signs, activity tolerance, bone or joint problem, heart medications, and nutritional status. The fitness nurse determines the goal of the patient and prescribes the exercise program of the patient. The fitness nurse will assist the patients during the exercise program and monitor their conditions. During and after physical training, the level of fitness is assessed and documented to determine the intensity and the outcome of the exercise program followed by the patient.

Another attribute is health coaching which is done to guide and motivate patients to make lifestyle changes such as losing weight, curbing tobacco use, managing stress, following a proper diet, and increasing physical activity. By addressing the range of physical, emotional, and environmental factors that influence people's behavior, health coaching is tailored to an individual's specific needs and challenges. It can result in measurable, goal-oriented outcomes (Llewellyn, 2000).

Synthesized Definition of Term

Fitness nursing is the combined science of nursing with the art of personal training that focuses on health promotional activities and disease preventive measures through physical fitness to endow patients with the optimum level of wellness.

Consequence

The consequence of fitness nursing includes has two aspects, the individual and the community. Individual aspect includes increased vitality, a better body shape, higher self-esteem, better fitness overall, and most importantly, avoidance of chronic illnesses. As for the community, the outcome would be a healthier community with increased productivity and increased lifespan.

Model Case and Additional Cases

Model Case

It is Wednesday afternoon. Nurse Jack is expecting only one patient for a fitness session. Mike is 29 y/o, a health-conscious bank manager. Mike occasionally drinks liquor and never smoked. He frequently visits the fitness center 2-3 sessions per week. On Mike's initial consultation about two years ago, he wanted to decrease his body mass. He was 210lbs that time and gets tired easily even in a short distant walk. Based on Mike's statement, Nurse Jack determined that he needs to improve his cardio-pulmonary endurance and weight loss and recommended sets of cardio and muscle endurance exercises. This time, Mike enjoys his weight at 165 lbs, 5'9", and with a normal BMI of 24.36. As a routine, Nurse Jack checked first his BP- 120/80. Overall, Mike is physically fit and eager for today's physical training. Mike is set for cardio exercises in combination with treadmill and weights exercises alternately. They started with a 15-minute warm-up. Nurse Jack is on his side to check him out. Mike has completed the cardio exercise for an hour and a half and appeared very tired. Nurse Jack reassesses him and found out that Mike is just doing fine. After the exercise, information on a healthy lifestyle was relayed to Mike. Nurse Jack has observed that Mike portrayed consistent behavior change towards achieving fitness since he started. Mike's cardio-respiratory endurance has improved after a series of cardio exercises based on the record of Nurse Jack. Mike will return on Saturday for another session.

This model case shows all the attributes of the fitness nursing concept. Nurse Jack determined the fitness goal of Mike, made the necessary assessments, and prescribed him an appropriate exercise. Nurse Jack assisted Mike throughout the fitness session and checked Mike's level of fitness. Nurse Jack also provided Mike with health coaching regarding his diet and healthy lifestyle.

Borderline Case

Nurse Hem has been assisting Rico patiently on his exercise program for 3 months now. Rico is 27 y/o, overweight. Rico's goal is to decrease his weight from his initial weight of 82kg to 72kg in a three-month regular exercise program. Today, Rico weighs 80kg which Nurse Hem is very concerned with. Based on his diet review on the previous month, Rico has been compliant with his low carbohydrates diet. Rico is in good condition today according to the routine assessment of Nurse Hem, aside from that Mike's body fat has little improvement. They are set for 1 hour and 45 minutes of mixed cardio and muscle endurance exercises in a treadmill and weight exercises wherein Rico has survived. After the session, Nurse Hem made a reassessment and noted that Rico was doing well. Nurse Hem reminded Rico about his diet program that he must lessen the intake of foods rich in carbohydrates and glucose. Rico just nodded and went out of the

fitness center. Nurse Hem has no more appointments so he is set to go home. On his way home, he dropped by the mall to buy some stuff. But sadly, he saw Rico seated in an ice cream shop eating a large cup of sundae.

This contrary case lacks the attribute of health coaching. Nurse Jack just reminded Rico of his diet which is why Rico did not demonstrate the behavioral change that results in a little improvement in Rico's fitness.

Related Case

Nurse Marga is a public health nurse for less than a year. She is visiting her patients who are members of the Hypertensive and Diabetic Club once a month in the barangay to give their monthly supply of anti-hypertensive medication and to monitor her patients' response to their medical regimen by checking their blood pressure and blood sugar. During her visit, she gave a lecture to the patients regarding the importance of lifestyle modification and exercise. The effect of cigarette smoking was emphasized in her discussion because she has observed that most of her patients are smokers. Afterward, Nurse Marga initiated a 20-minute aerobic exercise with her patients. Her next visit will be next month.

This is an example of a related case. It exhibits the ideas that are similar to fitness nursing but looks different when examined closely. Nurse Marga provided health education to her patients about healthy lifestyles and physical activities and initiated aerobic exercises. However, Nurse Marga is a public health nurse who is implementing a health program for a patient with non-communicable diseases.

Contrary Case

Chad is a friend of Nurse Gab. Chad is 34 y/o, a smoker, and obese. His father died 2 months ago due to a heart attack. This made him decide to ask for help from his friend. Nurse Gab had a busy day so he just provided instructional videos of different exercises and brochures about proper diet and nutrition. Three weeks after, Nurse Gab have learned that Chad was hospitalized due to chest pain with a diagnosis of Angina Pectoris. According to his informant, Chad overexerted to his exercise program but continued smoking and consumed a lot of food.

This is an example of a contrary case because the attributes were not shown in the story. Nurse Gab did not make any assessment to Chad, no presence and assistance of the nurse during the exercise, and health coaching is not also done.

Invented Case

Hercules was sailing along the Aegean Sea when he knew that the gods and goddesses in Mt. Olympus are feeling weak

because of the food and liquor they had consumed during the month-long festival. He immediately called the Pegasus so he could visit them. He was horrified by what he saw. The gods and goddesses have lost their fitness which greatly affects their power. Hercules had a great idea of how to help them. He proposes to his father, Zeus to conduct an Olympic game among the gods and goddesses after three months and Zeus affirmed. For this reason, the other gods and goddesses were eager to train with Hercules. The following day, Hercules gave them various exercises. There were restrictions to their diets too. The Olympian gods and goddesses are good in sports. Poseidon and Hades are excellent swimmers so they preferred swimming exercises. Artemis, Apollo, and Eros train and compete in archery. Athena and Ares are excellent swordsmen, so they train and battle in fencing events. Day by day, the gods and goddesses were gradually regaining their fitness and power. Until the day of the Olympics has come, the gods and goddesses have totally recovered their fitness. They rewarded Hercules for a job well done.

This is an example of an invented case. It is a fictional story of Hercules and the Olympian gods and goddesses who went through different physical exercises to regain their power. This fictional story contains all the attributes of fitness nursing.

Empirical Reference

There are only a few studies on the concept of fitness nursing. Hopefully, the analysis of this concept will open up a new door in nursing research and practice. Kempainen et al. (2012) stated that nurses can be considered general health promoters, with their health promotion activities based on sound knowledge and giving information to patients. Nursing is an appropriate profession that implements health promotion activities. But, several barriers are associated with organizational culture and have a marked effect on delivery.

Implication

The lifestyle of people has been greatly affected by technological advancement. Many people have developed lifestyle-related diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension. Fitness Nursing can be a way to alleviate the increasing number of these chronic diseases through physical fitness for both the nurse and the patient.

Conclusion

Fitness Nursing is not yet fully defined in the nursing profession. The concept analysis utilizing Walker and Avant's framework has provided new insight into this phenomenon. Thus, further exploration, understanding, and development of this concept should be done to fully recognize the role of nurses in promoting physical fitness

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