

# Nepal needs Continuing Professional Development for Re-registration in Nursing and Midwifery

Bibha Simkhada,<sup>1</sup> Edwin van Teijlingen,<sup>2</sup> Chandrakala Sharma,<sup>3</sup> Apsara Pandey,<sup>3</sup> Padam Simkhada<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Human and Health Sciences, University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield, UK, <sup>2</sup>School of Health and Social Care, Bournemouth University, Bournemouth, UK, <sup>3</sup>Maharajgunj Nursing Campus, Institute of Medicine, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal.

## ABSTRACT

The nursing and midwifery profession needs to stay up to date with the latest developments. In this Viewpoint, we shall be referring to 'nurses' and 'nursing' to mean 'nurses and midwives' and 'nursing and midwifery' respectively. Nurses must continue to update their skills and competences to meet changing future population health needs effectively and safely. However, the reality is that many staff are reporting difficulty accessing and completing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in all settings.

**Keywords:** CPD; midwifery; nursing; post-registration education; training.

## INTRODUCTION

Nepal has made significant growth in nursing in recent decades, and in midwifery education in recent years. The quality of nursing education and future of these professions in Nepal remains a growing concern when compared to international standards. Despite the growing number of nursing colleges and students in the country,<sup>1</sup> the practising workforce is still limited, and the quality of care still has a long way to go.

## CONTEXTUAL PERSPECTIVES

In Nepal, nurses and midwives must re-register every six years, but they can continue to practise without having done any training or learning since they did their last or even original registration. Many other countries require nurses and midwives to show evidence of post-registration training, called CPD. CPD offers the opportunity to maintain and improve knowledge, expertise and update skills set, leading to retention of staff.<sup>2</sup>

Introducing compulsory high quality CPD will have a direct benefit on the personal and professional

development.<sup>3</sup> Thus, patients will be receiving better quality of care through evidence-based practice and improved nursing knowledge and skills of nurses. Our collaborative research on CPD for nurses and midwives in Nepal, found an urgent need for CPD in post-registration nursing.<sup>4,5</sup> This project was intended to support the Nepal Nursing Council (NNC) in establishing mandatory CPD. This qualitative study highlighted the need for urgent action at three levels: (a) policy level including the national situation of CPD, political influence and training guided by the policy; (b) organizational level incorporating perceptions towards forms of CPD, staff shortage, poor staff retention, seniority for training, financial constraints and lack of continuity of training; and (c) individual level including motivation for training and lack of relevant training.

## WAY FORWARD

We strongly advocate the introduction of compulsory CPD, perhaps a minimum number of hours per year, as a key requirement for the renewal of the registration as a nurse and midwife. As international researcher working for nurses and midwives, we suggest that Nepal needs to consider utilising existing resources on CPD and developing more relevant CPD training for nurses and midwives. In addition, freely available CPD modules from other part

**Correspondence:** Dr Bibha Simkhada, School of Human and Health Sciences, University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield, UK. Email: b.d.simkhada@hud.ac.uk.

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of the world could be utilised if they are accredited. For example, World Continuing Education Alliance (WCEA) are providing free CPD modules for nurses and midwives in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) however they are not fully contextualised to each country, and they can be considered in some situations.<sup>6</sup> Sharing and contextualising global resources to Nepalese nurses and midwives to take these opportunities to develop knowledge and skill when there is lack of resources on CPD in Nepal. There is urgent need to develop and implement CPD policy in nursing and midwifery in Nepal.

## CONCLUSIONS

If Nepal does not formalise CPD, only some staff will engage with training activities, but it will be ad hoc depends on personal interests, not service requirements, and perhaps more importantly what is made available (for free) by either the government and/or INGOs (International Non-Governmental Organisations) rather than relevant to their current practices. We argue that promoting CPD benefits the quality of health care, builds confidence as it guarantee to the individual patient in Nepal that the nurses and midwives who are treating them have up-to-date skills and knowledge. In addition it strengthens the NNC as it supports to professionalise nursing and midwifery in Nepal and bring the standard of nursing and midwifery practices to a higher and international level.

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