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Effective of the guidelines for the scope of nursing practice in Laos: A qualitative study**Mayumi Hashimoto, Miki Matsufuji**

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Background: The Ministry of Health of the Government of Laos established the Guidelines for the Scope of Nursing Practice in 2007, held national dissemination seminars frequently in 2008 and set up a committee to implement the guidelines in public central hospitals in 2013.

Objective: To explore the effectiveness of the guidelines for the scope of nursing practice for nursing leaders that has been implemented at hospitals in Laos.

Method: A qualitative, exploratory, descriptive research design was used. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with 13 clinical nursing leaders (five nursing directors, five members of nursing departments and three chief nurses) in 2016. Inductive data analysis was performed using a modified grounded theory approach.

Findings: Five categories and 10 sub-categories were identified regarding the effectiveness of the guidelines for the scope of nursing practice. The analysis revealed that clinical nursing leaders faced difficulties in implementing the guidelines at hospitals because of a lack of nursing competency and inadequate understanding of the scope of nursing practice by medical doctors; however, they could cope with the situation flexibly. The implementation process cultivated the nurses' awareness of the nursing profession as typified by their identity as a nurse, encouraged them to develop their professional way to work, such as by organizing training and meetings by themselves and helped them transform their relationships with medical doctors into professional partnerships. The nursing leaders also described their ideas of professional nursing in Laos.

Conclusion: These findings suggest that the guidelines affected not only the scope of nursing practice at hospitals, but also the awareness of nursing leaders regarding the nursing profession and their relationships with medical doctors. Although some difficulties were seen among clinical nursing leaders in implementing the guidelines at hospitals, overall, the implementation process enhanced nursing practice in Laos.

Biography

Mayumi Hashimoto has been actively involved as a Technical Advisor on Nursing and Midwifery Education System and legal framework for human resources for health in low-middle income countries.

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