2.7: Cross-Country development of Nursing Knowledge

The development of nursing theory and knowledge development in other countries has been influenced by the United States. For example, nursing theory, its relationship to knowledge development, and scholarship in Iceland is 50 years old. University-based nursing education was established at the University of Iceland in 1973. This was the first baccalaureate nursing program in Europe. Nursing concepts such as holism, caring, adaptation, patient respect/partnerships, therapeutic relationships, and education as derived from Nightingale, Henderson, Peplau, and Roy influenced this curriculum. The introduction of some nursing theories, particularly Henderson’s needs-based theory, along with United States nursing scholars such as Benner, Newman, Orem, and Parse, were cited as major influences in guiding practice [15].

China experienced a 30-year abolition of nursing academia from 1953 to 1983. United States’ influence on nursing curriculum became apparent in 2001. Textbooks included information on US nursing theorists such as Henderson, Orem, Peplau, Rogers, and King. Prior to this the curriculum was medically focused and nurses were taught by physicians, due to lack of nursing faculty [16].

Nursing practice and education in Australia originated from the British tradition influenced by Florence Nightingale. The focus was on the medical model of care until the late 1960s. Henderson’s nursing perspective influenced practice in the 1970s. Though Western nursing theory was taught in the schools, Australian nursing leaders cautioned against importing these theories on the premise that nursing being a practice discipline and influenced by contextual factors is most appropriately developed through the study of nursing practice in context [17].

Nevertheless, health for all and shared resources has been a goal of the World Health Organization (WHO) since the 1970s. The question arises as to how we as nurses can aspire to this goal. Though implementation of nursing interventions may present more of a challenge in different areas of the world, due to such factors as lack of resources and different government infrastructures, interdisciplinary collaboration can be a means to troubleshoot the different
challenges that arise. After the area of research is defined, it is suggested that the novice nurse seeks mentors that have like research interests and if possible from other areas of the world. In choosing a mentor, it would be important that the novice nurse not only chooses a colleague with the same interest but with a similar nursing philosophy and worldview. If the topic is new and unexplored, qualitative research may be a good place to start. If the literature review reveals a fair amount of studies with standardized tools and metrics, quantitative research may be the likely choice. Social media, blogs, Skype, and teleconferences are useful tools for developing intercollaborative research studies. Differences in outcomes can not only inspire new research to gain further understanding but also add further insight into the growing body of knowledge that is being developed.