

## Bringing Nursing Theories into practice: If not Nurses, Who else? A Perspective from a Nurse

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The use of theory as a basis for practice is one of the characteristics of a profession. Therefore nursing theory is very important for nursing discipline. It helps nurses defining body of knowledge and giving directions to nursing practice. Nursing theory aims to describe, predict and explain the phenomenon of nursing.<sup>1</sup> Many studies indicated that many perceived contributions perceived from nursing theories such as assist student learning, help to structure patient assessment, improve problem solving, guide and justify nursing actions, and provide others with rationale for nurses' work<sup>2</sup>.

However, there are also many nurses do not use nursing theories to guide their practice, including apply these theories into research. Fawcett states that most of the grand theories currently available in nursing are all-embracing, abstract, non-testable conceptual models.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, in an attempt to be all-inclusive, nursing theories explain nothing. In addition, Meleis felt that theorists were becoming more competent in articulating what theory is, rather than what the substance of practice itself is. It is argued that, if we do not know what nursing is, how can we work within the real world of practice?<sup>4</sup>

Actually, we need to underline that nursing theories have so many levels. Nursing theories vary according to typology, scope, generalizability, level of and abstraction role. The most abstract and universal is called *meta-theory* or philosophic inquiry; the theory that is broad in scope and highly abstract conceptually maybe referred to as a *grand theory*, whereas the theory that has a narrow scope and is more concrete or practical maybe referred to as a *middle-range theory*; and the last is *micro-range/practice theory* is the most restrictive in terms of time and scope or application.<sup>5</sup>

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From these levels of theories, we may rethink which nursing theories that we cannot apply into practice.

Nurses may feel confused regarding nursing theories because they have just been taught about grand nursing theories only. In fact, based on my experiences, in Diploma and Bachelor nursing. So, nurses may think it is difficult to be applied. However, if nurses think grand theories is too abstract, they might use middle range or practice theories. But, we need to consider that middle range theories might not be able to cover all part of nursing care holistically, in terms of bio, physics, psychology, social, and spiritual care, therefore nurses need to develop more middle range theories. Otherwise, nurses just use grand theories that guide and direct nursing care comprehensively

Thus, it is still a challenge for nursing leaders today to guide clinical nurses to apply theories into practice. This phenomenon leads to further

investigation whether nurses understand or not about nursing theories. In the end, nurses need to develop and bring theories into practice because there is no other professions can do that, except nurses themselves to achieve full professional status comparable with other professions by basing its practice on theories.

### References:

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