Achieving Quality in Community Health Care Nursing

Community Health Care Series

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Achieving Quality in Community Health Care Nursing

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Achieving Quality in Community Health Care Nursing

Edited by

CAROLYN MASON

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Maura Pidgeon, Hugh McKenna, Alison While, Robert Stewart and Ian
Turner, Ann Long, Kate Cernik 1997

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FOREWORD

I want to commend the purpose of this book: *'to challenge community nurses to find and use quality approaches and tools which are applicable to their areas of practice'*. The aim is to *'stimulate ideas and encourage action to achieve and demonstrate quality in ways that are considered to be appropriate by community nurse specialists themselves'*.

Community health care nurses have responded in many positive ways to the challenge of the recent years. I believe this book will assist them to go on delivering accessible, responsive, patient/client-centred services, in a whole range of settings, which will be effective in achieving good health outcomes for individuals, families, groups and communities.

The book is a timely contribution, and Dr Carolyn Mason is to be congratulated in bringing together a range of contributors who have approached the subject from different perspectives and provided a spectrum of solutions for community nurses to reflect on, try out and evaluate and from these activities to select ways of seeking to improve their practice.

JUDITH E. HILL
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Successive governments have indicated their commitment to enhancing the health of the nation and, in recent years, the focus of care delivery has shifted with escalating speed into the community. In so doing, it has become evident that community nurses and health visitors provide the focus for the promotion of health gain, and for the maintenance of positive health status for individuals, groups and local communities. Community nurses and health visitors are destined, therefore, to become leaders in the design, delivery and evaluation of effective health care interventions, informed by academic discovery, and advanced practice skills and competencies.

The changes that confront the contemporary community nursing practitioner are characterised by the diverse nature of the context within which community care is transacted, with an increasing emphasis on inter-sectoral co-operation, interprofessional collaboration, community action and development, and reduced reliance on the acute sector and residential care provision for longer stay client groups.

The impact of change, pushed by a growing demand for flexible, high-quality services provided within local communities, will inevitably shape the NHS of the future. Resources have already been shifted to the community (although at a pace that is all too often criticised as being grossly inadequate to meet client need). Commissioners and providers are now required to demonstrate that the care they purchase and deliver is effective and responsive to the needs of local practice populations. To complement this, community nurses will be required to ensure that their activities make a significant impact on health gain for their practice population and, as such, must become seriously involved in structuring the political agenda that ultimately governs their practice environment.

In order for the community workforce to respond to these challenges, it will be necessary to ensure that community workers are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge base to be able to function effectively in the 'new world of community health practice'. Nurses will be required to develop and change, drawing upon the very best of their past experience, and becoming increasingly reliant upon the production of research evidence to inform their future practice.

This series is aimed at practising community nurses and health visitors, their students, managers, professional colleagues and com-

missioners. It has been designed to provide a broad-ranging synthesis and analysis of the major areas of community activity, and to challenge models of traditional practice. The texts have been designed specifically to appeal to a range of professional and academic disciplines. Each volume will integrate contemporary research, recent literature and practice examples relating to the effective delivery of health and social care in the community. Community nurses and health visitors are encouraged towards critical exploration and, if necessary, to change their own contribution to health care delivery – at the same time as extending the scope and boundaries of their own practice.

Authors and contributors have been carefully selected. Whether they are nurses or social scientists (or both), their commitment to the further development and enrichment of health science (and nursing as an academic discipline in particular) is unquestionable. The authors all demonstrate knowledge, experience and excellence in curriculum design, and share a commitment to excellence in service delivery. The result is a distillation of a range of contemporary themes, practice examples and recommendations that aim to extend the working environment for practising community nurses and health visitors and, in so doing, improve the health status of their local consumer populations.

Contributors to *Achieving Quality in Community Health Care Nursing*, edited by Dr Carolyn Mason, highlight specific quality issues relevant to practice in the United Kingdom. The book provides a critical appraisal of quality models and approaches relating to consumer feedback, resource management and a range of client groups. Rooted in the commissioner-provider context of contemporary community health care nursing, the authors articulate the importance of evidence-based practice. Readers are provided with a range of measurement tools designed to assist service evaluation. Furthermore, the authors analyse existing concepts of care delivery and challenge practitioners to develop new ways of achieving excellence in the workplace.

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