Current and Future Challenges in Home Nursing

The context in which health care is provided is changing and the boundaries between hospital and home care are constantly under review, similarly what is medical work today may be nursing work tomorrow. This paper recognises that nursing is a global activity and that differences exist in terms of how nursing and home care are defined. This paper sets the context for nursing work and explores the drivers for the expansion in home care, namely an ageing population and the management of long term conditions.

In the context of managing long term conditions, internationally there has been a shift from a paternalistic model of care where the professional is deemed always to know best, to a more collaborative approach to care planning with an emphasis on self-management and family care. This paper explores this shift in focus in chronic disease management and its impact.

The challenge of providing quality care within finite resources, coupled with a technological revolution, has led to a proliferation of roles in health care often referred to as skill mix and aspects of this mix which may impact on future care provision by nurses in the home will be explored namely:

- Role enhancement
- Substitution
- Delegation
- Technological innovation

Finally, since the future is set to be more data driven, in the light of the above an attempt will be made to highlight potential quality indicators, which may be used to evaluate the services provided by home care nurses.

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