**Need Theory Evaluation**

**Need Theory Congruence with Nursing Standards**

Nursing standards constitute professional nursing actions demonstrated by practitioners through their practice. Contemporary nursing standards include proper patient assessment, diagnosis and identification of treatment outcomes, planning treatment regimen implementation, and comprehensive patient evaluation (Masters, 2015). These standards clearly define the nursing process thus laying the foundation for clinical decision making and provision of care to all clients. Given the nature of nursing standards, it is apparent that Henderson’s theory aligns with them. For instance, the basic assumption of this theory is that nursing is tantamount to helping patients in all aspects pursuant to their wellbeing. The latter ties up all the preceding nursing standards, since they revolve around taking actions meant to guarantee patient welfare through proper diagnosis, treatment, and assessment. In addition, the 14 basic components of Henderson’s theory under physiological, psychological, and spiritual/moral dimensions of patient care align with current nursing standards that are meant to guarantee holistic care of individuals and not just their physical health. This is a significant strength of the theory because it demonstrates the holistic nature of an individual and need for consideration of the same during care provision.

**Need Theory Congruence with Current Nursing Interventions/ Therapeutics**

Henderson is often considered the founder of modern professional nursing. The theorist’s nursing concept is still being used in clinical as well as community healthcare. This is ascribable to the fact that the theory adopts a positivist outlook. As a result, it fits properly with medical care approaches. Besides, as pointed out by George (2010), Henderson’s theory uses the idea of fundamental individual needs, cultural interaction and communication, as well as, bio physiology. These sub-concepts give the need theory a broad and dynamic coverage of diverse patient needs. Moreover, clearly outlining the 14 components addresses patients’ requirements in varying domains in an inclusive. This division further makes the model easily applicable in clinical settings.  The descriptive nature of the need theory is also a point of strength, as it shows clear definition of patients’ needs and medical professionals’ role, while reinforcing its alignment with current nursing interventions.

**Empirical Testability of Need theory**

As a prolific researcher and author in the nursing profession, Henderson was an avid supporter of nursing research. However, the theorist upheld the belief that such investigation should be clinical research. Most of the research carried out before Henderson’s time had focused principally on the profession itself and on academic processes, instead of focusing on nursing practice and its outcomes. This explains why she strove to change the trend and instead shift research to clinical aspects of nursing. The 14 activities characteristic of Henderson’s theory can form the basis for empirical research. The only weakness of the need theory from this perspective is that the statements are not phrased in testable words. Nonetheless, this can be countered by altering the phrasing used for the activities to create testable research questions. Once this is achieved, there is strength in the theory’s ability to provide necessary guidance in researching any element of the outlined individual care needs (McEwen & Wills, 2014).

**Evidence of Need Theory Use in Nursing**

According to Tilley (2015), Henderson’s clear outlook on the role of nurses and patients’ needs has considerably influenced nursing education.  For instance, her principles were incorporated in published nursing textbooks between the 1930s and 1990s. In addition, these values stemming from the 14 activities still bear importance in assessing nursing care in the modern care environment. Henderson’s work has also impacted nursing research by choosing to focus on nursing practice and by confirming the importance of tested mediations in helping patients regain their health. In the international arena, nursing researchers continue to base their investigation on Henderson’s model as the framework of choice. McEwen & Wills (2014) highlight examples of researchers from Turkey, Netherlands, Japan, and Poland teaming up to develop the Care Dependency Scale using the 14 elements of Henderson theory on nursing care. In another study by Medina-Valverde (2011), the researchers use Henderson’s theory to develop facilitator software used to streamline the nursing process of caring for patients. This tool adopts the need theory to create a guide for use of patient data to deliver proper qualitative care by nurses. The same applies to Ahsitam and Jacoline’s (2015) study that seeks to enable nurses to enhance the standard of care through comprehensive assessment of patient requirements and creation of a pragmatic care plan. Extensive use of the need theory in nursing education, research and practice is an indisputable strength, since it not only shows the practicality of constituent concepts, but also the potential for use despite the ever-changing nature of the profession.

**Socio-Cultural Relevance of the Need Theory**

Henderson’s theory bears immense socio-cultural relevance since it attempts to debunk the misconceptions previously held about nursing as a profession and about nurses as well. By showing that nursing duties exceeded physical care to encompass psychological and emotional needs, the theory not only broadened the scope of the profession, but also initiated changes in the social roles assigned to nurses. Besides redefining socio-cultural perception of nursing, which is strength in itself, the theory provides better understanding of the profession by both nurses and society at large. It is also potent as it provides a universal basis for education and skills training in the field.

**Contributions to Nursing**

Henderson’s theory outlines activities expected of nursing practitioners, which is of significant impact to the field. Other important contributions to nursing include assisting patients, genuinely and respectfully interacting with them, as well as, acting on their behalf if situations warrant it. The latter explicitly show how the theory transformed the perception of nursing and how such changes reinforce the ideals of nursing professionalism. This apparent simplicity, logic, and generalizable nature of the need theory are strong aspects of its contribution to nursing. However, there is a limitation in the lack of explicit conceptual interrelation of the 14 activities. All the same, the strengths of the theory from this viewpoint surpass its limitations.

**Summary**

From this theory evaluation, I have come to recognize the significant role played by Henderson’s need theory in providing better understanding of nursing as a profession. In addition to providing a comprehensive definition of what nursing constitutes, the theory’s emphasis on fundamental human needs is the primary focus of modern nursing practice. The 14 constituents of nursing care as delineated by the theory are simple and have been widely used in nursing research and practice, thus accentuating its importance. I find it intriguing that the theory has been applied in a range of care elements from developing software meant for patient care to creation of practical treatment regimens. This is indicative of the immense potential of the theory in present and future nursing practice and research.

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