NURSES AS HEALTHY ROLE MODELS: THE WIDER PUBLIC HEALTH AGENDA

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“If each of the world’s 13 million nurses made a personal commitment to eat healthily, exercise appropriately, and avoid the use of tobacco, this would improve their health and well-being and reduce the likelihood of their developing chronic disease. If each of these nurses acted as role models, educators and change agents among their families, friends, workplaces and local communities to promote healthier lifestyles, together we could help to halt the tide of chronic disease.” (ICN 2010: 37)
THE PARADOX

- International Evidence of high levels of smoking, obesity, stress and alcohol consumption

- In the UK, many National Health Service (NHS) staff are reported to be obese or overweight, smoke, have poor nutrition or lack sufficient exercise (Blake et al., 2011, Blake et al., 2012, Blake and Patterson, 2015, Timmins et al., 2015)
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

• What does the term role modelling health promoting behaviour currently mean to the nursing profession?

• What are nurses' attitudes towards role modelling health promoting behaviour?
METHODOLOGY

Three Phased Hybrid Concept Analysis and Development Approach

Theoretical Phase
- \( n=39 \times 79 \)
- **Systematic Analysis of Literature**
- Identifying antecedents, attributes, consequences and cases

Fieldwork Phase
- **Focus group** \( n=39 \) NHS Trusts across London and South East London.
- Concept Analysis and Thematic Analysis of Qualitative data

Final Analytical Phase
- **Integration of theoretical and fieldwork phase**
- Refining of antecedents, attributes, consequences and identification of cases

WHAT DOES ROLE MODELLING HEALTH PROMOTING BEHAVIOUR MEAN TO NURSES?

Being a role model in health promoting behaviour involves being an exemplar, portraying a healthy image (being fit and healthy), and championing health and wellness. Personal attributes of a role model in health promoting behaviour include being: caring, non-judgemental, trustworthy, inspiring and motivating, self caring, knowledgeable and self confident, innovative, professional and having a deep sense of self.

(Darch 2017)
A KEY THEME: WORKING AS A NURSE DOES NOT ALWAYS SUPPORT OWN HEALTH

The work itself does not support our own health sometimes. So how are we supposed to promote health, when the work that we believe in, going past our duties, giving our all of ourselves but then the work in return makes us ill? (Everyone nods.)

The way the system is set up with the long shifts, the short breaks, you know sometimes you don't get the breaks, I don't know how you can be expected to role model healthy behaviour when you’re not given the time to look after yourself properly.
You can’t have a water fountain because it’s too much money and the vending machine is only available at some trusts at weekends because they’ve had to close them, so you have to go to the petrol station for a sandwich for dinner. They don’t look after their staff; they don’t have a culture to look after you.

When my mum nursed, they got all their food, they got their uniforms washed, they got shoes bought for them, they had a very different view of valuing staff.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy and Public Health Agenda
Organisations
Nurse in Practice
Education
ORGANISATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Workplace health initiatives are only helpful to a point-individualistic which puts responsibility on nurses

Recognition of organisational determinants and potential for influence of nurses’ health are required

Address workplace stress to avoid unhealthy coping mechanisms - increased workplace support for mental health

Reviews and ratings of organisations should include the health and well-being of employees

Health and wellbeing representative on all trust boards

Nurses must have a voice about what supports them to be healthy in the workplace
REFERENCES


Guardian. (2014). Doctors and nurses told to slim down for sake of patients. Guardian online


