ABSTRACT

DELIVERING EXPERT CARDIAC SUPPORT IN THE COMMUNITY: THE ROLE OF THE NURSE

By MS. VICKY ALAGANDRAN

Deaths due to chronic diseases are a major cause of adult illness deaths in all regions of the world. The impact of these deaths hinders the economic development and potential of these countries. Cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke) are the leaders of these deaths. They are responsible for 30% of all the deaths in the world and are the main chronic condition that contributes significantly to the burden of disease on individuals, families, societies, and countries.

The threat of cardiovascular diseases is growing and risks factors are widespread. Common modifiable risk factors underlie the major causes of cardiovascular diseases which in turn contribute to death.

- 4.9 million, deaths occur as a result of tobacco use.
- 2.6 million, people die as a result of being overweight or obese
- 4.4 million, deaths are due to raise total cholesterol levels
- 7.1 million, deaths as a result of raised blood pressures

Chronic cardiac diseases take decades to be fully established as they have their origins at young ages. There are many opportunities for prevention. 80% of premature heart disease and stroke can be prevented. Management of these cases is long term. It requires a systematic approach to treatment. Lifestyle modification cannot be overemphasized. The cost implications are unbelievably low dispelling the notion that prevention and control requires massive funding.

A leadership role is essential in the prevention and control of cardiovascular diseases. The role of the nurse is to take up this challenge. Clinical nursing interventions and promotion of preventive measures can help to reduce deaths and improve quality of life.

Comprehensive and integrated action need to be taken by all parties concern. This can only be done through partnerships, multidisciplinary team participation, networking with individuals / organizations and fraternities who share a common interest.
The Agenda is BOLD and BROAD
Requires COURAGE and AMBITION
But the way forward is CLEAR
It’s the NURSES turn to take ACTION

About Writer

Ms Vicky Alagandran started her nursing career in the School of Nursing, Assunta Petaling Jaya. She later moved to Ministry of Health and served in various intensive care units in Kuantan, Malacca, Kuala Lumpur and Johor Baharu. In 1992, she was seconded to Institut Jantung Negara (National Health Centre).

Vicky obtained her Bachelor of Health Sciences (Nursing) from Victoria University in Melbourne in 1998. She was subsequently promoted to head the training department in the National Heart Centre. She was responsible for writing the curriculum for in-house cardiopulmonary critical care nursing programme. In 2006, she was the one of members who spearheaded the foundation of the National Heart Centre College. The first programme between November 2006 and May 2007 was with Liverpool John Morse University. With the establishment of the College in 2007, she became the programme leader. She also coordinated the professional diploma in Cardiovascular and Thoracic Sciences for the College with Liverpool John Morse University.

Currently, Vicky pursuing her masters in Education with University Malaya. She is a life member of the Malaysian Nurses Association and the Malaysian Nurses Foundation.