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Integrating Emergency Preparedness and Response into Undergraduate Nursing Curricula



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Acknowledgement

This document is based on the outcome of three WHO meetings on nursing and midwifery in crises and emergencies conducted by Health Action in Crises (HAC) and Health Systems and Services (HSS) in 2006 and 2007. The initiative of the HAC Department of Emergency Preparedness and Capacity Development and the HSS Department of Human Resources for Health for strengthening the role of nursing and midwifery in emergency preparedness and response has been supported by HRH Princess Muna Al Hussein, WHO Patron on Nursing and Midwifery, who inaugurated and participated in two meetings, held in Geneva and Amman.

Collaboration in the area of nursing in emergencies was initiated by Dr. Ala Alwan, the then ADG/HAC (October 2005 - February 2008). This document is the fruit of a series of consultations, meetings, discussion and reviews at the global, regional and country levels under his leadership and guidance.

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Foreword

The past few years have witnessed many emergencies and natural disasters that have influenced the life of millions around the globe. A series of political and social crises has resulted in almost 25 million internally displaced people and more than 9 million refugees worldwide.

It is thus critical to find the right people with the right competencies at the right time and the right place to strengthen preparedness for, response to, and recovery from an emergency or a disaster. Nurses and midwives are frontline workers under stable conditions, but more so during situations of emergencies and crises, working both in pre-hospital as well as in hospital settings. In order to contribute to saving lives and promoting health under such difficult conditions, they need to have the right competencies. These include the ability to carry out rapid response including diagnosis, surveillance, emergency medical care, organization and logistics, containment and communications. Skills and expertise are also needed to create temporary efficient facilities.

With this in mind, WHO initiated the process of reviewing and upgrading the contribution of nursing and midwifery in emergencies through organizing a global consultation in collaboration with the International Council of Nursing, in November 2006. Among other things the global consultation recommended that Member States should include emergency nursing in pre-service nursing curricula, develop continuing education programmes to build the capacity of nurses and midwives in emergency preparedness, response and mitigation and adopt the set of core competencies for nurses in emergency and disaster preparedness and use it for developing educational programmes in disaster nursing.

Building on these recommendations, WHO in October 2007, in collaboration with other partners including the Jordanian Nursing Council, reviewed the role and contribution of nursing and midwifery in emergency preparedness and response and developed recommendations for integrating skills and competencies into undergraduate curricula.

In November 2007, WHO convened a follow-up meeting in Geneva for a core group of experts in nursing education and emergency preparedness and response to develop the competencies, content areas and topics of an undergraduate nursing curriculum in emergency preparedness and response. This document is the outcome of the core group meeting.

More work will be needed to test the recommended curriculum included in this document and

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