

Original Paper

A Review of Status Quo of Post Management of TCM Specialist Nurses in China

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Abstract

It summarized the current situation of post-management of TCM specialist nurses in China and mainly introduced the current situation of post-management of TCM specialist nurses in China from the aspects of post setting, post responsibilities, post hierarchy, and performance evaluation.

Keywords

TCM nursing, Specialist nurses, Management programme, Post system, Position management

1. Introduction

From the end of the 20th century, China began to emphasize the strengthening of nursing specialization development (Huang, Huang, Ying, et al., 2018). "The National Development Plan for the Nursing Industry (2021-2025)" (2022). It was proposed that "the cultivation of TCM nursing talents should be strengthened to effectively improve the TCM nursing serviceability", and "TCM nursing professional nurses" should be included into the related shortage of talents. TCM nursing specialist nurses refer to TCM nursing clinical experts who have passed the theoretical and practical training of the TCM specialist system, obtained the qualification certificate through examination, mastered the TCM nursing methods and techniques featured by specialty and specific disease, and possessed the nursing ability of syndrome differentiation and disease differentiation (Wu, Qin, Ji, et al., 2019). TCM specialist nurses have higher core competence, which is one of the inevitable results of TCM nursing specialist development (Li, Wang, Mou, et al., 2019). The continuous education and training of TCM specialist nurses were proposed (Zhang, Zhuang, Qiu, et al., 2009). Since then, the relevant research on TCM

specialist nurses has gradually expanded to the evaluation system, core competencies, training mode, etc. However, there are still some problems, such as "emphasizing training but neglecting application", imperfect management schemes, and lack of re-certification mechanism (Cao, Li, He, et al., 2015). It has become an important issue to explore the management scheme of TCM specialist nurses which meets the needs of nursing development and the current nursing situation in China (Chen & Zhang, 2019). This study was based on the analysis and summary of the status quo of the position management of TCM specialist nurses in China, to provide a reference for the development of a more reasonable position management system for TCM specialist nurses in China, to better play its role.

2. Specialist Nurse Post Management Status Quo

2.1 Post Settings

At present, the country has not yet issued policies and systems to regulate the use and management of specialist nurses, and the working system, practice scope, and professional specification of most specialist nurses are not clear. In most hospitals in our country, the use of specialist nurses is not distinguished from that of ordinary nurses due to the shortage of nursing human resources, thus failing to exert the advantages of specialist nurses' professional ability (Xia, Jiang, & Lei, 2021). The work content of TCM specialist nurses lacks pertinence and their roles are unclear, so it is urgent to carry out competency research and establish a standardized management scheme. Previous studies showed that 92.0% of the hospitals had post management system, 69.8% of the hospitals had an assessment system, 49.4% of the hospitals had a promotion system, 38.0% of the hospitals had a specialist nurse remuneration system, and 40.7% of the hospitals had specialist nurse full-time posts (Ding, Wu, Tian, et al., 2021). 70.2% of the specialist nurses said that they needed to provide a platform to play a role; 65.8% of the specialist nurses proposed the need to increase the specialist nurse job, and specialist nurses' satisfaction with professional development needs to be improved (Ding, Wu, Xiao, et al., 2020). "Only when there is a talented person can there be a promising future". Setting up posts to build a platform for specialist nurses to show their self-value is very important for promoting the development of specialist nurses and should be paid attention to.

In 2011, Guangdong Provincial People's Hospital took the lead in formulating the full-time post-management plan for specialist nurses. The plan pointed out that specialist nurses were subordinate to the management of the Nursing Department, based on the clinical departments, and worked for the whole hospital, without taking up the staffing of department nurses (Li, Huang, Huang, et al., 2011). Based on the accumulation of experience in our hospital, we proposed setting up posts through multiple ways to give full play to the role of specialist nurses, including setting up nursing outpatient clinics, regulating nursing consultation, and organizing nursing professional groups (Ding, 2013). The General Hospital of the People's Liberation Army has designed different career development plans for nursing managers and specialist nurses and formulated management regulations on the training and use of specialist nurses, which effectively alleviates the phenomenon of overlapping post responsibilities

between nursing managers and specialist nurses. Training specialist nurses to gradually become clinical nursing experts and specialist nursing leaders, and reduce the loss of personnel, and stable nursing teams (Pi, Tang, Wang, et al., 2019). A survey was conducted on the work status of 273 TCM specialist nurses in Chongqing after one year's return to the hospital, and the results showed that their work styles were more diversified (Yang, Yang, Chen, et al., 2022). Including TCM nursing rounds, leading TCM nursing technology, organizing seminars above the hospital level, attending TCM nursing consultations above the hospital level, and sitting in TCM nursing outpatient clinic, etc. For TCM nursing outpatient visits through management evaluation mechanism, clear job responsibilities and assessment indicators, take follow-up ask effect (Peng, Yang, Zhong, et al., 2023).

Form, timely guidance, focus on investigation, quantitative assessment, and dynamic competition, to achieve the survival of the fittest. It has a significant application effect on improving the TCM nursing skills of house-call staff, improving the visiting quality of patients, and enhancing visiting satisfaction. At present, there is an urgent need for a set of perfect post-setting methods for specialist nurses to urge nursing managers to provide a professional platform for specialist nurses. At present, there is no clear and unified certification system or post-management system for TCM specialist nurses in China, and further research is needed to explore it to give full play to the leading role of talents.

2.2 Job Responsibilities

The roles and functions of specialist nurses mainly include clinical practitioners, managers, researchers, and educators (Ding, Wu, Tian, et al., 2021). The survey results of 792 hospitals showed that specialist nurses mainly worked in specialist care in clinics, accounting for 97.3%, and the specialist nurses participating in specialist care consultation and nursing outpatient service accounted for 63.6% and 59.7%, respectively (Ding, Wu, Xiao, et al., 2020). The main role of specialist nurses is still in specialist care (97.3%), which is closely related to the encouragement of specialist nurses to dig deeper into clinical specialist care and exert their professional values in recent years (Ding, Wu, Tian, et al., 2021).

Whether specialist nurses should take the post of nursing manager has not been unified in the industry. Investigation of the current situation of work and management of specialist nurses in Anhui province (Ao, 2010). According to the statistics, 47.56% of the trained specialists turned to nurse management as head nurses or above, and even 18 specialists stepped out of the specialty nursing field to become head nurses. It was considered that the roles of specialist nurse and nursing manager were connected and crossed and that the specialist nurse concurrently taking the position of the head nurse was the performance of rational use of human resources (Jiang, Li, & Liu, 2008). Most of the scholars represented by Wu Xinjuan in our country think that "cooperation", "leadership" and "research" are the abilities shared by the specialist nurses and managers, but their realization methods are different, and the roles of the two should not overlap (Wu, Li, Li, et al., 2017; Shi, Liu, & Zhang, 2017). They proposed that the "double shoulder pick" model with the overlapping roles of specialist nurses and head nurses has caused a great deal of work for specialist nurses to manage concurrently, occupying a large amount of time and energy for specialist nurses, resulting in insufficient time to carry out specialist nursing work and failure to give

full play to their due roles in the corresponding posts after training, which has affected the work enthusiasm of specialist nurses and the development of nursing specialty to a certain extent (Pi, Tang, Wang, et al., 2019). Is not conducive to the professional level of play (Shi, Liu, & Zhang, 2017). Specialist nurse and head nurse are two different career development paths of specialty and management, and the confusion of responsibilities or being both will deviate from the original intention of specialist nurse training (Zhang, Li, Hong, et al., 2014).

Research is the source of power for the sustainable development of tcm nursing. We should pay attention to the cultivation of nurses' scientific research ability, encourage nurses to actively declare subjects at all levels and participate in nursing scientific research groups, actively carry out scientific research activities, and promote the development of hospital nursing with scientific research. The report pointed out that only 19.5% of the specialist nurses could undertake the tasks after training (Nie, Zhao, & Sun, 2019). The positioning of some specialist nurses remained at the level of theoretical level and operational skills. 29.9% of the nurses had never received retraining after completing the specialist nurse training and obtaining the qualification. Enhancing the cultivation of information literacy of nurses in hospitals of traditional Chinese medicine, increasing the investment of nurses' research time, and effectively transforming the research results into service for clinical practice are the important ways to effectively improve the weak research ability of nurses in hospital of traditional Chinese medicine at present (Li, Wang, Mou, et al., 2019).

TCM nursing education is an effective means to popularize TCM nursing. With the deepening understanding of TCM nursing, it is imperative to improve the overall level of TCM nurses and strengthen the ability of TCM nursing education. With the change in the modern medical model and social health concept, the scope of nursing work has been expanded from simple disease care to comprehensive preventive health care. TCM nursing has its unique advantages in nutrition and diet therapy, emotional regulation, TCM nursing technology, health preservation, rehabilitation and health care, and health promotion and sports, which better meet the development trend of nursing. Therefore, TCM nursing has a broad development space and social needs. Nursing managers should grasp the opportunity in time, strengthen the use of TCM nursing specialists, continuously improve the level of TCM nursing, and exert the characteristics and advantages of TCM nursing to promote the comprehensive and significant development of TCM nursing (Xu, Bai, Song, et al., 2013).

To ensure the full play of the role of specialist nurses, we should set up full-time posts for specialist nurses, further clarify the responsibilities of specialist nurses, deal with the balance of multiple roles of specialist nurses, and promote their functions to be fully played.

2.3 Position Level

There is currently a lack of a unified grading model for specialist nurses. The survey found that most nursing department directors in China prefer to divide the specialist nurses into three grades: national, provincial, and hospital according to the graduation certificate grade (Zhang, Xie, Wei, et al., 2015). This stratification did not form a ladder for the professional development of specialist nurses. Under the

guidance of Benner's energy-level advanced model theory, Changhai Hospital divided the specialist nurses into three levels according to their professional qualifications, specialist skills, and comprehensive qualities, including primary specialist nurses, intermediate specialist nurses, and senior specialist nurses. The specialist nurses at each level can only apply for promotion after passing the strict evaluation completing the evaluation at this level and meeting the access criteria at the next level, thus forming a stepped career promotion model (Wang, Hao, & Zhang, 2019). The First Affiliated Hospital of Henan University of Chinese Medicine divided the visiting staff of the TCM nursing outpatient department into four echelons according to their age, working life, professional title, whether they graduated from TCM college, studied or experienced as a specialist nurse, and implemented the hierarchical advanced teacher-training mode to explore a new path of advanced follow-up personnel training (Peng, Yang, Zhong, et al., 2023). We can set up a research team on specialist nurse management policies, set up a multi-track specialist nurse post-management system at the primary, intermediate and senior levels, deeply analyze the management mechanism and personnel composition characteristics of specialist nurse certification centers in European and American countries, and combine with the current situation of nursing teams in China to set up a specialist nurse advanced management system suitable for China's national conditions from the perspectives of degree education, scientific research and innovation, quality of nursing practice and multi-disciplinary cross-disciplinary collaborative development (Zhang, Lv, Chen, et al., 2022).

2.4 Performance Appraisal

Giving affirmation and encouragement to nurses' contributions and giving appropriate compensation and rewards are helpful to improve nurses' professional benefit and sense of accomplishment (Li, Wang, Mou, et al., 2019). The salary system directly affects the job satisfaction of specialist nurses (Yu, Dave, Yu, et al., 2019). Therefore, linking performance with bonuses and improving salary has become an important means for managers in China and abroad to stimulate the enthusiasm of specialist nurses. However, the specialist nurses are not satisfied with the existing promotion performance system. the research shows that 31.0% and 27.9% of the specialist nurses are very satisfied with the title or the promotion priority of the position, and the performance of the specialist position, respectively. 84.6% of the specialist nurses propose the need to improve the treatment of the specialist nurses (Ding, Wu, Xiao, et al., 2020). The medium and large hospitals affiliated with Southeast University have formulated the performance allocation scheme for nursing staff on performance management of specialist nurses, in which it is stipulated that each nursing consultation person shall have a performance score of 0.25 points, and each case for the development of new technologies and new projects shall have a performance score of 0.5 points. The "specialist nurse assessment form" shall be applied for the assessment of specialist nurses every year. Firstly, the head nurse confirms whether the material is true, and then the head nurse audits, the nursing department evaluation committee comprehensive assessment that specialist nurses are qualified to perform their duties, assessment of qualified specialists nurses to perform their duties every month and performance points 1 ~ 2 points, perform their duties unqualified personnel 1 year will no

longer enjoy the corresponding performance in the performance points, until the performance of their duties again qualified assessment can continue (Feng, Li, Xu, et al., 2020). Research shows that personal income and welfare are the most important incentives (Wang, Jing, Wang, et al., 2021), salary incentive is the most obvious source of job satisfaction, high pay and low return will make specialist nurses have a relative sense of deprivation, and kill the will to work (Wan & Xia, 2023). In terms of remuneration, no matter how much extra incentive, it represents the affirmation and reward given by the hospital to the specialist nurses. The specialist nurses can feel the recognition and encouragement, which is a great promotion for the specialist nurses. Therefore, it is necessary to set up a performance allocation scheme in the position management of TCM specialist nurses.

3. Summary

Specialist nurses of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) have unique advantages and high training value in the fields of chronic disease management, rehabilitation treatment, prevention before illness, prevention of existing diseases, and continuous nursing care. The current situation of "emphasizing training but neglecting use" of specialist nurses in China determines the necessity of post-management. Only by starting from the specific post and taking the core competence of specialist nurses as guidance can the post-training and post-evaluation be unified. Based on the development needs of hospitals, patients, and specialist nurses, the state, hospitals, and specialist nurses have made concerted efforts to form a management system integrating post-employment, duties, performance, and re-education and training. Continuous quality improvement is implemented in every step of the construction of the specialist nurse post-management system, comprehensive evaluation of the post-management plan, and at any time according to the evaluation results to modify and improve the management plan, only in this way can we do a good job in the use and management of specialist nurses in our country, give full play to the positive role of specialist nurses. To promote TCM specialist nurses to play a greater role in the context of "healthy China 2030" and provide a stronger talent guarantee for the development of a healthy China, how to implement the post-management of TCM specialist nurses according to the national conditions of our country needs to be further studied and explored.

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