

Silent Victims in Need of Attention: Nursing Care for Mothers of Children with Down Syndrome, A Step Towards Holistic Nursing

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Abstract

Nurses serve as educators, advocates, and providers of emotional support for mothers in managing the unique health and developmental challenges their children face. From early diagnosis, nursing care can facilitate the mother's understanding of the conditions and their implications, providing vital information that promotes informed decision-making. Nurses can guide mothers by identifying developmental milestones, care needs, and available resources, thereby creating a supportive environment for both the child and the family. It can be said that the mothers of children with Down syndrome should be considered in nursing care programs just as much as the children themselves, and their physical and mental health should not be overlooked. The necessity of nursing care for mothers of children with Down syndrome goes beyond basic medical support. This support includes educational empowerment, emotional resilience, and comprehensive health strategies. By addressing the health complexities and challenges faced by children with Down syndrome and the burdens borne by their mothers, nursing care can create a supportive ecosystem where the needs of the family can also be acknowledged and met. Attending to the needs of mothers in care programs enhances their ability to fulfill the multifaceted responsibilities of raising a child with Down syndrome, leading to better outcomes for both the mothers and their children. Ultimately, recognizing and addressing the diverse needs of mothers through targeted nursing care is key to promoting healthier families.

Key Words: Children with down syndrome, Holistic nursing, Mothers, Nursing care.

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DEAR EDITOR

Caring for a child with Down syndrome (DS) comes with numerous challenges and presents caregivers of these children with various difficulties in different aspects of life. The complexities associated with caring for a child with DS necessitate a strong support system for the mothers of these children, who often bear the primary responsibility for their care. Nursing care is essential in reducing the stress experienced by these mothers and equipping them with the necessary resources to effectively manage their own well-being and that of their child. The complexities of Down syndrome require the adoption of multifaceted nursing care that targets not only the child but also the mother (1). Nurses serve as educators, advocates, and providers of emotional support for mothers in managing the unique health and developmental challenges their children face. From early diagnosis, nursing care can facilitate the mother's understanding of the conditions and their implications, providing vital information that promotes informed decision-making. Nurses can guide mothers by identifying developmental milestones, care needs, and available resources, thereby creating a supportive environment for both the child and the family (2).

The assessment and monitoring of the care needs of children with Down syndrome is essential, as these children are highly susceptible to various health issues such as congenital heart defects, thyroid problems, hearing and vision disorders, and gastrointestinal issues. Therefore, nurses can provide mothers of these children with information about health problems associated with Down syndrome, including the increased likelihood of respiratory infections and the importance of regular medical check-ups, as part of a care and support program (3). This information empowers mothers to take preventive

measures and ensures that these children receive timely therapeutic and care interventions in the event of illness or acute problems, resulting in improved care outcomes for these children. Additionally, nursing interventions that focus on the psychosocial support of these mothers can be extremely beneficial, as they allow for the exploration of the complexities and emotional challenges related to caring for a child with Down syndrome (4).

The results of studies indicate that mothers who care for children with disabilities, including Down syndrome, generally have poorer health status compared to the general population. This highlights the greater importance of nursing care that considers not only the needs of the child but also the health of the mother, reflecting a holistic approach to the nursing care program for these children. By conducting comprehensive assessments that include evaluating the physical, mental, and emotional health of the mother, nurses can develop a comprehensive nursing care plan that better meets the caregiving needs of both the child and the mother (5). These nursing assessments can lead to the early identification of health issues that mothers may face, allowing for prompt intervention before adverse outcomes occur. This program includes examining the effects of chronic stress and its manifestations, such as fatigue, anxiety, or social-emotional problems. Nurses can also facilitate access to support groups and mental health resources designed for these mothers through effective education and guidance, enabling them to find ways to share experiences and develop coping strategies (6). In addition, providing advice on nutrition and physical activity can enhance the physical health of mothers and help improve their overall resilience in facing the challenges of caring for their children. Nurses can also facilitate greater socialization and information exchange by

planning workshops or support groups specifically designed for mothers of children with Down syndrome. These support groups allow mothers to access information related to growth and development education programs, behavioral management techniques, and self-care practices, as well as share their own information with others, ultimately strengthening the self-care abilities of mothers of children with Down syndrome (7).

Ultimately, it can be said that the mothers of children with Down syndrome should be considered in nursing care programs just as much as the children themselves, and their physical and mental health should not be overlooked. The necessity of nursing care for mothers of children with Down syndrome goes beyond basic medical support. This support includes educational empowerment, emotional resilience, and comprehensive health strategies. By addressing the health complexities and challenges faced by children with Down syndrome and the burdens borne by their mothers, nursing care can create a supportive ecosystem where the needs of the family can also be acknowledged and met. Attending to the needs of mothers in care programs enhances their ability to fulfill the multifaceted responsibilities of raising a child with Down syndrome, leading to better outcomes for both the mothers and their children. Ultimately, recognizing and addressing the diverse needs of mothers through targeted nursing care is key to promoting healthier families.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that he has no competing interests to disclose in relation to this paper.

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