Have you thought about Occupational Health Nursing?
An Occupational Health Curriculum for Use in Baccalaureate Nursing Programs

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Relevance to PHN

Care of populations in the home, school, work sites, and community are basic to community and public health nursing.

ACHNE Essentials of Baccalaureate Nursing Education for Entry Level Community/Public Health Nursing, 2009
So, what is an occupational health nurse (OHN), anyway?

- Provides for and delivers health and safety programs and services to workers.
- Focuses on
  - Promotion and restoration of health
  - Prevention of illness and injury
  - Protection from work-related and environmental hazards
  - Improving corporate profitability
What is Occupational Health Nursing?

The specialty practice that focuses on the promotion, prevention, and restoration of health within the context of a safe and healthy environment. It includes the prevention of adverse health effects from occupational and environmental hazards. It provides for and delivers occupational and environmental health and safety programs and services to clients. Occupational and environmental health nursing is an autonomous specialty and nurses make independent nursing judgments in providing health care services (AAOHN, 2004, p. 2).
What positions do OHNs hold?

- Clinician
- Occupational health nurse manager or administrator
- Occupational health services coordinator
- Emergency preparedness and disaster planner
- Corporate director
- Consultant
- Educator & Health Coach
- Researcher
Future of Nursing
Key Recommendations

• Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training.

• Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression.

• (IOM, 2010)
Workforce Trends

• Older, more diverse workforce
• Increasing productivity demands
• Trying to maintain work/life balance
• Rapid pace of social, economic, and workplace change (institute of medicine, 2000)
Occupational Health Nursing Domain

OHN Workforce Trends

• Occupational and environmental health nurses are critical in the delivery of quality health care services to the nation’s workforce.
• Occupational health nurses contribute to profitable businesses and society by reducing employee health costs, disability claims and injuries, while improving absentee rates and maximizing employee productivity (American Association of Occupational Health Nurses, 2009).
• Quality education for occupational health nurses is critical for their success in these roles.
Healthy People 2020

- Several topics and objectives are specifically directed toward workplace health and safety
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses

• The primary association for the largest group of health care professionals serving the workplace

• Provides education, research, public policy and practice resources for occupational and environmental health nurses
NIOSH Traineeships for Occupational Health Nurses

See locations of Centers at http://niosh-erc.org/courses/locator.shtml - NIOSH Education and Research Centers Locator Map
Occupational Health Nursing in the BSN Curriculum

• Ideally, occupational health nursing didactic and clinical would be included in the BSN curriculum

• Fewer than half of undergraduate nursing education programs include occupational health in the curriculum

• There is a lack of qualified faculty to teach this content
Summary

• Need for specially prepared nurses to meet the health needs of workers
• Education system poorly prepared to introduce emerging nurses to the specialty
• Need to develop didactic and clinical learning opportunities for BSN students in the C/PH course.
Goal

Enhance interest among undergraduate nursing students in occupational health nursing as a career opportunity
Approach

Develop and distribute teaching resources regarding occupational health nursing for C/PH nurse educators

1. Curriculum development
2. Curriculum testing
3. Curriculum modification
4. Distribution of curricular resources
Phase 1. Curriculum Development

- Development of an initial draft document
- Review by expert panel
- Early testing
- Revision
Curriculum Structure

- Instructor guide
- Sample student guide
- Pretest
- Pre-class learning activity
- Classroom/Seminar guide
- Posttest
Curricular Features

• Variety of teaching-learning strategies
• Time-limited
• Nurse narratives
• Flexible to a variety of teaching-learning situations
• Accessible
Phase 2. Curriculum Field Testing

• Recruitment of a panel of C/PHN educators

• In advance of testing
  – Distribution of curriculum
  – Orientation to the resources

• Following testing
  – Educator satisfaction
  – Student satisfaction
Phase 3. Curriculum Modification

- In response to results of educator and student satisfaction results (pending)
Phase 4. Distribution of Curricular Resources

- AAOHN Web page
- ACHNE
- Others to be developed
We sometimes had worker injuries at the plant. I not only managed the injuries that occurred, but I also implemented a program to investigate the injuries. Information from this program helped us to understand how to make changes in the work environment to make it safer for workers, and reduced our injury rate.
Future Directions

• Development of the OHN student clinical practicum
  – Suggestions for developing the business case for serving as a clinical site
  – Sample MOU, hold harmless agreement
  – Guidelines for preceptors
  – Sample student projects & activities
  – Preceptor networking & consultation site
  – Suggestions for securing equipment & supplies for students