

EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON NURSING STANDARDS

A Council of Europe agreement has recently been reached on common European standards in nurse training. The main objective, by making provision for high level qualifications for nurses, is to facilitate their finding employment in the eighteen member States.¹

The agreement deals in detail with the educational level required of nursing school candidates, the duration and content of curricula, organizational standards in nursing schools and diplomas. The agreement refers specifically to general nursing practitioners, both male and female, whose duties are defined as follows:

To provide competent nursing care to people requiring it, bearing in mind the physical, emotional and intellectual needs of patients whether in hospital, at home, in school or place of work, etc.

To observe situations or physical and emotional conditions having appreciable effect on health, and to communicate their observations to other members of the medical team.

To train and assist the requisite auxiliary personnel to fulfil the needs of the nursing service in any health institution.

Applicants for admission to nursing schools should have had at least ten years schooling, evidenced by a school certificate or the passing of an entrance examination.

Student nurses should have at least 4,600 hours of instruction in nursing. Theoretical and technical courses in nursing care and fundamental science should consist of at least one-third of this programme. Practical clinical courses should be for at least half that time. Both should cover every aspect to the nurse's functions,

¹ See *L'Hôpital à Paris*, Paris, 1968, No 49, from which the information in this article is extracted.

including sickness prevention, medical education, feeding and dieting, first-aid, blood transfusion theory, the administration and effect of medicines, and rehabilitation.

Practical courses, to be of genuine educational value shall be in approved departments having premises, equipment and personnel of all kinds adequate to provide students with supervised initiation in professional duties.

Courses in nursing schools should be given by qualified teachers: doctors, nurses and specialists in various fields. The staff of each school should include at least one qualified female nurse having completed at least one year's training before qualifying as a teacher of nursing.