

# **Role of Vietnamese nurses in meeting the future increasing health care needs of the elderly**

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# Aging population & nursing workforce

## Population & the elderly

Pop 96.2 mill;  
ranks 3rd in Southeast Asia  
& 15th in the world

Elderly >60yr: 12% (2017);  
reach 20%(2038); top 10  
countries fastest ageing

68% live in rural areas;  
72.3% live with  
their descendants

Shortages of  
human  
resources to  
care for the  
elderly are at  
alarming  
stage

## Nursing & caregiver workforce

No of Nurse: 132,000  
Nurse/population = 1 / 900

<5% nurses for elder care;  
Nurses specialized in  
geriatric are not trained

Nurses mainly work in  
urban hospitals;  
Caregivers are not trained

# Role of nurses in elder care



- **A world without nurses is almost impossible to imagine:** in our lives, every person need a nurse. With an extremely significant number of 32 million nurses across the planet, they provide the largest volume of services, the most direct & frequent care, the first to receive patients and the last to see the patients off the health care facilities
- **The elderly need nursing care most:** they have multifaceted needs and are affected in unique ways by the combined effects of the ageing process & the disease process, thus quality of care service for elderly should become the top priority for all governments.
- **Caring for the elderly is the work of heart:** It requires the nurses not only provide properly care but also with a great responsibility, be patient, be delicate and very hard work.

# Role of nurses in elder care?



*Various roles of nurses that can contribute to the optimum health and overall wellbeing of the older people. The essential roles includes:*

1. Care service provider
2. Care restorer
3. Care educator
4. Care communicator
5. Medical supporter



# Highlighted contributions of nurses to improve health for elderly includes:

*Health services provided by nurses is one of the pillars of health system services for elderly. The areas nurses in Vietnam contributing to improve elderly's health includes:*

- **Assist the elderly to achieve optimal level of independence:** By properly care for the elderly on personal hygiene, bathing, dressing, moving, transporting, eating and performing rehabilitation activities, the geriatric nurses greatly help contributing to improve quality of life & achieving independence as much as possible for the elderly.
- **Assist the elderly to reduce risk for diseases and possibly lessen the need for medical treatment:** By educating individuals, groups & family members on spiritual & emotional care, self care, self medication, nutrition, stress management, early detection of health problems, the nurses can help reducing risks for certain diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, heart attack, stroke...
- **Collaborate with medical doctors & care team to ensure quality & safety treatment for elderly patients:** elderly patients are vulnerable to health problems, & safety issues; A range of care activities provided by nurses such as, drug administering, monitoring health problems, preventing bedsores, fall & accidents will directly improve quality of health services.



# What are the pluses & minuses of nurses working cross borders

## Numbers of medical & nursing personnel cross borders

- ❑ **1980s – 2010:** > 7000 doctors and nurses worked in African countries
- ❑ **2014 – present:** 892 nurses enter to Japan (EPA); 101 nurses applied nursing jobs & 71 (70%) passed exams and are working; 791 nurses applied care workers & 182 (23%) passed Japan's national board examination. Currently, 622 are working as care workers
- ❑ **2015 to present:** 320 nurses enter Germany; 195 completed their training and working; 125 are under training.

## Pluses

- ✓ **Personal:** obtained jobs, higher income, become skilled nurse or skilled care worker, good foreign language, more job opportunities when returning home.
- ✓ **Country:** reduce unemployment, increased GDP, have additional groups of skilled nurses & Caregivers.

## Minuses

- ✓ **Personal:** need more invest on language education, away from family, some nurses felt degraded to work as caregivers.
- ✓ **Country:** invest in domestic training but not use effectively; currently, mechanism to utilize skilled nurses/caregivers after returning homes has yet in place. However, there is not negative effect on country health system because the number of candidates work cross borders are rather small.

To say in short: gain more than lose

# What is needed for nurses to respond effectively to the elderly care needs?

**Suggestion 1.** National health policy & health plan ensure adequate number of geriatric skilled nurses & caregivers to provide health services in all health care & community settings including: hospitals, nursing homes, social welfare centers, health clinics and families.

**Suggestion 2.** To effectively responding to the shortage of nursing personnel globally, regional collaboration on standardized education for geriatric nurses & caregivers and mutual recognition among the Asian member states are needed to facilitate the movement cross border of nurses and caregivers.



# What is needed for nurses to respond effectively to the elderly care needs

**Suggestion 3:** Education on elderly care for general nurses, geriatric nurse specialists, caregivers, family care members & key local staff is a priority agenda for all member states to meet multifaceted care needs of the elderly

## **Nurse & Geriatric Nursing Specialists**

- ✓ Extended elderly care contents into the current curriculum for general nurses
- ✓ Implementing the specialized education for geriatric nurses

## **Family members & Local staff**

- ✓ Providing short training courses for local staff & family members on assisting ADL for elder people
- ✓ Passing knowledge & skill care on elderly care to other family members

## **Professional Care Givers**

- ✓ Caregiver is as important as nurses in the area of elderly care
- ✓ Regional guidelines on basic competency for caregivers need to be standardized and recommended for use by members states.





A small, rectangular wooden tag is pinned to a plant with a black string. The tag has the words "Thank you!" written in a black, cursive script. The plant has bright green, serrated leaves. The background is a soft-focus, light-colored surface, possibly sand or a light-colored wall.

Thank  
you!