

SPACE NURSING: RAPIDLY EMERGING NURSING SPECIALTY

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ABSTRACT

Space nursing is the nursing specialty that studies how space travel impacts human response patterns. Similar to space medicine, the specialty also contributes to knowledge about nursing care of earthbound patients. Since the beginning of commercial aviation in the 1920s, nurses have been part of aviation and flight. In 1958, President Eisenhower signed the National Aeronautics and Space Act to form NASA. Part of this act was to recruit nurses to work closely with medical teams to determine the fitness of astronauts for space exploration. Nurses helped observe the effects of spaceflight on astronauts upon their return from missions

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INTRODUCTION

Objectives

1. The main objective of this article is to bring awareness about space nursing.
2. To know regarding role & responsibility of space nurse.
3. To focus in Indian scenario with regard to space nursing.

Since the beginning of commercial aviation in the 1920s, nurses have been part of aviation and flight. In 1958, President Eisenhower signed the National Aeronautics and Space Act to form NASA. Part of this act was to recruit nurses to work closely with medical teams to determine the fitness of astronauts for space exploration. Nurses helped observe the effects of spaceflight on astronauts upon their return from missions.³ Lt Dolores O'Hara and Lt Shirley Senath were the first nurses assigned to work with the first seven Project Mercury astronauts. They worked to develop emergency hospital kits for the astronauts. These nurses had to ensure that the astronauts could manage casualties, plan for disaster control, and provide first aid in the event of an emergency.

In 1962, NASA announced the Space Nursing Program which required applicants to have a previous bachelor's degree in nursing⁴.

Meaning/Definition

Space nursing is the nursing specialty that studies how space travel impacts human response patterns. Similar to space medicine, the specialty also contributes to knowledge about nursing care of earthbound patients.¹



Diagram: 01, Nurse communicating and caring for astronaut

What Is A Space Nurse?

- The majority of aerospace nurses provide critical and emergency care during transport for patients who are air evacuated.
- These nurses are trained to deal with the unique challenges of patient care in an unstable circumstances with limited resources.

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- On the space front, there are also nurses who are involved in the care of astronauts prior to launch, and who are on standby when they touch down.
- They perform pre- and post-launch assessments
- Provide instructions to astronauts for how to handle medical emergencies while in flight².

How to Become a NASA Nurse

- To become Space Nurse one should be holding a bachelors/Master's degree with Registered in any country nursing council/university/college.
- Initially considered a military flight nurse with the Air Force in order to break in since they deal with pilots and high-tech flight.
- Good health and have enough alertness to assess, care for the sudden incidences.

Space Nursing Society



The society was established in 1991 and has members from around the world including Australia, Canada, Czech republic, England, Germany, Greece, Scotland and the United States.

In 1991, the Space Nursing Society was founded by Linda Plush with the help of Dr. Martha Rogers. It is based on Rogers' Theory, the Science of unitary human beings.

The Space Nursing Society is an international space advocacy organization devoted to space nursing and space exploration by registered nurses. The society is an affiliated, non-profit with the Society. The society serves as a forum for the discussion and study of issues related to nursing in space and the impact of these studies on nursing on Earth.^{5,6}

Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), India

Is the lead Centre of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) under the Department of Space (DOS), Government of India. The Centre is named in fond memory of Dr Vikram A Sarabhai, the great visionary and the father of Indian Space Programme. VSSC pioneers in rocket research and launch vehicle projects of ISRO.

VSSC had a small beginning at Thumba, a coastal village at Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of Kerala on the south west coast of India, in 1962⁷.

Nurses also recruited in this prestigious center for taking care of space scientists / astronaut's and their families too. Though in India there is not enough scope for space nursing at present situation. But Military Nursing Service is a prominent and highly honored field for the nurses to serve.

CONCLUSION

Still space nursing specialty have to improve a lot of skills which is through evidence based nursing practice to assist space scientist to conduct series of research to help entire mankind to achieve highest level of life care and living. Nurses also need to accompany space scientists/astronauts in future years for advance research by developed countries. With regard to this space nursing should be advanced and highly demandable field of nursing. And also nurses should undergo special training and separate qualification.

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