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TITLE PAGE

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King’s middle-range theory of Goal Attainment – a feasible framework for nursing

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ABSTRACT

Among many nursing theories about nurse–patient interactions, one of the most important of which is Imogene King’s Theory of Goal Attainment.

Aim: The aim of this study was to assess and analyze the use of King’s theory in nursing education, research and practice. No studies on practical use of the King’s Theory of Goal Attainment have been found in Kazakhstan.

Methods: a theoretical-reflective essay, conducted in a dialectical process between relevant literature, theoretical framework and reflection.

Results: King’s Theory of Goal Attainment has been successfully employed in various activities such as nursing education, clinical nursing settings, nursing management, quality improvement projects and nursing research. Goal achievement theory presupposes that patients and nurses jointly define and achieve goals through the interaction to provide patient-oriented nursing care and has been demonstrated to be effective.

Conclusions: Summarizing the wide international experience in the implementation and application of the theory, the Kazakhstani educational organizations would need to change nursing curriculums for certain degree, enhance academic faculty with Msc and PhD in Nursing, and increasing resources (textbooks, journals, databases, etc.), and investing into nursing science.

Keywords: Imogene King’s theory, Goal attainment theory, Nurse-patient relationships, Nursing theory.

Кингтің орта деңгейдегі мақсаттарға жету теориясы - мейіргер ісі үшін нақты мүмкіндіктер

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Абстракт

Мейіргер мен пациенттің қарым-қатынасы туралы көптеген мейіргерлік теориялардың ішінде ең маңыздыларының бірі Имоджен Кингтің мақсатқа жету теориясы болып табылады.

Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты - Кинг теориясын мейіргер ісі бойынша білім беруде, ғылымда және тәжірибеде қолдануды бағалау және талдау. Қазақстанда Кинг теориясының практикалық қолданылуына арналған зерттеулер табылған жоқ.

Әдіс-тәсілдері: тиісті әдебиеттерді өңдеумен қатар, теориялық негіздер мен ой толғау процесін қолдану арқылы жүзеге асырылған теориялық-рефлексиялық эссе.

Нәтижелері: Кингтің мақсатқа жету теориясы мейіргерлік білім, клиникалық мейіргерлік жағдайлар, менеджмент, сапаны жақсарту жобалары, сонымен қатар мейіргерлік зерттеулер сияқты әртүрлі салаларда сәтті қолданылған болатын. Мақсатқа жету теориясының тиімділігі ретінде оның пациентке бағытталған мейіргерлік күтім барысындағы науқастар мен мейіргерлердің өзара әрекеттесуі арқылы мақсаттарды бірлесіп анықтап, оларды жүзеге асыру мүмкіндігі пайымдалады.

Қорытынды: Теорияны енгізу мен қолданудың мол халықаралық тәжірибесін қорытындылай келе, қазақстандық білім беру мекемелерінде мейіргер ісі бойынша оқу бағдарламасын әлемдік деңгейге дейін жетілдіріп, мейіргер ісі мамандығы бойынша магистр және Ph.D. дәрежелері бар профессорлық-оқытушылар құрамының кәсіби қабілетін нығайтып, сондай-ақ ресурстарды (оқулықтар, журналдар, деректер базалары және т.б.) ұлғайта отырып, мейіргер ісі ғылымына инвестициялауды арттыру қажет.

Түйін сөздер: Имоджен Кинг теориясы, мақсатқа жету теориясы, мейіргерлік мен науқас қарым-қатынасы, мейіргерлік теориясы.

Теория среднего уровня Кинг по достижению цели - реальные возможности для сестринского дела

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Абстракт

Среди множества сестринских теорий о взаимодействии медсестры и пациента, одной из наиболее важных является теория достижения цели Имоджен Кинг.

Целью этого исследования было оценить и проанализировать использование теории Кинг в сестринском образовании, науке и практике. Исследования по практическому применению теории Кинг в Казахстане не обнаружены.

Методы: теоретико-рефлексивное эссе, проводимое в процессе обработки соответствующей литературы, теоретических основ и размышлений. **Результаты:** Теория достижения цели Кинг успешно применялась в различных сферах деятельности, таких как обучение медсестер, клинические сестринские ситуации по уходу, менеджмент, проекты улучшения качества и исследования медсестер. Теория предполагает, что пациенты и медсестры совместно определяют и достигают целей посредством взаимодействия по оказанию медсестринской помощи, ориентированной на пациента, и демонстрирует свою эффективность. **Выводы:** Обобщая обширный международный опыт внедрения и применения теории, казахстанским образовательным

организациям необходимо будет усовершенствовать учебные программы для медсестер до международного уровня, усилить преподавательский состав со степенью магистра и доктора философии в сестринском деле, а также увеличить ресурсы (учебники, журналы, базы данных и т.д.) и инвестирование в сестринскую науку.

Ключевые слова: теория Имоджен Кинг, теория достижения цели, отношения медсестры и пациента, сестринская теория.

Relevance and goal

Nursing as a science and profession has focus on four phenomena, i.e. the nursing metaparadigm: the human as a whole being, the environment, the health, and the nursing/caring. Nursing science is defined as a coherent body of knowledge with theoretical conceptualizations and explanations of the subject of inquiry, and the formal methodological processes of attaining and testing knowledge in a discipline [1]. Nursing can be defined also as a noun: as “a basic science whose phenomenon of concern is unitary human beings in mutual process with their environments” [2, page 34] or as a verb: “the actions taken by nurses on behalf of or in conjunction with the person, and the goals or outcomes of nursing actions” [3, p. 5]). In order to provide the best possible nursing care to individuals in different contexts, life situations and health challenges, both research evidence and nursing theories are to be implemented into nursing processes. In this paper, a middle-range theory of Imogene King is described and reflected in relation to nursing care, patient education, nursing education, leadership and quality improvement.

King’s middle-range theory of goal attainment

King defined nursing as verb: “ a process of action, reaction and interaction by which nurse and client share information about their perception in a nursing situation” [4, p. 2]. She highlighted the definition of a theory as “a set of concepts, that, when defined, are interrelated and observable in the world of nursing practice” and that the theory serves to build a “scientific knowledge for nursing” [5, p. 24]. She started to develop her theory already on 1960’s, from the base of review of literature, discussions with colleague scientists and nurses, two empirical studies and a critical reflection on the information gathered [6] and The von Bertalanffy General Systems Model [7]. In other words, King’s philosophical worldview consisted in an interactional and a system approach in the development of the conceptual framework. Years after, while revising her previously published book “Toward a Theory for Nursing: General Concepts of Human Behavior”, she amplified the

goal attainment in her theory (c.f. = *see for* [8]), for her philosophy was based on Greek philosophy and the Aristotelian-Thomist perspective, according to which people strive for the ultimate goal of happiness [9].

The main concepts of King's theory of goal attainment are the personal, interpersonal, and social systems. She believed that her theory was different compared to other because it considered the interaction of humans in these various types of systems, i.e. (= *it is*) environments [5]. King provided an example of a personal system as a perspective of an individual (f.eg. = *for example* a patient or a nurse) with life history, experiences and needs. Interpersonal systems, then, are formed when two or more individuals interact, forming dyads (such as a patient and a nurse, or another near partnership), triads (such as a parents and a child) and so on. According to King, social systems are religious, educational, and health care systems [9]. Her theory demonstrates one approach to study systems as a whole, but not isolated - all the systems are in constant interaction.

For each of the three systems there is a set of concepts that provides a method for nurses to organize and build their knowledge, skills and values for better nursing practice [9]. Below, the Table 1 (adapted from [10]) shows the concepts of each of the systems. In the early version of her theory King used ten major concepts from the personal and interpersonal systems to support the theory of goal attainment (Table 1, bold font). She stated that nurses use purposeful transactions (i.e. perception, verbal and nonverbal communication and interaction) with patients that lead to mutual identification [6, 11] of concerns, problems influenced by stressors, time and space; a goal setting; exploration of means and roles to reach the goal; and interactions with the three systems related to that goal attainment which is health – defined as ability to function in social roles [6]. In her theory, King gives detailed information about the nursing process, which can be seen both as a method and a theory. The steps of the nursing process are: assessment, nursing diagnosis, planning, implementations, and evaluation. King demonstrated linkages between the theory of goal attainment and the traditional nursing process as shown in Table 2 (adopted from [12]).

Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here

As the central focal point of the personal system is an individual or a person, the personal systems are influenced by many

variables such as age, habits, social status, place and the role in the family, etc. (= *and so on*). Furthermore, King mentions resources which range from the tangible (money, food, etc.) to intangible resources, which may include self-esteem, social support, and others. These resources become part of the system as inputs through interaction with the environment [9]. The theory defines the metaparadigm concept of humans as social, sentient, rational, reacting, controlling, purposeful, action oriented, and time oriented beings in their behavior [7], i.e. the personal system recognizes the holistic individual and their value (Sitzman 2015). The interpersonal system contemplates the metaparadigm concept of health through recognizing the health as a fluid concept to which the individual must adapt to attain, and all of King's three systems envisage the environment concept by acknowledging the impact of the concept of self, the relationships of the individual as well as the circumstances that comprise environment as concepts that influence the holistic perspective [13].

As in modern person-centered care, the King's goal attainment theory places the patient at the center focus with the nurse facilitating and supporting people in maintaining and caring for themselves. King identified transaction as the main focal point of the theory because the patient stands as an active participant in goal setting and accomplishing the health [11]. Further, she stated that the goal of a nurse is to help individuals to maintain their health so they can function in their roles. If the strengthening, maintaining and restoring the patient's health is difficult to achieve, then nurses ensure the individuals die with dignity [7, p. 175]. King viewed the traditional nursing process as a system of interrelated actions—the method by which nursing is practiced. Along with that comes critical thinking. The critical thinking process emphasizes the intellectual skills of apprehension, judgment, and reasoning and provides the rationale for actions taken by the nurse. At the beginning of the nursing process, when meeting, communicating and interacting with patient, nurse should base of the questions like:

- What are the patient's perceptions of the situation?
- What are my perceptions of the situation?
- What other information do I need to assist this patient to achieve health?
- What does this information mean to the situation?
- What conclusion (judgment) does the patient make?
- What conclusions (judgments) do I make?

This critical thinking process will end by proper patient assessment, and so do other steps of nursing process might apply critical thinking mode. In this process the nurses are accountable to encourage the interaction with the patient. Goals cannot be mutually achieved unless the nurse and the patient share their perceptions, feelings, values, and conclusions [5]. When the relationships are established based on mutual respect and trust, the nurses can successfully achieve the goal of helping patients in maintaining their health. The key here is the collaborative decision-making process, where the nurse and the patient communicate information, leads to goal attainment. However, King believed that perceptions of the nurse and client influence the interaction process; goals, needs, and values of the nurse and client impact the interaction process; individuals have a right to knowledge about themselves; individuals have a right to participate in decisions that influence their lives, health, and community services; individuals have a right to accept or reject care; and goals of health professionals and goals of recipients of health care may be incongruent [7]. King doesn't reflect how this possible value conflict is to be tangled, but one can assume that the social systems (religious, educational and health care, [9]) have an major impetus on these situations.

Research evidence on usefulness of King's theory in nursing care

As an interaction is a component of every nursing contact and communication process, the theory of goal attainment is useful in every nursing situation [14]. King's theory of goal attainment has been successfully applied in different fields of nursing care such as in nursing education, different clinical nursing practices, nursing leadership, quality improvement projects and nursing research.

King's early publications have been used as the foundation for the nursing curriculum development in many universities. Her theory of goal attainment was applied as a framework for the baccalaureate program at the Ohio State University School of Nursing [15]. Similarly, in Japan, the theory was used to organize nursing education and in more recent years, in nursing education programs in Sweden, Portugal, Canada [16]. According to Frey et al. [16], nursing educators from Japan and Sweden referred to cultural relevance of King's theory for nursing education in their schools as major reason for its selection: King viewed the human personal values such as motivations, desires, and needs as normative and directly influenced by culture. Therefore, the health goals of one

person might be vastly different to another individual of diverse cultures or even those from within the same cultural group [10]. Further, [17] claim that the approach of the theory in continuing nursing education is beneficial to participating nurses, patients, and to the advancement of the nursing practice.

Since 1980's King's theory has also been useful for the nursing practice in multiple settings and situations. Having in-depth analysis of King's theory of goal attainment, it was clear and evident that the theory can be applied in an emergency room setting [18]. In a study [19] King's theory of goal attainment provided a useful structure for the investigation by using a clinical pathway for the care of patients undergoing transurethral resection of prostate. Within the study it was found out that King's theory gave direction for nursing practice through emphasizing the processes of multidisciplinary cooperation, communication, interaction, transaction and use of critical thinking. Nurses who interact with other systems will influence the health outcomes of the patients/families during their hospital stay and beyond discharge, with the result that the patient becomes more accountable for own health. A conceptual model and theory are applicable and helpful in tuberculosis treatment, which might be complex and lead the patients to abandon treatment [20]. The study [21] successfully verified the feasibility of the theory of goal attainment used in nursing interventions for improvement care for people with diabetes and better adherence to treatment. In addition, a goal-oriented nursing record (GONR) has been developed by King herself from the base of her theory of goal attainment [5]. This approach helps nursing specialists to collect data, identify problems and define nursing diagnosis, outline the goals, implement nursing plans and evaluate have they attained the goal or not.

In nursing leadership and quality improvement projects, researchers [22] used the King's theory to provide a comprehensive analysis of managerial coaching in health care organizations to identify what skills and attributes were necessary to establish effective managerial coaching relationships with nursing staff. Another settings, where the King's theory has been used in line with other models, are quality improvement projects as it's demonstrated by means of changing the traditional night shift reports to the bedside reporting, so the patients could be involved in care planning [23]. There are plenty of studies confirming the applicability of the theory of goal attainment in in development of clinical pathways, nursing informatics, pediatric fall

prevention, and others [24]. It could be used also, for example, in quality improvement project such as improving a level of confidence in nursing skills of providing the pediatric intravenous chemotherapy. First, the team (in the role of interpersonal system) is formed of individuals who comes together in order to take action and achieve the goal. Team members would benefit if they use the conceptual framework and goal attainment theory in achieving the objectives. Assessment: low percentage of the confidence in skills of pediatric intravenous chemotherapy. Nursing diagnosis: low level of the confidence due to insufficient training and standard compliance monitoring. Planning will include set of actions followed by an implementation of systematic education system throughout the pediatric oncologic units. Finally, goes evaluation of the actions made and testing. If the expected outcome not attained, the nurses must brainstorm the factors that prevented the goal achievement.

Also researches have been based on use of King's theory of goal attainment in diverse of research issues. Implementation of nursing theories promotes more knowledge for better actions in nursing, and interaction of the "Family Health Strategy" study participants and patients brought to effective cooperation in decision-making the health goal [25]. King's theory has been used in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Pakistan, Portugal, and Sweden, also in various university nursing schools in the United States, and have provided a foundation for many research studies [7]. In addition, many new middle-range theories have been created and developed applying the King's theory, including Frey's theory of families, children, and chronic illness; Killeen's theory of patient satisfaction with professional nursing care; Sieloff's theory of work team/group power empowerment within organizations; Wicks' theory of family health, Doornbos' theory of family health; and the advance directive decision-making model of Goodwin, Kiehl, and Peterson. Fairfax developed a theory of quality of life of stroke survivors. Nwinee used King's work to develop the Nwinee Socio-Behavioral Self-Care Management Nurse Model [5]. In terms of the personal system, Brooks and Thomas (1997) derived a theory of perceptual awareness based on judgement and action concepts [7].

Discussion and conclusions

According to many authors, the long standing theory of goal attainment is still very much practical and applicable across a variety

of nursing environments, one might even venture to say all of them, and has been rather adapted to changing times by amending the additional supporting definitions and concepts [8].

Considering such an impact made by the King's theory of goal attainment in many foreign countries, we have no doubts that also in Kazakhstan it will find its respectful place. First, our national educational organizations would need to change nursing curriculums for certain degree to develop up to the international level. In order to enhance Kazakhstani nursing science and better educational programs, the nursing theories might be one of the core majors. Moreover, we have to think of ensuring the academic libraries with proper and sophisticated textbooks and other scientific literature, as well as provide more access to the databases, so our nursing students and faculty might be empowered enough. One of the challenges for our state policy-makers and decision-makers would be an issue of investing sufficient amount for the development of nursing science. Secondly, our country needs new academic staff that would fill the niche of faculty members of the level of MSc and PhDs in nursing. We need to foresee the status of the national nursing schools, which should be independent of but in intense collaboration with medical schools. Thirdly, through enhanced nursing education on basic and advanced level and systematic nursing research activities, King's theory could be easily applied in the nursing care, nursing management and/or leadership activities like changes management, quality improvement projects, and in other settings, where on top of aforementioned nurses can improve their own skills of interaction and communication with the patients.

To conclude, it is obvious that Imogene King contributed to the enhancement of nursing knowledge via development of middle-range theory of goal attainment. There are more than enough research evidence and practical implications which can prove the utilization and applicability of the King's theory of goal attainment. Encouraging the main focus on the cooperation of both nurse and the patient, goal achievement and outcomes, it had influenced dramatically the nursing practice, science and education. However, it would be important to explore how the social system of King's theory (organization, authority, power, status, control, decision-making) affects this cooperation between the patient and the nurse in situations when goals of patient and goals of health care professionals may be incongruent.

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Table 1. Systems of King's Goal attainment theory

PERSONAL	INTERPERSONAL	SOCIAL
Perception	Interaction	Organization
Self	Communication	Authority
Growth & development	Transaction	Power
Body image	Role	Control
Time	Stress	Status
Personal space	Coping	Decision-making

Table 2. The traditional nursing process and the King's theory of goal attainment

Nursing Process as Method	Nursing Process as Theory
A system of interrelated actions	A system of interrelated concepts
Assess	Perception of nurse and client
Communication of nurse and client	Interaction of nurse and client
Plan	Decision making about goals
	Agree to means to attain goals
Implement	Transactions made
Evaluate	Goal attained (if not, why not?)

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