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Diagnostic Reasoning

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Diagnostic Reasoning

Diagnosis is an essential aspect of healthcare, and it helps a patient know their health status. Without a diagnosis, Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN) would not know why patients feel the way they feel, and they would not know which treatment or interventions they would give to the patient to help ease their ailing. When a diagnosis is provided by an APRN accurately and in a timely manner, patients have the opportunity of receiving an effective health outcome. This is because the decision made from the diagnosis of the patient's condition will determine the effective intervention or treatment that will benefit the patient.

As taught in class, diagnosis follows a diagnostic process that determines the treatment or intervention the patient needs for a positive health outcome. Using the diagnostic method has helped me make accurate diagnoses and decisions regarding the patient's conditions who have benefitted. The process includes the patient's experience of health problems; then, the patient seeks healthcare services to determine their condition. Thirdly, an APRN takes down the patient's history from when they started feeling the symptoms and how they were and currently feeling. That includes gathering information, integrating and interpreting the information, and concluding on a diagnosis that makes sense and goes hand in hand with the signs and symptoms of what the patient has described. Also, conducting physical exams are included in the diagnostic process to determine any underlying conditions the patient might have that might be affecting their health (Balogh et al., 2015).

My experience helped me to differentiate between single potential diagnoses and differential diagnoses. As a healthcare professional, more than one diagnosis is considered when diagnosing patients with specific symptoms. However, for the patient to clearly understand their condition, the differential diagnoses are narrowed down to the most probable conditions

according to the patient's dominant symptoms. Hence, after refining the diagnosis, a single diagnosis of the patient's condition is produced. For example, if a patient was suffering from specific symptoms such as chronic fatigue and mild chest pain, which lasted 5 minutes or less, it sometimes spreads to his left arm before the pain subsides. Therefore, the patient's differential diagnosis is hypercholesterolemia and hyperlipidemia since it is related to chest pains and increased levels of lipoproteins or cholesterol in the blood.

However, for a more specific diagnosis, healthcare professionals such as the APRN's should do more diagnostic thinking and consider which diagnosis best suits the patient's symptoms. Implementing diagnostic reasoning as an APRN has helped me to take a good clinical history of patients and performing good physical examinations, which have helped in narrowing down more than one diagnostic probabilities (differential diagnosis). It has also helped me learn what the patient is going through than being fixated on diagnostic testing. This has helped me develop specific diagnostic skills such as active listening to the patient and what is going on with them, enabling the patient to trust me and open up about particular problems they have been going through with their bodies, and trusting my ability to diagnose the patient with the accurate diagnosis.

Using diagnostic reasoning, an adequate physical examination, and a significant clinical history taking will determine a single diagnosis related to the patient's symptoms. However, there is a need for diagnostic testing since it will confirm our initial diagnosis to avoid false diagnoses and clinical mistakes. A study done to determine the use of diagnostic reasoning skills confirmed that APRN's need more educational training on how to trust their diagnostic intuition that will enhance their competency in providing timely and accurate diagnosis and intervention (Lee et al., 2016).

References

- Balogh, E. P., Miller, B. T., & Ball, J. R. (2015). Improving diagnosis in health care. Chapter 2: The Diagnostic Process.
- Lee, J., Lee, Y. J., Bae, J., & Seo, M. (2016). Registered nurses' clinical reasoning skills and reasoning process: a think-aloud study. *Nurse education today*, 46, 75-80.

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