Should surrogacy care be included in nursing educational programs?

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Introduction

Nursing programs often expect nurses to be in a position to observe rules, values, ethics, and responsibility.

It is therefore important for members of the nursing profession to work collaboratively to align their education with the primary care needs of the patients.

Surrogate mothers play a critical role in aiding reproduction.

Despite the growth in the use of surrogate mothers both in the U.S. and globally, very few nursing education programs provide adequate education on this topic.

The inclusion of surrogacy in the nursing education curriculum is a key consideration identified as a necessity to the current generation.

There is a growing demand for surrogacy services and that in itself provides a need for proper nursing education that encompasses surrogate mothers.

Methods

Review of the Literature

Inclusion Criteria

• Peer-reviewed articles and books
• Published within the past 12 years
• Published between 2006–2018

Databases searched were: CINAHL complete, Medline and Keywords used: surrogacy, gestational carrier, surrogate mothers, and nursing.

12 sources were used in the analysis.

Results

The American Association of College of Nurses (AACN) curriculum does not contain surrogacy educational requirements despite the steady rise in the practice. A majority of midwifery nursing students have little or no interest concerning the care of surrogate mothers.

Due to increase of LGBTQ relationships, chronic diseases that could impact pregnancy, and the fact that 12% women aged 15 to 44 in the US have issues with carrying a pregnancy to term or getting pregnant, the number of surrogate births are on the rise.

Surrogate mothers and intended parents both take an emotional risk which further explains the need for a comprehensive educational program to address various issues that may rise during the birthing process.

In a review of four nursing maternity textbooks, less than one page was focused on care of surrogate mothers.

Background

Surrogacy becomes an ideal way to help address birth defects and complications that may affect women.

There are two main types of surrogacies: Traditional and gestational surrogacy. The gestational carrier bears no genetic connection with the child; traditional surrogacy framework is that in which the surrogate becomes pregnant with her own eggs and hands over the child after a successful delivery.

Many persons still consider surrogacy as an unethical means of delivery. Such mindset should not be permitted to influence the medical field.

A number of the nursing school programs and nursing students have their focus firmly laid on passing exams.

Members of the nursing faculty should consider the adoption of a curriculum and experiences that target surrogate mothers.

Conclusions

The need and demand for healthcare services are increasingly divergent.

The quantitative study reveals gaps and reasons why there is an urgent need to consider inclusion of surrogacy care under the nursing curriculum.

Historically, nursing education has evolved by adding content affecting society such as geriatrics and end of life care.

Nursing education should continue to evolve alongside societal changes in order to provide holistic care to our growing and diverse population.

References

• The case for same-sex marriage, Gallup 2016.

Dr. Susan Lowey
Ms. Barbara Thompson
Dr. Algernon Kelley
Ms. Helen Cheves
CSTEP/McNair Program

Source: American Society for Reproductive Medicine

According to the American Society for Reproductive medicine (2015), 2,807 babies were birthed through surrogate mothers as compared to 738 in 2004.