

Educational involvement of nursing staff in a medical charity mission

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Introduction

In September 2015 and March 2016 a combined team of nurses and doctors from our institution took part in the humanitarian project of the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic called MEDEVAC; in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Together with other members of the team, we were asked to perform nursing supervision at the Department of Cardiac Surgery of the Calmette Hospital, where a series of paediatric surgical open heart procedures were performed. The main task was to educate local staff and possibly eliminate nursing mistakes which could potentially lead to patient's harm or to prolong the stay in the postoperative unit.

Methods

The main method used was education and supervision in oral form in English followed by demonstration. The education occurred mainly in the early postoperative period and was related to proper application of intravenous drugs, precise measurement of physiological functions, regular toilet of a respiratory tract and serving nutrition to patients. We preferred to use local material resources but displayed also materials imported from the Czech Republic. During our stay, we were able to organize meetings which were attended by both the principal and the head nurse. As part of these meetings, we tried to find solutions for these and other deficiencies in compliance with the personnel and local material supply.

Results

The local nursing staff showed great interest in deepening and acquiring new information and was able to utilise newly acquired knowledge almost immediately. Despite the rush associated with medical emergencies and the language barrier the local and visiting teams were able to achieve the main task as stated in the introduction.

Conclusion

The presentation highlights the importance of nursing staff participation in charity missions to perform education and supervision of the local staff, as well as to achieve best possible medical results.