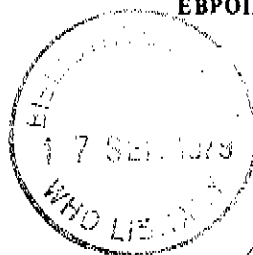




Working Group on Appropriate Technology  
in Health Laboratories

London, 2-5 October 1979



ICP/ATH 001/9 INDEXED  
(ICP/PHC 007)  
5 September 1979  
ENGLISH ONLY

*Hospital Nursing Service*

ROLE OF THE NURSE IN LIAISON BETWEEN THE WARD AND THE LABORATORY

by  
Miss M.O. Clark  
Nursing Officer (Research), Scottish Home and Health Department  
Edinburgh, United Kingdom

In providing diagnostic or research assistance to clinicians, laboratories require appropriate and correctly-labelled specimens, in the appropriate amount and medium, and arriving at the correct place at the right time.

The nurse in the ward will be involved in, and be responsible for, the collection and dispatch of many specimens, between the ward and the laboratory. This is a small but important aspect of the nurse's work; and, because of varying shift patterns and staff turnover rates, there is no guarantee that the same staff will be on duty often enough to become familiar with any but the most common investigations.

Liaison between the ward and the laboratory should be simple and should be a two-way process. Nurses require information on laboratory services with regard to:

- (1) The conditions under which the specimens should be collected, e.g., whether an early specimen of urine is required and what does "early morning" mean?
- (2) Instructions for the conduct of particular tests. These should be readily available to ward staff, e.g., on the glucose tolerance test and Schilling test.
- (3) The dispatch of specimens. Such information should include guidance on the laboratory where the specimen is to go, the container it should be in and the amount of the specimen required, and also the form which has to accompany the specimen to the laboratory.
- (4) Safety of staff when collecting specimens and of patients. Codes of practice, taking into account the legislation and local conditions, should be prepared to ensure that forms and specimens cannot be confused.
- (5) Transportation of specimens from wards to laboratories.

Conclusions

It should never be assumed that a nurse who may be comparatively junior and who may have other competing priorities will know what to do in relation to collection of specimens or conduct of tests. An awareness of potential problems in this area allows positive steps to be taken to prevent them. Benefit would accrue to all concerned if relevant information could be made available to all staff in the form of a handbook prepared following discussion between clinicians, laboratory staff and nurses.

The issue of this document does not constitute formal publication. It should not be reviewed, abstracted or quoted without the agreement of the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe. Authors alone are responsible for views expressed in signed articles.

Dieses Dokument erscheint nicht als formale Veröffentlichung. Es darf nur mit Genehmigung des Regionalbüros für Europa der Weltgesundheitsorganisation besprochen, in Kurzfassung gebracht oder zitiert werden. Beiträge, die mit Namensunterschrift erscheinen, geben ausschliesslich die Meinung des Autors wieder.

Ce document ne constitue pas une publication. Il ne doit faire l'objet d'aucun compte rendu ou résumé ni d'aucune citation sans l'autorisation du Bureau régional de l'Europe de l'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé. Les opinions exprimées dans les articles signés n'engagent que leurs auteurs.

Настоящий документ не является официальной публикацией. Не разрешается рецензировать, аннотировать или цитировать этот документ без согласия Европейского регионального бюро Всемирной организации здравоохранения. Всею ответственность за взгляды, выраженные в подписанных авторами статьях, несут сами авторы.