

Public Health Nursing

A Textbook for Health Visitors, School
Nurses and Occupational Health Nurses

Edited by
Greta Thornbory

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Forewords

Health Visiting

Throughout the history of health visiting, public health has been the underpinning aspect of the work of health visitors. This book articulates the changing role of health visitors in providing a dynamic service whilst engaging in innovative ways to tackle the complex needs of society today. The search for health needs have been identified by professional organisations as an important aspect of health visiting practice. The authors clearly define health within a public health dimension, whilst detailing the concept of health promotion as the process, which facilitates change and allows the health visitor to deliver a service, which acknowledges the demands of a multifarious approach.

The phenomenon of social capital as pivotal to public health and health policy gives the reader insight into the challenges of health visiting in an ever-changing society. The four principles of health visiting are clearly identified as central to health visiting practice. Although it is acknowledged in current legislation there is still much to achieve as far as public health is concerned, the authors state that the role of health visiting is less clear and health visitor numbers are reducing allowing them less time to focus on early intervention in health issues.

This book focuses on the importance of health visitors being politically aware in order to tackle the effect of poverty especially on the development of children. The authors emphasise the importance of community profiling which has long been a desirable attribute of health visiting activities.

This book also provides a sound underpinning for student health visitors as well as being reminders of the role health visitors have in public health to those health visitors and their managers in practice. The authors have captured the essential components of public health practice and the role that health visitors can play.

*Dr Ingrid Callwood
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School Nursing

In the century since school nursing began, understanding of child development, education and nursing skills have been transformed. Chapter 5 maps developments in both school environments and the National Health Service. The current health of the school-aged population predicts of adult health for decades ahead – and economic well-being, and social stability. The new Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) recognises this *pervasive* public health role of school nurses. The DCSF values school nursing expertise in delivering strategies for population health because of its unique impact on outcomes for children. This impact can be seen both in school and across wider community settings. Society's response to illness, adversity or abuse for individual children mirrors its *deepest* values. While enlightened policies such as the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 reflected noble aims, a 2008 survey for *Every Disabled Child Matters* revealed not one Primary Care Trust could quantify their spend on services for disabled children. England produced model *specialist* services for mental illness in young people, but now at the community level English adolescents have the worst mental well-being in the Western World. I discussed these concerns with the Children's Commissioner for England (around giving *11 Million* children a 'voice'): he emphasised the folly of the media 'demonising' teenagers. School nurses can work alongside young people in a responsive and accountable way that anticipates transitions and their growing capacity for responsibility. School nursing evolved unique *ethical* foundations that encompass 'vulnerable' individuals, groups of children and networks of parents or professionals. Those ethics underpin the duty of care described here.

Nurses work for the school-aged population within teams, within a variety of settings. Chapter 6 illustrates the standards for Specialist Community Public Health Nursing, relating this nurse to the wider school health service. Consultation with young people and a capacity to advocate for children based on evidence of their health needs are *key skills* to nurture. When professional training and development was going through a period of neglect concerns were often expressed about the poor evidence base for practice and the paucity of efforts to explain school nursing to other professions, especially general practitioners or service commissioners. Clear practical examples of school health expertise are provided here, e.g. for the epidemic of obesity sweeping the UK. The promotion of 'positive mental health' gives a good grounding for coming initiatives like *Targeted Mental Health in Schools*. These chapters foresee the professional need to enhance 'collaborative working' across all the agencies involved in young people's well-being. SCPHNs have been at the forefront of recent developments to *integrate* services for every child (ages 0-19) and the professional bodies have seized this challenge to combine innovation with evidence-based practice. The example given of raised standards in personal, social and health education, through an effective collaboration between school

nurses and both primary and secondary school teachers, shows us all the way ahead.

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Occupational Health Nursing

The contribution of occupational health (OH) nurses to public health is not new as they have promoted health and practiced at a strategic level for many years. Their contemporary public health role is recognised by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) as those holding an NMC-validated qualification in OH nursing can register as specialist community public health nurses.

OH nurses by definition practice with a specific client group – the workforce. They undertake a proactive role in reducing health inequalities amongst that population. These specialists are involved in policy development and undertake a population-based approach rather than merely providing care to individuals, these are important elements of public health practice.

The workforce is a captive audience for a range of health-promoting activities and never before has the OH nurse's contribution to public health been higher profile. Dame Carol Black's recent review of the health of Britain's working-age population, *Working for a Healthier Tomorrow*, has been a particular influence on public health and on OH nursing practice in particular. Black's review emphasises the premise that promoting, improving and maintaining the health of the working-age population makes a significant contribution to the nation's economic growth and social justice.

An experienced OH nurse educationalist and consultant has edited this book which provides a succinct overview of a workplace-focused public health strategy. It explores the four levels of primordial, primary, secondary and tertiary prevention linking these to contemporary OHN practice and highlights the role of the OHN in advising and supporting employers in ensuring a healthy and productive workforce. It is written in such a way that nurses new to OH nursing as well as those with more experience will benefit from its exploration of the role and function of the OHN within a multidisciplinary team.

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Preface

Public health (PH) nursing is not a new nursing discipline, but with the advent of the Nursing and Midwifery Council pulling together the nursing disciplines that work in the field of public health it has been necessary to address the issue with a textbook on the subject. Specialist education and training is required to prepare the qualified nurse to undertake PH nursing work as there is evidence that PH is currently taking centre stage in the challenge to improve the population's health and nursing should be playing an active part.

This book is a basic text aimed at those nurses new to the PH arena and who are undertaking specialist education and training. It is written by relevant experts in the field and the three main specialties of PH nursing, health visitors, who care for families and children up to five; school nurses, who care for the school-aged child and occupational health nurses, who care for the health and well-being of people at work. It does not aim to be all embracing of each discipline, it is designed to be read in conjunction with each discipline's specialist textbooks and the references and resources given in the book should act as pointers for further more in-depth reading and information.

One of the book's main aims is to show the diversity of each discipline and how they each address PH in vastly different ways according to the needs of their relevant population. The book starts by exploring the term *public health* and then how it relates to nursing. The chapters that follow then address each discipline in turn and conclude with a chapter on the all-important continuing professional development.

Greta Thornbory

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Finally, to Sue Hincliffe who encouraged me on the road to writing.

Greta Thornbory

Abbreviations

ACAS	Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service
AOHNE	Association of Occupational Health Nurse Educators
AOHNP	Association of Occupational Health Nurse Practitioners
BOHS	British Occupational Hygiene Society
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CDC	Centre for Disease Control and Prevention
CETHV	Council for the Education and Training of Health Visitors
CHPP	Child Health Promotion Programme
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPHVA	Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association
CTHV	Council for the Training of Health Visitors
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act 2005
DEA	Disabled Employment Advisor
DPA	Data Protection Act 1998
DSE	Display Screen Equipment (previously VDU or visual display unit)
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
EEF	Engineering Employers Federation
ELCI	Employers Liability Compulsory Insurance
EU	European Union
FAO	United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization
GMC	General Medical Council
GP	General Practitioner
HASAWA	Health and Safety at Work (etc.) Act 1974
HPC	Health Professions Council
HPV	Human Papilloma Virus
HR	Human Resources
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
HV	Health Visitor
ILO	International Labor Organization
IOSH	Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
LEA	Local Education Authority
LLM	Master of Laws
MHSW	Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
MMR	Measles, Mumps and Rubella

MSDs	Musculoskeletal Disorders
NATHNAC	National Travel Health Network and Centre
NAW	National Assembly for Wales
NFSHE	National Forum for School Health Educators
NHS	National Health Service
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
OH	Occupational Health
OHN	Occupational Health Nurse
OM	Occupational Medicine
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate of Education
PGCEA	Post Graduate Certificate of Education of Adults
PH	Public Health
PSA	Public Sector Agreement
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
RCN	Royal College of Nursing
RTWI	Return to Work Interviews
SAPHNA	School and Public Health Nurses Association
SCPHN	Specialist Community Public Health Nurses
SMEs	Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises
SNs	School Nurses
UKCC	United Kingdom Central Council
UKSC	United Kingdom Standing Conference
VRA	Vocational Rehabilitation Association
WHO	World Health Organization

Chapter 1

What Is Public Health?

Cécile Knai

Learning objectives

After reading this chapter you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning of public health
- Describe the changing approaches to public health over time
- Discuss some of the current debates within public health
- Comment on some of the implications of health practitioners

Introduction

This chapter attempts to answer the question 'What is public health?' and at one level, the answer is simple and straightforward: public health aims at preventing health problems before they occur and focuses on populations rather than on individuals. As we will see in the chapter, there are different ways of going about this task. The more convenient linear, two-dimensional way holds that there is a cause and there is a disease, and to address the disease one needs to address the cause. According to this line of thought, disease is brought about by specific aetiological agents which affect the body's structure and function, with illness a separate 'subjective experience of dysfunction' [1]. This biomedical model has been argued as being narrow: the reality is that achieving public health is a complex task with an ill-defined scope. This is not for lack of effort on behalf of public health practitioners. Indeed, as discussed below, an enormous amount of effort and debate and political commitment have converged over time so that the field of public health is a field in its own right, with educational and professional specialisations. The approach to health has shifted from a relatively narrow approach to a broader conception of what health means, as expressed by the World Health Organization (WHO) definition which has not been amended since 1948: 'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' [2]. Moreover, the understanding of public health and the extent to which governments should intervene to support