The Research and Development Profile of the Health Science Faculty at Stord/Haugesund University College

The R&D profile of the faculty aims to enhance professional development and contribute to the creation of new knowledge through research. The R&D work is part of the college's educational training program and is run in cooperation with other relevant research institutions and milieu, with the establishment of a national and international research network being given significant importance. Discussions surrounding the consequences of Nursing Science research in relation to nursing practice have produced topical questions regarding care work based on empirical evidence. The ability to clarify and increase understanding for the essence of nursing and care is a fundamental requirement for implementing empirical based knowledge into practice in healthcare services.

♣ The concept of knowledge

Research and Development work at Stord Haugesund University College is based on a broad acceptance of the idea of knowledge. In other words, the development of knowledge is founded on nursing science skills just as much as it is based on inter-scientific disciplines (science studies, humanistic studies), practical knowledge, and ethical and aesthetic skills.

♣ Epistemological issues

The aim of Nursing Science is to create knowledge of the skills involved in care work. Nursing Science strives to build bridges between different areas of knowledge and skills in order to form new ways in which to extend inter-scientific cooperation. Various scientific disciplines specialise in studying defined areas of subject matter such for example as: health, long-term illness and care. Such specialisation involves obvious challenges in terms of formulation, definition and criticism of scientific issues. The scientific mode of approach is open for various scientific research methods, including methods that are both quantitative and qualitative. For example, through action and application research, theory and practice can co-exist in a fertile relationship with each other. Viewed in this way, the clinical side can be developed while new knowledge is simultaneously developed. Research conducted under the auspices of the health science faculty at Stord Haugesund University College is based on the concept of *interaction* with focus on *good professional practice* in relation to patients with long-term illnesses.

♣ Interaction

The research and development programme of Stord Haugesund University College describes the concept of interaction from both an individual and systemic standpoint. The concept of interaction can be studied from various theoretic perspectives, relative to the actual problem areas:

- Interaction (care relationship, discussions relating to care) based on a nursing science perspective (the theoretic perspective defines the issues that can be covered; humanistic viewpoint, health, illness and nursing / care)
- Interaction that is based on a health service administrative perspective (interaction between various participants in organisations throughout society, empirical based nursing and care culture in the health service, development of the nursing-administrative models – Caritativ leadership)
- Interaction based on a societal-scientific perspective
- Interaction based on a genus perspective

♣ Good Professional Practice (Clinical Nursing Science)

Care work is built just as much upon scientific knowledge as it is on ethical and aesthetic knowledge (head, hand and heart). Promoting good professional practice means that it is possible through research to enhance both the strong and weak aspects of, for example, patient care and to bring to light the core ideal; how nursing can be made better. In such a partnership, which can be viewed as a “communion”, the professional takes responsibility and is prepared to create possibilities for the other participants. The area of research of clinical nursing science includes: nursing studies, care work and the individual, and patients in various situations ranging from preventive open care to intensive nursing. Clinical nursing science focuses on areas of the profession that hinder advancement and carry prejudices that prevent new ideas and skills from becoming integrated into preventive care work, clinical nursing and care.

♣ Patients with long-term illnesses

Society is facing ever-greater challenges in the way in which persons with long-term illnesses are treated. Such challenges are particularly relevant to the elderly who suffer illness in one form or another, patients who require habilitation and rehabilitation, patients with psychic and substance abuse disorders, and patients with chronic and complex disorders. Nursing science interpreted as a humanistic science shall uphold the dignity and freedom of the person. The fundamental meaning implicit in nursing science is concerned with the suffering of the person in relation to their health and life-situation. This insight involves being able to describe and clinically demonstrate what happens when the inner health potential (health in spite of illness) of the patient is touched.

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