School Nursing in Taiwan and Practices of School Nurses Association

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1. About Taiwan (Formosa):

- Area: 36,193 km²
- Population: 23.52 million (2016)
- 2016 Per Capita Gross National Income: 19,653 USD

2. The current condition of nursing and schools in Taiwan:
   - The ratio of total Taiwan population to students in school:
     Total population of Taiwan is 23,544,189 (sourced from information that is published by the Officials dated February 2017)
     The total number of students enrolled in schools in Taiwan is 4,616,078 (sourced from information published by Ministry of Education on the academic year 2015)
   - The ratio of students in schools to the entire population of the country is 19.6%
The ratio of existing school nursing personnel in Taiwan to existing nurses in the country:

The number of existing school nursing personnel in Taiwan is 4,662.
(The sources are from School Nurses Association of R.O.C., K-12 Education Administration of Ministry of Education, and Integrated Planning Division of Ministry of Education)

The number of existing nurses in the country is 157,968 (The sources are from Taiwan Union of Nurses Association dated February 2017)

The ratio of school nursing personnel to the nurses in the country is 2.95% (Kindergarten nursing personnel excluded)

According to the Ministry of Education, the number of existing school nurses in elementary, junior high, high school, and vocational high schools in Taiwan is: 4,662 (Kindergarten nursing personnel excluded)

### The ratio of existing school nursing personnel in Taiwan to existing nurses in the country

- The number of existing school nursing personnel in Taiwan is 4,662.
- The number of existing nurses in the country is 157,968.

### The current condition of teenagers in Taiwan from 12 - 24 years old:

- The total population of teenagers from age 12-24 in Taiwan in 2016 is 3,735,157

### Urban-rural Gap Leads to Huge Differences in Schools:

- Large elementary and junior high schools are located in the cities and have more resources.
  
  **Student population around 1,000–4000.**
• Small elementary and junior high schools are located on the offshore islands and mountain areas and have fewer resources. **Student population around 10–80 people.**

![The distribution graph of elementary and junior high schools in Taiwan](image)

5. **The employment of and authorities governing school nurses in elementary and junior high schools in Taiwan:**

- School Health Act stipulates: Each school shall employ school nurse regardless of the size of the school.
  
  - [1 nurse shall be employed for 39 classes or fewer; at least 2 nurses shall be employed for 40 classes and above.]
- Hired as civil servants in public high, junior high, and elementary schools
- **Source of funding:** National education budget.
- **Practicing registration:** Regulated by the health departments.
- Governing body: directed by the education departments, and cooperate with regional health departments when necessary (vaccination, infectious disease prevention and control)

6. **The practical work contents of existing school nursing [gathered and consolidated from school nursing personnel's self-experience].**

- Administrative duties in health center- Example: operation and management of health center, the environmental safety and crisis management of the campus, general administrative business, concurrent serving
- School health assessment (develop health promotion projects based on this)- Example: Developing "Smoking and Betelnuts Consuming Prevention Plan" to understand and improve the unhealthy behaviors of students for schools that have large population of students who have unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, eating betelnuts, developing "Oral Health Plan" to get students into developing a good habit of brushing their teeth after meals for schools that have high percentage of dental caries rate in student health examination, and developing "Nutritious Dieting in School Plan" to get students into developing a good habit of healthy eating habit...
- Physical assessment- Perform physical assessment on student to understand the health needs of students and further develop, execute, and improve on school health promotion projects. Physical assessment is done during the preliminary examination of height, weight, vision at the beginning of the semester, detailed health examination of the 1st, 4th, and 7th graders by
medical personnel, and when caring for students who seek help at the health center in the times of discomfort.

- Health Document Management - Management of student's health record cards, injury care record sheets, treatment hospitalization sheets, and individual case management records.
- Emergency sickness and injury treatment
- Prevention of infectious diseases
- Case management and follow up on necessary medical treatment - provide case management for chronic diseases and special cases. Follow up with the treatment for students who show abnormality in physical examination.
- Environmental assessment (focusing on discovering dangerous factors) - Example: Safety assessment on school playgrounds.
- Health counseling (focusing on physical and mental development) - Discover mental problems often through examining individual injuries and illness, and to provide further counseling. Example: headaches - found to be isolated and bullied by peers, skipping classes with friends; stomachaches - somatoform disorder, family issues, anxiety over test; abdominal pain - picky eating habits, not wanting to attend classes…
- Other duties delegated by the supervisors - Mostly on concurrently serve in other non-nursing duties, such as: cashier, paperwork, health insurance...

7. The establishment and functions of SNAC (Heart broken → Action → Walking out of isolation)

- 1986: The government cut the junior high school nurses’ pay by four tiers against good faith. Grievance grew among the school nurses.
- 1993: The Ministry of Education and Examination Yuan jointly recruited registered school nurses (through promotion examination) without equivalent posts for them. 235 candidates were qualified. Other than clinical nursing personnel serving in National Taiwan University Hospital and National Cheng Kung University Hospital, the remaining 204 school nurses began to unite.
- March 6, 1995: The school nurses in the entire country were shocked that school nurses were ranked in the lowest rank in the “Rank of Staffs in the Public School.” The school nurses started the war to pursue “Staff Junior Registered Nurses in Elementary and Junior High Schools in Accordance with Colleges”.

A protest on the street was planned in that year (May 12), and the Vice Minister of Education summoned the representatives of school nurses after work on May 11.

On August 1995, 700 school nurses joined the parade “Roar from School Angels in White” to fight for dignity and reasonable payment, demonstrating for “Fight for dignity-School health should not be neglected; Demand personnel establishment-school nursing workload should not be overlooked.”
• August 29, 1995: Victory.
• 1996–1997: The staffing of registered school nurses in elementary and junior high school at each city and county was gradually implemented.
• 2000–2008: Staffing registered school nurses in high school and vocational high school is completed.
• 1996: School Nurses Association of R.O.C was founded.
• 1996–present: Unite the collective forces to defend the position of school nurses, and develop school nursing practices with fellow school nurses.

8. School Nurses Association of R.O.C was founded on August 19, 1996:
   • Purposes:
     To develop a comprehensive function in the health center of the school
     To maintain the healthiness of teachers, staffs, and students
     To promote the specialization of school nursing practices
     To promote the rights of school nursing personnel
     To organize the grassroots nursing personnel to form a bottom up negotiation force to talk to and negotiate with the government

   • Distribution of members:
     There are currently around 4,300 members, made up by school nurses, from kindergartens to high schools in 21 cities and counties in Taiwan. There are a total of 5,852 high schools, vocational high schools, junior high schools, and elementary schools in Taiwan, and around 75% of the school nursing personnel are members of SNAC, which form a force to influence the school health policies and to speak up for the rights of student health care and development of school nursing profession.
Each school nurse from the 21 counties and cities in Taiwan walks out of health center and forms branches in each county and city through unification. They transform the problems encountered at work from being personal into collective and policy issues and conduct professional exchange and supportive gathering through the united force of the branches. They also work with the county and city governments to promote school health policies, to exchange for job autonomy and professional positioning.
The 21 counties and cities formed a national organization (School Nurses Association) to speak up on central policies to Ministry of Education, by means of negotiating, protesting, coordinating and fighting, to urge legislation and administrative reforms.

9. The Basis of Action and Strategies of SNAC:
   - Form consensus **internally**
     - Insisting on the professional autonomy of school nursing
     - Prioritize the best interests of the students
   - **External** actions to call for the society’s appreciation
     - Analyze and describe the costs and benefits
     - Drum up support from parents, general public, officials, members of Legislative Yuan

10. Actions and Contributions of SNAC
   - Consolidate the practical knowledge of experienced school nurses and compile it into a practice handbook. Revise the handbook when needed. The current version is the 3rd edition.
   - Promote orientation training for new school nurses and design the courses.
   - Advocated and received donations for first aid equipments for remote schools and thus affected the establishment of first aid education hosted by the Ministry of Education.
   - Take care of the students and community residents in the disaster areas
   - Cooperate with individual school nurses to discover and solve the problems encountered at work.
   - In case of restructuring of human resource in the government, make sure the schools maintain the position of school nurses.
   - Succeeded in promoting the legislation of School Health Act, and laid the foundation for legalization of school nursing personnel employment
   - Blocked the outsourcing of school nursing service to medical corporations.
   - Blocked the commercialization of students' health (e.g. increasing dependence on medical intervention for vision and ADHD)

11. Current Health Issues of Taiwanese Teenagers

   → **Increased ratio of unhealthy weight status (underweight and overweight)**: an increase of refined foods, consume too many snacks and lack of exercise.
Table 1: The statistic table for the weight status of students across the country for the academic year 2015 (%)

| Academic Year | Elementary School | | | | Junior High School | | | |
|---------------|--------------------|---|---|---|-------------------|---|---|
|               | Underweight | Normal | Overweight | Obese | Underweight | Normal | Overweight | Obese |
| 2015 Academic Year | 7.37 | 63.69 | 28.93 | | 6.59 | 63.97 | 29.43 |

→ **The ratio of poor vision remained high; good habits of eye usage should be nurtured at a young age.**

Table 2: The statistic table for poor vision of students across the country for the academic year 2015 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Poor Vision in Elementary School</th>
<th>Poor Vision in Junior High School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015 Academic Year</td>
<td>46.06</td>
<td>72.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

→ **The ratio of dental caries is up to 80%, and it is consuming the health of students.**

Table 3: The statistic table for ratio of dental caries of students across the country for the academic year 2015 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>First Graders</th>
<th>Fourth Graders</th>
<th>Seventh Graders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015 Academic Year</td>
<td>47.28</td>
<td>42.87</td>
<td>30.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

→ **Health issues for students who have chronic diseases.**

12. SNAC will be working towards…
   - School health assessment (as the basis for developing health promotion projects)
   - Cooperating with individual school nurses to discover and solve the problems encountered at work
   - Writing down practical knowledge of school nursing to publicize school nurses’ significance
   - Stepping out of Taiwan and walking into the global village

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