



The Road of Stoma Care in Nepal

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Stoma care in Nepal faces many problems as a result of poor healthcare resources. I first started stoma care in Nepal and opened a clinic in 1996. At the beginning, there were only seven ostomates. Now there are three to four thousand in total.



Nepal is country with many mountains. However, transportation is not well developed. It is not uncommon for patients to walk two to three days before they reach the clinic. Besides, cultural diversion and lack of formal education for most ostomates have created barriers in their daily living such as going to temples and worshipping their god. Many more ostomates withdraw from social activities simply because they believe that they are not 'normal' as their bowel is 'outside the body' after surgeries.

To facilitate rehabilitation and to improve quality of life of ostomates, the Nepal Ostomy Association was established eight years ago. The aims of the association are to provide counseling before and after surgery, to educate ostomates on proper use of ostomy appliances and necessary lifestyle modification, and to organize activities for ostomates of various age groups.



Economic status of Nepalese is also unsatisfactory. The availability of ostomy appliances is extremely limited and we are getting ostomy pouches through support of the Friends of Ostomate Worldwide (FOW), Australian Ostomy Association and New Zealand Enterostomal Therapists Association. I work with four other nurses in a stoma care clinic and the number of my patients is increasing since the 1990s. To enhance the services and cope with the growing demands, I need to

provide ostomy nursing in different places including hospitals, nursing homes and the Nepal Ostomy Association.



In the past sixteen years, there were six to seven nurses who received nursing education but unfortunately none of them is working in the specialty anymore. But I will not give up and I will continue to provide clinical education to other nurses and promote quality care for ostomates.



Other challenges in Nepal include the lack of awareness of professional stoma care services and limited investment from the government in ostomy care.

With the award of NNGF Congress Travel Scholarship, I was fortunate to attend the WCET Congress in 2010 and updated my knowledge in ostomy nursing. It enables me to conduct further training to others in my country.



Ostomy care in Nepal is still evolving. More work has to be done to let people in Nepal understand the importance of Enterostomal Therapy nursing and how the specialty can help improve the lives of ostomates.

There is still a long way to go.

Ms. Shanti Bajracharya is an experienced Enterostomal Therapy nurse in Nepal. She is the WCET International Delegate of Nepal. She was awarded the Congress Travel Scholarship by the Norma N. Gill Foundation to attend the WOCN / WCET Joint Congress held in Phoenix, USA in 2010.

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