
Letters to the editor

All letters to the editor should be addressed to: Editor, ANS, Aspen Publishers, Inc., 200 Orchard Ridge Drive, Gaithersburg, MD 20878. Unless otherwise noted, we assume that letters addressed to the editor are intended for publication with your name and affiliation. As many letters as possible will be published. When space is limited and we cannot publish all letters received, we will select letters reflecting the range of opinions and ideas received. If a letter merits a response from an ANS author, we will obtain a reply and publish both letters.

To the editor:

In response to the recent Thoun Northrup article in *Advances in Nursing Science* 15:3 on the self-care myth reconsidered,¹ the following ideas are offered related to the historic roots of self-care, self-care perspectives, contemporary issues related to self-care, and implications of self-care for future health care delivery.

Although the roots of self-care have historically been generated from nonprofessional health care, it should be emphasized that basic concepts have been central to nursing from early on. Nightingale wrote that nursing's goal was to "put the patient in the best condition for nature to act upon him."²(p133)

The general theme found in the medical, sociologic, and nursing literature, that self-care is giving care to oneself that ideally should be

given by health care professionals, demonstrates the emphasis on medical control and supervision. However, in our age of spiraling health care costs, with the need to reduce economic expenditures, an emphasis on maximizing health potential would be most cost-efficient. Patient education can elucidate knowledge related to self-care. An effective patient-education program can decrease intensity of care, decrease length of hospital stay, and decrease patient morbidity and mortality.³

As a graduate student involved in the study of nursing theory, I am encouraged to see the timely and thought-provoking analysis of self-care.

REFERENCES

1. Thoun Northrup D. Self-care myth reconsidered. *ANS*. 1993;15(3):59-66.
2. Nightingale F. *Notes on Nursing: What It Is and What It Is Not*. New York, NY: Dover; 1969 (original work published 1859).
3. Crane V. Patient education as a mechanism for illness prevention and self-care. *Health Care Superv*. 1985;4 (1):57-69.

—Lori Gorski, BSN, RN
Graduate Student
Saint Xavier University
Chicago, Illinois