



## **Brief History of Nursing Education in Papua New Guinea**

Papua New Guinea has experienced a diverse Nurse Training and Education programs since the arrival of Christian Missions in late 19 century. These diverse nursing programs highlight the approach of the government to health care delivery and the preparation of health workers to provide services particularly in the rural areas.

The Modern Nursing was introduced in Papua New Guinea in the early 1950's with the arrival of the missionary groups. The Maternal, Child Health and Midwifery were the first three-year program for the Nurse Education program of Papua New Guinea. In 1951 the churches where the entry requirement was grade four conducted the first Maternal Child Health training program. In 1958 a three-year program was introduced and was called the Territorial Nurse Course. Post basic certificate courses were introduced in 1961 with Midwifery followed by Post basic psychiatric in 1967; Anaesthetics in 1968, and Paediatric in 1971 followed by Operating Theatre in 1972.

In 1964 a three and half year Nursing program was introduced and was called "B" Nursing and graduates from this program were expected to become nurse leaders who would have great influence on the Nursing development throughout the country. In 1969 Papua New Guinea Nursing Council took over Nursing Examination and therefore a number of changes were made in the nursing programs in 1971.

In 1971 Territorial Nurse Program was phased out and replaced by Enrolled Hospital and the Community Health program. The entry requirement to these programs was grade eight. The registered Nurse program replaced the "B" Nursing program and the duration reduced to three years. The entry requirements were grade ten school leavers.

From 1973-1975 the Diploma Nursing programs were introduced: Nursing Administration, Nursing Education, Nursing Community Health, and Health Education. In 1978 the three Nursing programs Registered/Enrolled Hospital and Community were rationalized to provide a General Nurse program. The duration of the program was three years and four months and entry level to the program remained as grade ten. Between 1983 and 1985 Enrolled Nursing program were phased out allowing no further intake in the program. In 1985 the Nurse Aide program phased out and the Community Health Workers training was introduced which is currently in place.

The Advanced Nursing Diploma programs in Midwifery, Paediatric, Mental Health and Acute Care Nursing were introduced in 1998 upgrading from Post Basic certificate to Advanced Diploma. The following year (1999) Diploma in General Nursing program was introduced as an upgrade from general nurse certificate. The duration of the program was

reduced to three years with entry requirements of grade twelve school leavers.

Currently all the schools of nursing throughout the country are upgrading and developing their General Nursing Curriculum to the diploma level. It is hoped that in a few years' time the Nursing Education in PNG will be upgraded to the degree level to become more in line with nursing profession around the world.