

THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL NURSES TOWARDS THE PROVISION OF  
MENTAL HEALTH CARE TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE USERS WITHIN A  
SELECTED HOSPITAL IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH  
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## ABSTRACT

Mental health care is provided by professional nurses as they are the one who are in first contact with mental health care users. Professional nurses should treat mental health care users holistically who are admitted in general wards as sometimes do not receive the care they needed. Their medications for mental disorder sometimes are not given regularly and they end up being dangerous to self, others and properties and sometimes they abscond. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and describe the role of professional nurses towards provision of mental health care to mental health care users at a selected hospital in the Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa.

A qualitative design using descriptive and exploratory approach was used. Sample of this study were professional nurses who were selected purposively. In depth face to face unstructured interview conducted with mental health nurses and non-mental health nurses. Participants were asked question on their role towards provision of mental health care to mental health care users. Data was analysed using six steps of Tesch approach. The results show that the role of professional nurses is provision of total care using holistic approach were they assess, give medication , refer MHCU to MDT and give health education. During executing of their role they experience challenges on infrastructure which lack safety and privacy, human resources who has negative attitude and insufficient knowledge and skill. Based on the findings of the study in-service training should be done to all nurses; Professional nurses should be encouraged to continuously develop themselves by doing part-time studies on mental health. Mental health care user who is unmanageable in general wards should be transferred to mental health care unit.

**Key Words:** Professional nurse, mental health care users, mental disorder, mental health, mental health care, role.