

# Continuing Professional Development for Nurses and Midwives in Community Health in Riyadh First Health Cluster

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## Abstract

It is important for nurses to consistently enhance their knowledge and abilities, which can be achieved through participating in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs. The objective of this research is to implement a CPD program at PHCCs that will maintain the standard of nursing services. This will be accomplished through a training needs evaluation that was conducted in 2021. **Methods:** The research conducted was a secondary quantitative study known as a "desk study". The data used for this study was collected in 2021 from Primary Health Care Centers (PHCCs) in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, specifically from the Riyadh First Health Cluster. The participants were recruited from these health centers and were all nurses. The study interviewed a convenient sample of 700 nurses and managed to get a response rate of 82.4%. **Results:** According to the study, a significant number of nurses (84.8%) held a Diploma of Science in Nursing, indicating that the study participants recognized the advantages of attending continuing nursing education. The nursing staff prioritized learning essential concepts and principles for performing nursing procedures and improving their advanced nursing skills. Although the majority of the sample had a Diploma degree, most of the respondents expressed a desire for professional development in leadership and management knowledge and skills. **Conclusion:** It is important to establish a continuing education program that is tailored to meet the professional requirements of nurses working in primary health care centers. The design of such a program should consider the challenges that inhibit nurses' participation in continuing professional development (CPD) and develop effective strategies and frameworks to enhance their involvement in community health.

**Keywords:** nursing services, health, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), desk study.

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## BACKGROUND

The objective of Saudi Arabia's Health Sector Transformation Program is to develop a holistic, efficient, and unified healthcare system that caters to the requirements of both individuals and communities. This is achieved by implementing a new care model that prioritizes the promotion of health and prevention of diseases in primary healthcare centers. As a result, primary healthcare services offered by community health facilities are expected to be adaptable and responsive to the goals of the health sector transformation.

It is crucial for healthcare professionals to be equipped and ready for the changes happening in the industry. To meet this expectation, nursing professionals should continuously develop their competence through effective and guided professional development. Continuing professional development (CPD) is necessary to maintain their knowledge and

skills. Nurses' access to CPD should be made more accessible, practical, and pertinent to their needs. Adequate funding and accessibility to CPD should be provided by all healthcare organizations [1].

It is crucial to support community nurses in enhancing and advancing their skills to provide top-notch care for their clients. This involves conducting competency evaluations and implementing effective educational programs for the nursing staff. Once the competency assessments are completed, innovative learning activities will be developed, extensive educational programs will be revised, and the Staff Educator's Guide to Nursing Competencies book will be utilized to promote competency [2].

### Significance of the study

The importance of the study lies in creating a continuing professional development (CPD) program for nurses working in primary health care centers. It is

necessary to provide them with opportunities to learn and improve their skills in order to meet their educational requirements after completing their basic nursing education. It is crucial for nurses working in primary healthcare to maintain their professional competence by participating in lifelong continuing education. This is not only a requirement for maintaining their professional registration, but also helps them provide high-quality nursing care and service to their patients and clients. Therefore, it is important for nurses to show interest in continuing their professional education throughout their career.

However, academic affairs and training is in a position to use the results of previous learning assessment needs conducted in 2021, throughout Riyadh First Health Cluster targeted nurses category and therefore, to formulate a continuous professional development (CPD) framework for nurses and midwives working at R1 primary health care centers.

#### Research questions:

1. What are Learning Needs of CPD for nurses in community health in First Health Cluster in Riyadh?
2. What are Benefit of Attending Continuing Nursing Education?
3. What are barriers of Attending continuing professional development program for nurses in community health?

#### Study aim

The aim of this study is *“to maintain a high quality of nursing services at PHCCs by establishing a Continuing Professional Development program (CPD) evident by training needs assessment conducted on 2021.”*

#### Study objectives

##### The objectives of this study are;

- To describe nurses training needs allover PHCCs in Riyadh First Health Cluster.
- To recognizing Benefit of Attending Continuing Nursing Education and the barriers of Attending continuing professional development program.
- To recommend further action(s)for improvement.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Although CPD is important, there is a lack of agreement on what it exactly means. This term is often used interchangeably with other terms such as continuing professional education, professional development, and lifelong learning. At times, CPD has also been used with different definitions [3-5].

Thus, for example, in some countries such as Australia, the meaning attributed to professional development " is recognised as continuously seeking to improve and a commitment to being professional " [6] also as United Kingdom, "is the way health

professionals continue to learn throughout their careers so they keep their knowledge and skill up to date " [7]. However, In these definitions Given that CPD should be a continuum through practice [8], for this review the American Nurses Association (ANA) referred in its definition of CPD "a lifelong process to active participation by nurses in learning activities. It concerned activities that were pursued to developing and maintaining their continuing competence, supporting achievement of their career goals and enhancing professional practice" [9]. The fact that the term "learning activities" was used meant that all kinds of learning activities could be used to achieve both objectives. However, the methods chosen to undertake CPD activities were often didactic in nature and less connected with the workplace and a more self-directed way of learning [10, 11].

Previous studies reported that the promoting of Continue Professional Development for nurses in the clinical context was fundamental, due to its positive effect on patients health outcomes, professional development and the organizations [12, 13]. Also, nurses need to cope with many kinds of public health emergencies and improving the quality of care as well as health outcomes and this is what it can offer program of Continuing professional development [14-16]. Therefore, it is an important part for nursing human resource management to promote nurses' CPD encourage nurses to participate in continuing education courses regularly and equip them with the necessary professional knowledge and ability [17, 18].

Although important to provision of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for nurses is challenged with many barriers. These Barriers to CPD participation include understaffing, last minutes changes to work schedules, shift work, role as carer at home and CPD affect time outside work [19]. Additionally, previous studies showed barrier :accessibility, staff motivation, marketing and advertising, financial issues [20-22].

To overcome these barriers, a continuing professional development program should be starts by making an honest Learning assessment need of current situation and nurses' professional needs. Learning needs could identified by organizations, such as continue education providers and Some nurses may share self-identified needs with educators. For that the identification of education needs must be specific, measurable, and applicable through practice experience, reflection, questioning, practice audits, self-assessment tests, peer review, and other sources. Additional learning needs assessment tools for learner-identified needs can include focus groups, interviews, surveys, diaries (or other reflective activities), self-assessments, and difficulties arising from practice [23-25]. Optimally, effective -developed and implemented learning need assessment can provide many benefits, as

help guide prioritization of topics, providing continue education program, and design ideas and formulating strategies for how to proceed with training efforts [26].

After identified knowledge and skills shortages and areas that are in need of developing, the next steps are to determining professional development goals that help decide which activities and subjects would support goals. Billett (2002) distinctively observed that activity associated with learning in the workplace tend to focus on individual objectives, yet the goals of CPD are mutually interdependent on individual and system aspects [27].

Finally, it is important after plan and engaging in education effectiveness documents achievement of intended outcomes. However, using an outcome-based approach to assess the effectiveness of CPD is a narrow way of understanding its impact [28]. Also evaluation of effectiveness of training is rarely considered alongside returns on investing in training activities [29].

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study is a secondary quantitative study, that is known as "desk study." aimed to answer specific

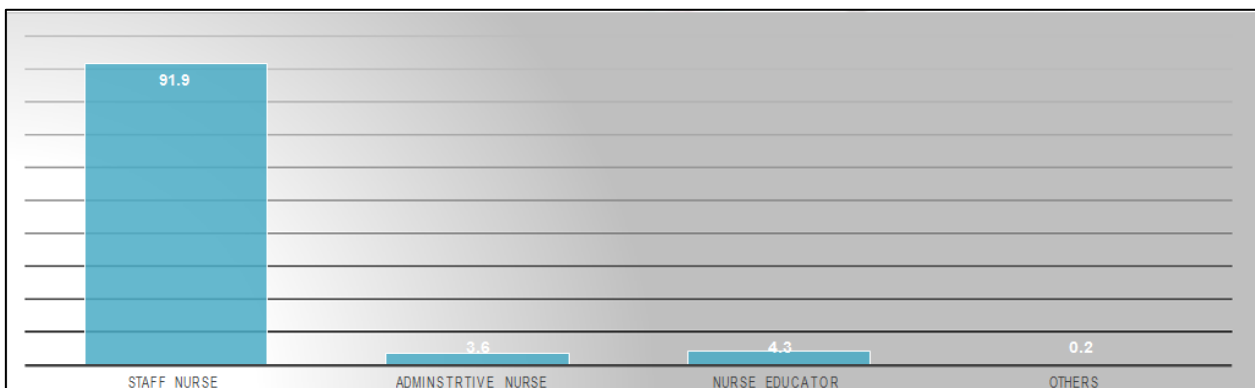
questions using previously collected information. The data source used for this study is first-party data collected in 2021 from the Riyadh First Health Cluster in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a part of the administration task for the academic affairs and training directory of community health excellence. The study subjects were nurses recruited from primary healthcare centers in the same health cluster. The inclusion criteria were all nurses who participated in the interview, and the sample size was a group of 700 nurses who were conveniently selected with a response rate of 82.4%. To analyze the collected variables, descriptive statistics were used to quantify them in percentages.

**Ethical consideration**

- Study protocol was reviewed and approved by academic affairs in community health, the first health cluster in Riyadh on March 15, 2023.
- Approval from Community Health Excellence from Riyadh First Health Cluster (CHE, R1) to use the Primary data.

**RESULTS**

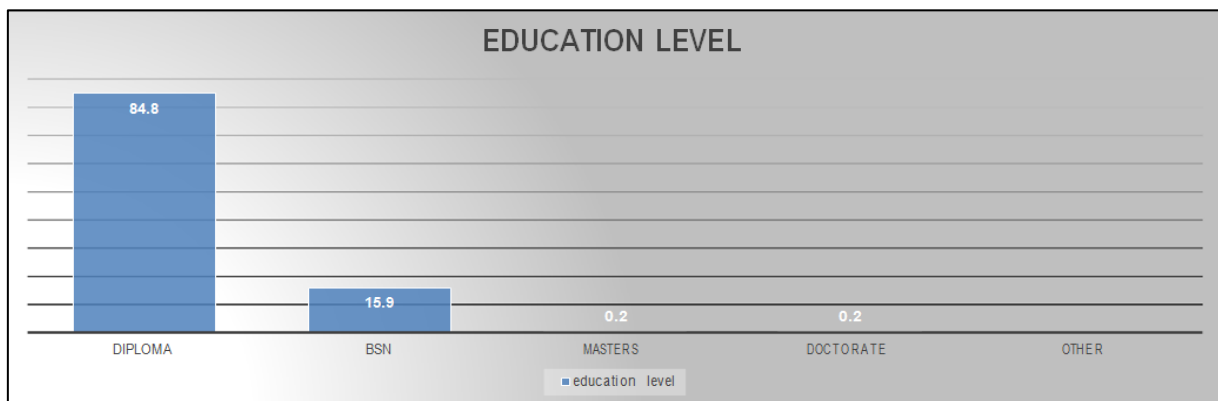
**Demographic data**



**Figure 1**

The above chart (Figure 1) showed that 91 % of the respondents are Staff Nurses, 4.3 % are Health Educator and another 0.2 and 3.6% are administrative Nurses.

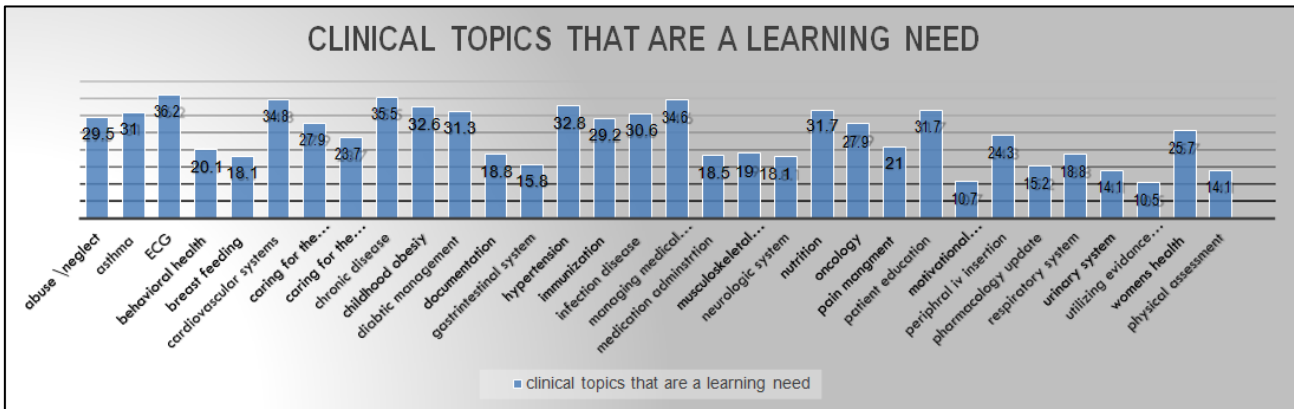
**Education level**



**Figure 2**

The above chart (Figure 2) showed that 84.8% of the respondents are Diploma, 15.9 are BSN and 0.2 are masters and doctorate.

**Clinical Topics That Are a Learning Need**

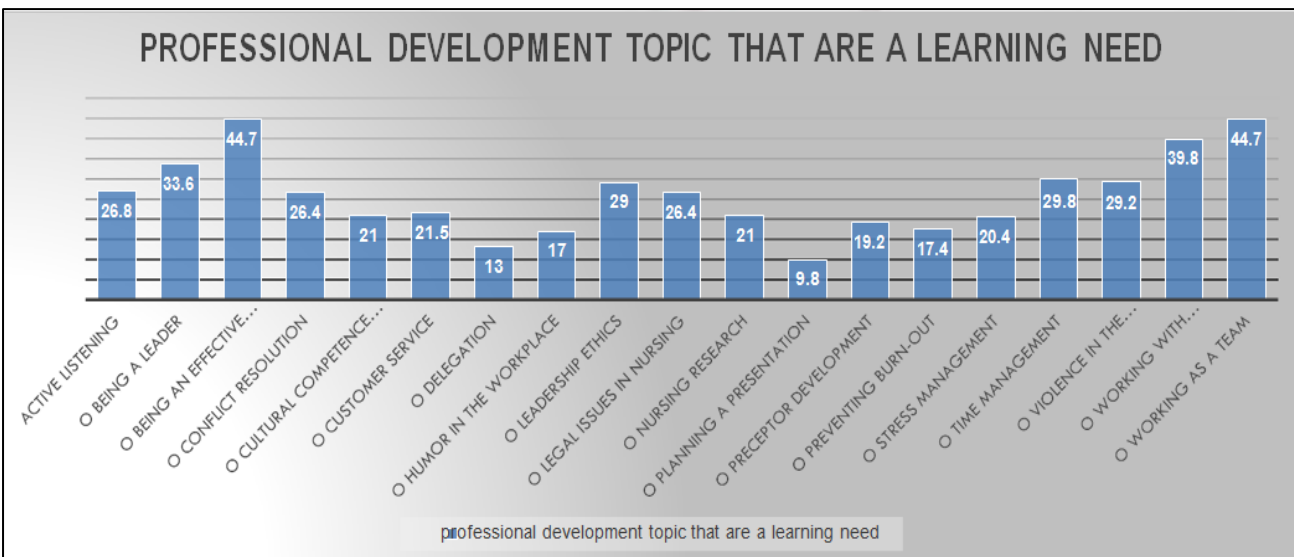


**Figure 3**

The first question asks that What clinical topics do nurses need to learn. Descriptive statistics will be again used to answer this question. Thirty-two items were included in the scale, and we find that: Basic ECG Interpretation36%, Chronic Disease 35.5%, Cardiovascular System34.8%, Managing Medical Emergencies34.6%, Hypertension 32.8%, Childhood Obesity32.6%, Patient Education 31.7%, Nutrition 31.7%, Diabetes management31.3%, Asthma31, Infectious Disease30.6%, Abuse/Neglect29.5%, Immunizations29.2%, Caring for the Geriatric Patient27.9%, Oncology 27.9%,

Women's Health25.7, Peripheral IV Insertion 24.3%, Caring for the Pediatric Patient23.7%, Pain Management 21%, Behavioral Health20.1%, Musculoskeletal Injection Techniques 19%, Documentation 18.8%, Respiratory System 18.8%, Medication Administration 18.5%, Breast Feeding18.1%, Neurologic System18.1%, Gastrointestinal System15.8%, Pharmacology Update 15.2%, Physical Assessment14.1%, Urinary System14.1%, Motivation 10.7%, Utilizing Evidence Based Practice 10.5.

**Professional Development topics that are a learning need**



**Figure 4**

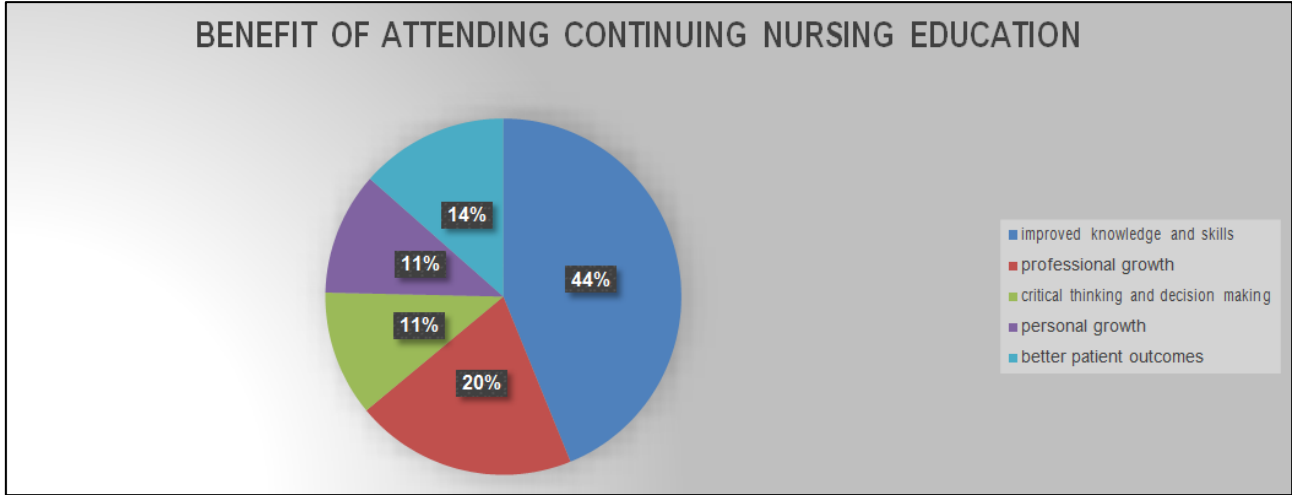
The second question asks that What Professional Development topics do nurses need to learn. Descriptive statistics will be again used to answer this question. The above chart (Figure 4) showed that

Professional development topic that are a learning need: Working as a Team 44.7%, Being an Effective Charge Nurse 44.7%, Time Management 29.8%, Working with Difficult People 29.8%,Violence

in Workplace 29.2%, Leadership Ethics 29%, Active Listening 26.8%, Legal Issues in Nursing 26.4%, Conflict Resolution 26.4%, Customer Service 21.5%, Cultural Competence and Sensitivity 21%, Nursing Research 21%, Stress Management 20.4%, Preceptor

Development 19.2% , Preventing Burn-Out 17.4%, Humor in the Workplace 17%, Delegation 13%, Planning a Presentation 9.8%

**Benefit of Attending Continuing Nursing Education**

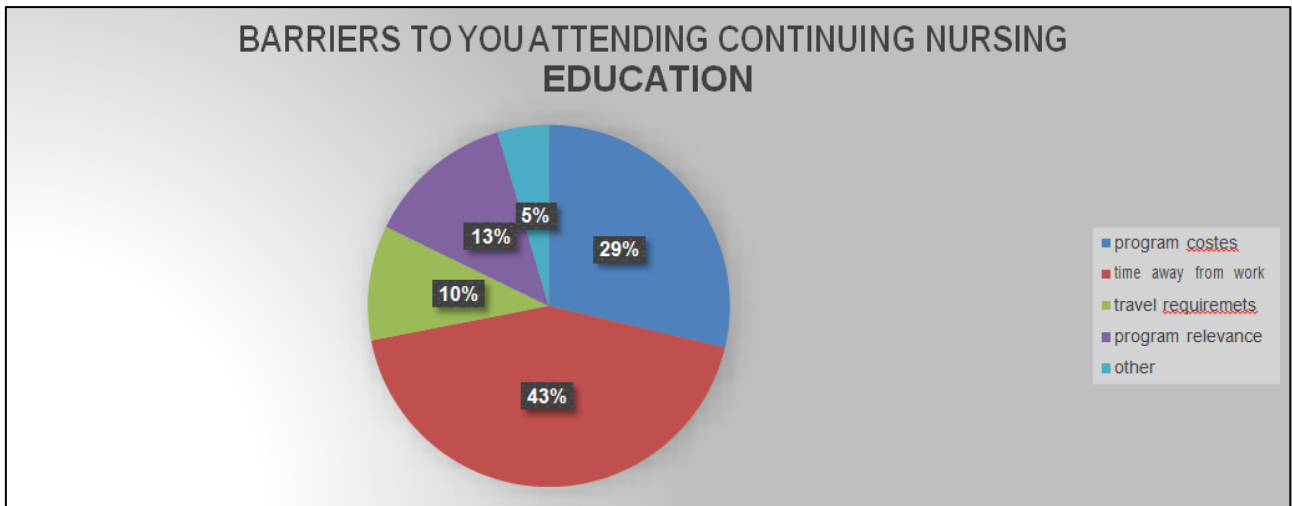


**Figure 5**

The third question what are Benefit of Attending Continuing Nursing Education. To answer this, a descriptive analysis of items was included in the Benefit regarding Continuing Nursing Education scale to be analyzed. The above chart (Figure 5) showed the percentage of each item in benefit of attending continuing nursing education, and it also displays that

almost 44% of nurses reported that improved knowledge and skills, 20% professional growth, 14% better patient outcomes, 11% critical thinking and decision making and 11% personal growth.

**Barriers of Attending Continuing Nursing Education**



**Figure 6**

The fourth question What are barriers of Attending continuing professional development program for nurses in community health. Descriptive statistics were used to answer this question. The above chart (Figure 6) showed that the barriers of attending continuing nursing education 43% time away from work, 29% program costs, 13% program relevance, 10% travel requirements and 5% other.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDING**

The results revealed that 91 % of the respondents are Staff Nurses, 3.6% are administrative Nurses, and 4.3 % are Health Educator. There was a higher percentage of nurses having a degree of Diploma of Science in Nursing that was 84.8 % , 15.9% who had their Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and only 0.2% had masters and doctorate.



### **1-Summary of the results related to the first question of the research, What are Learning Needs of CPD for nurses in community health in First Health Cluster in Riyadh?**

This question which concerned with describe a Learning Need of CPD for nurses in community health in First Health Cluster in Riyadh, the results were two parts:

#### **a) Clinical topics nurses need to learn**

In the study, 32 items were included in the scale to determine the clinical topics that require learning. The results showed that the following topics were most prominent: Abuse/Neglect at 29.5%, Asthma at 31%, Basic ECG Interpretation at 36%, Behavioral Health at 20.1%, Breast Feeding at 18.1%, Cardiovascular System at 34.8%, Caring for the Geriatric Patient at 27.9%, Caring for the Pediatric Patient at 23.7%, Chronic Disease at 35.5%, Childhood Obesity at 32.6%, Diabetes management at 31.3%, Documentation at 18.8%, Gastrointestinal System at 15.8%, Hypertension at 32.8%, Immunizations at 29.2%, Infectious Disease at 30.6%, Managing Medical Emergencies at 34.6%, Medication Administration at 18.5%, Musculoskeletal Injection Techniques at 19%, Neurologic System at 18.1%, Nutrition at 31.7%, Oncology at 27.9%, Pain Management at 21%, Patient Education at 31.7%, Motivation at 10.7%, Peripheral IV Insertion at 24.3%, Pharmacology Update at 15.2%, Physical Assessment at 14.1%, Respiratory System at 18.8%, Urinary System at 14.1%, and Utilizing Evidence Based Practice at 10.5%. Women's Health was found to be at 25.7%.

The outcome demonstrates that the nursing personnel deemed it crucial to acquire knowledge about fundamental concepts and principles that are essential for executing nursing procedures and advanced nursing skills. As general skills and core abilities, including intercultural skills required for practice, direct patient care, and patient-focused activities such as assessments, procedures, interpretation of data, and patient counseling within a specific clinical specialty, are significant, nurses must possess proficiency and expertise in these areas [32].

#### **b) Professional Development topics nurses need to learn:**

The study revealed that there were nineteen items on the scale indicating the professional development topics that were required for nurses to learn. The results indicated that there were several prominent areas that needed to be focused on, including being an effective charge nurse with 44.7%, working as a team with 44.7%, and leadership ethics with 29%. Other areas like active listening, conflict resolution, legal issues in nursing, and violence in the workplace were also important. The study also highlighted the need for cultural competence, customer service, humor in the workplace, nursing research, preceptor

development, preventing burn-out, stress management, time management, and working with difficult people.

The findings reveal that a large proportion, 84.8%, of nurses in the sample had obtained a Diploma of Science in Nursing. However, the survey respondents expressed a strong desire for professional development in leadership and management knowledge and skills. They also indicated their readiness to take on leadership roles and become effective charge nurses. It is crucial to provide a Leadership and Management Course to support the Succession Plan and improve the leadership abilities of all nurses, considering their career pathway [32].

### **2-Summary of the results related to related to the second question of the research, What are Benefit of Attending Continuing Nursing Education?**

The study focused on the advantages of attending Continuing Nursing Education, and the findings revealed that the majority of the participants acknowledged the significant benefits of such education. The results showed that 40% of the participants believed that their knowledge and skills had improved, while 20% experienced professional growth. However, a small percentage of the participants (11%) considered critical thinking and decision making skills and personal growth to be of little benefit, and 14% believed that attending Continuing Nursing Education would result in better patient outcomes.

This result go in harmony with what has been revealed by Yu *et al.*, (2022) who showed The nurses had a positive attitude towards CPD and recognize the importance and benefits of that through: Improving and strengthen the ability of clinical specialty and become specialist nurse. Moreover, nurses may feel valued and respected when they get knowledge and ability in a certain specialty ahead [30]. As well continuous pursuit of knowledge ensures patients get the best possible care, and ongoing learning can also fulfill personal ambitions of prolonged growth [12, 13]

### **3-Summary of the results related to the third question of the study, What are barriers of Attending continuing professional development program for nurses in community health?**

This question which concerned with determine the barriers of Attending continuing professional development program for nurses in community health, the most prominent results were as follows: The result of this study showed that (43%) of the sample thought that the biggest barrier of attending continuing nursing education was time away from work, whereas 29% program costs, 13% program relevance, 10% travel requirements and 5% other.

Aboshaiqah, (2011) reported a similar finding found three major barriers affecting participants' attendance of CPD, 38.2% agree that financial support

was the major barrier, followed by the commitment/scheduling problems to attend the educational activities with 29.7%, and finally the ability to attend the class regularly with a 19.6%. Administration needs to provide adequate time for nurses to attend programs in tertiary hospital of Saudi Arabia, which might result in inability to achieve the planning of CPD when not address these barriers [31].

## CONCLUSION

According to the results of our survey, there is a need for an educational program specifically designed to cater to the professional needs of nurses working in primary health care centers. This program should consist of three levels: Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced, covering topics such as knowledge, judgment, skills, and professional values within a legal/ethical framework. To ensure the effectiveness of continuing professional development (CPD), efforts should be made to identify and address barriers to studying, and to create strategies and frameworks that encourage CPD participation among community health nurses. Nurse managers should play an active role in facilitating their nurses' participation in CPD, and E-learning and distance education should be given more attention and development.

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