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Exploring clinical leadership myths and legends: Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole

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Aim: To identify the attributes and characteristics of clinical leaders by exploring the contrasting myths and legends that surround the lives and practice of Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale.

Background: Literature will be presented and used to highlight the attributes and characteristics of these two famous nurses. Ten clinical leader attributes will be outlined with examples of how Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale can be viewed (or not) as clinical leaders.

Discussion Design: The clinical leader attributes identified by Stanley (2016) are explored alongside an outline of the attributes and characteristics of the two great nursing leaders. Assessed are their approaches to being; approachable and open, effective communicators, visible in practice, role models for clinical practice, empowered decision makers, their clinical competence and the application of their values and beliefs.

Results: Historical record and contemporary literature will be used to facilitate the discussion. The examples used and historical information provided will shed light on the lady with the “lamp” and her contemporary, Mary as we explore how clinical leaders and clinical leadership is understood and applied in a more modern context (Stanley, 2010)

Biography

David has contributed significantly to nursing and midwifery education since he began teaching Enrolled Nurses in South Australia, in 1987. Since then, David has developed into a consummate professional educator who is student focused and driven to maintaining high quality, supportive, clinically relevant and up-to-date learning experiences in a range of presentation/learning formats.

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