

Brief History of Nursing profesion in cameroon.

Nursing profesion in Cameroon can be traced back to the start of the colonial era. When the Germans annexed Cameroon in 1884 they trained a type of medical personnel called 'Dressers' (Maingeh, 1999) whose duty was to dress wounds and sores (Lee, 2005). The Germans were followed by the French and the British. In the French part of the country Dr Eugene Jamot according to the National Observatory for Human Resources for Health in Cameroon NOHRHC (2010) opened the first school to train nurse aides in 1930. The training lasted three months and these graduates helped him in his fight against sleeping sickness. According to Kamta (1999) the training evolved to health assistants who were trained for three years and performed both medical and nursing. In the British Cameroons Maingeh (1999) reported that after the Germans left, the British continued using the services of dressers when they opened the African hospital in Victoria by 1933. During this time training for nurses was only available in Nigeria and since the British managed their territory as part of Nigeria it was easy for Cameroonians to study in Nigeria. The NOHRHC (2010) reported that the first training school in this part of the country was started by the Catholic mission in 1954 at Shisong. The school trained staff nurses in a three year programme. The state owned Bamenda nursing school was formerly opened in 1969 to also train staff nurses. These schools were all hospital based as there was no university based programme at the time. All the nursing programmes at this time were under the Ministry of Public Health.

The University of Buea began a four year training programme for the award of a Bachelor's degree in Nursing Science (BNS). The first batch of graduates left in 2001 and were mostly nurses who had previously held diplomas. The university conferred its first Masters degrees in Nursing Education in 2009, and does not offer any doctoral degrees. The University of Yaounde I which is the oldest in Cameroon also started a Master in Nursing Science degree in the late 2000s. Entry into practice is still based on the three-year diploma which can now be obtained from both the ministries of Public Health and Higher Education.

Nursing profesion in cameroon now has a legal association called The Cameroon Nurses Association (CNA), it was established in 1999. The main aim of the CNA is to contribute to the improvement of the health of citizens by fostering nursing education, research, care and management, uniting nurses.