

History of the Nursing Profession in Cameroon.

The nursing profession in Cameroon has a rich and evolving history. Here is a detailed overview of its development:

1. Colonial Era (late 19th century-1960):

- During the colonial period, nursing in Cameroon was primarily performed by traditional birth attendants and herbalists.
- In the early 20th century, Christian missionary groups, such as the Catholic and Protestant missions, began establishing healthcare facilities and introducing Western nursing practices.
- These missionary groups played a crucial role in training and recruiting locals as nurses and midwives. Nursing education was mainly institution-based, with limited formal training opportunities.

2. Post-Independence Era (1960s-1980s):

- After Cameroon gained independence in 1960, the government placed greater emphasis on healthcare infrastructure, including the development of nursing schools and hospitals.
- The first nursing school in Cameroon, the "Government Nurse Training School" in Bafoussam, was established in 1962.
- Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, nursing education expanded, with the establishment of more nursing schools across the country. These schools provided diploma-level training for registered nurses and midwives.

3. Professionalization and Continued Expansion (1990s-Present):

- In the 1990s, efforts were made to professionalize nursing in Cameroon. Nursing associations, such as the Cameroon Nurses Association, were founded to advocate for the rights and welfare of nurses.
- The government also initiated reforms to upgrade nursing education. This included introducing Bachelor of Nursing Science programs and implementing standardized curricula for nursing schools.
- In recent years, there has been an increased focus on improving the quality and standards of nursing education and practice, including the introduction of postgraduate nursing programs and specialization options.
- The number of nursing schools has continued to grow, providing more opportunities for individuals to enter the nursing profession.
- Additionally, the role of nurses has expanded beyond traditional bedside care to include roles in research, administration, education, and policy development.

Today, nursing continues to be essential in providing quality healthcare in Cameroon. The profession faces challenges, such as a shortage of nurses in rural areas and the need for ongoing professional development and support. However, efforts are being made by the government, professional associations, and international organizations to address these issues and advance the nursing profession in Cameroon.