

THE HISTORY OF THE NURSING PROFESSION IN CAMEROON

The nursing profession in Cameroon dates as far back as the colonial era and has significantly evolved through the years. During the colonial period, the European missionaries played a crucial role in establishing healthcare facilities, delivering healthcare services across the country, and also training locals to assist.

After the independence of Cameroon, in 1961, the west Cameroon council of nurses was created which was in charge of all aspects that involve nurses. That is from education, to recruitment, to certification, regulation of practice, etc. This council was later dissolved in 1972 with the emergence of a unitary state.

The Cameroon government recognized the need to train local nurses to meet the growing healthcare demands of the population and established the first training school for nurses known as the Yaounde school of nursing, in 1963. This marked a significant milestone in the professionalization of nursing in Cameroon. In 1966 the SRN diploma was introduced with entry qualifications as 4 O/L science subjects. In 1976, the Brevete/midwife training program was introduced.

Over the years, additional nursing training institutions were established in various regions of the country, for formal education and training. These included the Buea, Bamenda, and Douala schools of nursing among others.

In 1979 the Cameroon nursing council was created as the regulatory body responsible for the registration and regulation of nursing and midwifery practice in the country.

Then in 1984 the OPMS (Ordre des Professions Medico-Sanitaires) was created , which was in charge of issuing license and collecting dues for nurses, midwives and all paramedics. It exists till date but has no legal power to regulate the nursing practice in the country.

Later there was the creation of other professional nursing associations such as the Cameroon nurses association (CNA) IN 1999, which was established to advocate for the rights and welfare of nurses, and to promote professional development.

In addition to the nursing training schools established in the early years Cameroon has witnessed the growth of nursing education. Higher level nursing programs such as bachelor of nursing science and the master of nursing science have been introduced in universities and nursing schools across the country, and even PhD programs, which run till date.

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