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E-LEARNING: INNOVATIVE PROGRAM FOR INCREASING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR WORKING NURSES

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Background: Health care training including nursing have conventionally been delivered through face to face mode requiring physical presence of the trainee. Because of distance, shortage of staff, cost, perceived and/or real staff vacuum, higher training of working nurses have been a challenge. Therefore, the University of Nairobi (UoN), school of Nursing sciences (SONS) in partnership with AMREF established an innovative program to increase accessibility of higher training for working nurses.

Objective: To increase access to higher education for Nursing while maintaining acceptable staffing patterns and health care delivery services

Methodology: This is a blended eLearning program where registered diploma nurses upgrade to BSc Nursing. The program takes three academic years, structured into 3 trimesters of 14 to 17 weeks. In addition, each semester has 2 weekly three face to face sessions with the remaining time dedicated for self directed learning. The program has been running seamlessly since 2012.

Results: Five groups have been admitted since the inception totaling 300 students. Of the students, 80% (n=240) are females. The transition of each class from one level to the next have been 80 to 95%. The performance by the student on individual course unit have been above 80% (very good) including the biomedical courses.

Implication: E-learning program is an effective model that should be adopted for Nursing training. It improves accessibility to higher education for nurses, maintains staffing patterns while assuring continued service delivery. A unique collaboration between university and private entity bringing synergism and resource maximization has been brought forth. In conclusion, a review of the workplace performance by the students undertaking this programme needs to be carried out to assess the trickledown effect of the accrued benefits of higher nursing training.