HOWEVER BUSY WE ARE, BASIC NEEDS SHOULD ALWAYS BE MET
I support your Care campaign to improve fundamental patient care across the UK (www.thecarecampaign.co.uk).

Everyone who goes into a care setting is entitled to communication with compassion, assistance with toileting, effective pain relief and help with nutrition and hydration.

These four elements are fundamental to delivering quality nursing care. I understand that it is sometimes difficult to find time to deliver everything to a patient, but the basic care needs should always be met.

Communication is key and we always need to respect a person’s dignity and choice.

Sue Grave, by email

RESPECTING OTHERS’ BELIEFS IS A VITAL PART OF NURSING CARE
Having read Stephen Wright and Julia Neuberger’s feature on spirituality (June 6), I was prompted to write about a colleague’s experience of being admitted for a minor examination.

When asked about his religion, he said he was an atheist. The nurse told him that it was wrong not to have faith, and she was forceful in her encouragement for him to join her in Christianity.

As a Christian, this shocked me. I have always been taught that it is my duty to give non-judgemental care to patients. My colleague’s atheism should have been given as much respect as any religious belief.

As healthcare professionals, we need to think about how our beliefs affect what we do and the way we act – and to respect the fact that others have different beliefs.

Andrew White, by email

‘ENGAGED SPIRITUALITY’ IS KEY TO PREVENTING ABUSE AND NEGLECT
I was most interested in ‘Why spirituality is essential for nurses’ (features June 6). Stephen Wright and Julia Neuberger argue that ‘engaged spirituality’ is the key to preventing further cases of patient abuse and neglect. I find myself in total agreement with their manifesto for change.

Their article helped me to come to some personal conclusions about my two episodes of long-term sick leave caused by work-related depression and anxiety.

Spirituality should begin with the relationship between managers and employees, as well as colleagues.

Sally Wood, by email

I CANNOT SEPARATE THE SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF MY LIFE
I agree with Stephen Wright and Julia Neuberger that spirituality is essential for nurses (features June 6). How can we offer holistic care if we are not in touch with our own spiritual needs? Simply meeting patients’ physical needs is not enough.

Spirituality is part of the essence of nursing. My faith has helped me in every aspect of my life, including my work. As a senior practice learning facilitator in a learning and development department, my spiritual engagement has positively affected the way I lead my life, relate to colleagues, carry out my role and especially my work with patients.

I support the seven-point manifesto for integrating spirituality into healthcare. We need radical change in the NHS – from the inside out.

Florence Nightingale became a nurse out of her conviction that her creator was calling her to do good to others. Her belief system dictated and influenced the choices she made in her life and work. Miss Nightingale’s achievements were underpinned by her compassion rooted in faith.

My spirituality helps me to provide care and do the best in my work. I cannot separate the spiritual and physical aspect of my life in dealing with people – be it patients, colleagues or others.

Hermie Santos, by email

Obituary

Sir Derek Wanless
1947-2012
Author of seminal review on health service funding

Sir Derek Wanless, who has died aged 64 of pancreatic cancer, was a banker and public policy adviser whose 2002 report for chancellor of the exchequer Gordon Brown laid the foundations for the following decade’s huge increases in NHS funding.

Securing Our Future Health: Taking a Long-Term View made the case for a sustained investment in the NHS, changing fundamentally the political debate about the gap between investment and demand.

King’s Fund chief executive Chris Ham said: ‘Sir Derek’s report stood the test of time as the most complete and influential analysis of health needs ever undertaken in this country.’

Sir Derek was also an advocate for the healthcare system to be more grounded in the community. A subsequent 2006 report, Securing Good Care for Older People, transformed the debate over the care of vulnerable older people and social care funding.

The son of a storekeeper at a cement works in Newcastle upon Tyne, he gained a scholarship to the Royal Grammar School and studied mathematics at King’s College in Cambridge, with a support grant from NatWest.

Sir Derek joined the bank in 1967, becoming group chief executive in 1992. He was ousted in 1999 after criticism from City investors over the high costs of its investment banking operations.

He was appointed a non-executive director of Northern Rock in 2000 and resigned in 2007 following a collapse in confidence and a run on the bank.

A supporter of Newcastle United Football Club, he was made a freeman of the City of London in 1992 and knighted in 2005.

Freelance journalist Laurence Dopson, a regular contributor to Nursing Standard, died on June 19. This is the last obituary he wrote.