

Feminism and Nursing: An Historical Perspective on Power, Status, and Political Activism in the Nursing Profession

Thetis M. Group, Joan Roberts



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This book examines nursing's feminist consciousness as the profession has developed and evolved over time. The interrelationship between the status of nursing and the status of women in patriarchal society is analyzed. Nursing's struggle to overcome its oppression and gain increased autonomy and political power is considered from an historical perspective. Early leaders in the profession, such as Florence Nightingale, Lavinia Dock, and Lillian Wald, are analyzed with regard to their social reform, political, and feminist activities. Nursing's support for the Equal Rights Amendment and its role in the women's movement that reemerged in the 1960s is examined in light of the profession's ambivalence to feminist issues. The last 20 years show that the profession has become actively aware of important issues such as pay equity and equal job opportunity and that nursing has become more cognizant and supportive of feminist goals on a variety of issues. This work provides a comprehensive review of the history of the nursing profession while simultaneously instructing in new paradigms of thought relative to provision of healthcare and human services by women.

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