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CONTENTS

Evaluation of a national reform in Israeli child protection practice designed to improve children's participation in decision making	Ravit Alfandari
Parental Considerations of Child Day-Care Centres in Israeli Palestinian Society	Rana Eseed
The Path to Economic Independence among Intimate Partner Violence Survivors: Theoretical Background, Barriers and Courses of Action	Karni Krigel, Einat Peled
Old-Age Pension and Israel's National Labour Court	Israel Doron, Zehavit Korver
Changes in the Role of Community Nurses in Israel	Rachel Nissanholtz- Gannot, Bruce Rosen, Miriam Hirschfeld, Yair Shapiro

Summaries of the Main Articles

Evaluation of a national reform in Israeli child protection practice designed to improve children's participation in decision making

Ravit Alfandari¹

A national reform of child protection practice in Israel includes the ambition of strengthening children's participation in intervention decisions carried out in formal committees, called Planning, Intervention and Evaluation Committees. A qualitative study was conducted of how well this was being achieved by following 21 case studies of families referred to the committees over six months. Data was collected from interviews with social workers, field observations of the committees and a document review. A systems approach was undertaken as a conceptual framework in order to allow a whole-organisational understanding of what is happening in the field, and why. The key finding was a very limited realisation of the reform's aim. Only seven children attended the committees, and they had little influence on decisions, which appears to have made them less co-operative in implementing them. Those who did not attend rarely had their views conveyed to the committee by their social workers. The reform's lack of success is explained by being ill-suited to the organisational working environment and culture. The analysis identified a number of systemic factors influencing the failure to give greater priority to children's views, including: lack of skill and time, organisational messages about practice priorities and paternalistic ideology.

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Parental Considerations of Child Day-Care Centres in Israeli Palestinian Society

Rana Eseed¹

Currently there is a paucity of studies in Israel regarding the considerations guiding parents in their choice of a day-care centre for their children. The few studies that deal with this subject concentrate on two areas of consideration: convenience and quality, while there is almost no reference to culture, beliefs, and religion. The discussion in Israel regarding religious day-care centres is particularly limited, with no in-depth studies of religious organisations and their importance for parents. This dearth of studies is especially noticeable with regards to Palestinian society in Israel.

The goal of the current article is to examine parents' considerations in three content areas: convenience, quality, and religion. The population of Palestinian parents in Israel is a traditional one that has almost never been studied in this context. The study compares parental considerations of day-care centres operated by religion-based organisations as well as those not operated by religion-based organisations. Service suppliers to Palestinian society in Israel are diverse and include religious organisations. Despite their being a major factor in delivering day-care services in the absence of an extensive supply of public frameworks, these organisations have rarely been studied in this context.

The current study is quantitative and based on a self-administered questionnaire. 551 parents of children in day-care centres participated, most of whom defined themselves as being religious to very religious, although not all of them use religious day-care centers. 290 parents placed their children in religious day-care centres compared to 261 parents who placed theirs in non-religious centres.

The study reveals that considerations of quality are most emphasised by Palestinians when choosing a framework for their children, whether they are religious or not. This finding agrees with other studies in Israel and elsewhere, according to which the quality of care is parents' main consideration. A very central place was also afforded to the religious character of the framework, which

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is interesting considering that many of the parents were sending their children to non-religious frameworks.

The Path to Economic Independence among Intimate Partner Violence Survivors: Theoretical Background, Barriers and Courses of Action

Karni Krigel¹ and Einat Peled²

Public policy encourages female recipients of welfare, including survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV), to develop economic independence. However, IPV victims face unique barriers to doing so. A critical overview of the literature in this field reveals three main obstacles: Active and violent intervention by the perpetrator; damage to health caused by extended exposure to violence; institutional, organisational, and social barriers. Furthermore, a background of gender violence, low socio-economic status, and belonging to a marginalised ethnic-racial group may intersect with both the direct and indirect effect of the violence, thus augmenting barriers to developing economic independence. The article concludes with a discussion of ongoing intervention programs for developing IPV survivors' economic independence against the background of these barriers, and proposes courses of action.

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Old-Age Pension and Israel's National Labour Court

Israel Doron¹ and Zehavit Korver²

The old-age pension is one of the corner stones of Israel's national social insurance. It is intended to prevent poverty in old-age and insure minimal existence with dignity. Despite the importance of old-age pensions, and various descriptive writings in the field, very few empirical studies have been conducted regarding their impact in general, or their legal implications specifically. This study attempts to add to existing knowledge by studying the ways by which old-age pensions are discussed and ruled upon in Israel's National Labour Court decisions. The study qualitatively and quantitatively analyses a sample of one-hundred and four court rulings. In general, the findings indicate that the overall number of cases concerning old-age pensions which are dealt with in the National Labour Court is low. Key legal issues which are discussed concern aspects of: residency, time limitation, the inter-relation between old-age pension and supplemental income, and the issue of persons with disabilities who enter old-age. In general, the National Labour Court refrains from intervening in the existing statutory balance that shapes Israel's old-age pension scheme.

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"Like Blind Kittens" – Changes in the Role of Community Nurses in Israel¹

*Rachel Nissanholtz-Ganno², Bruce Rosen³, Miriam Hirschfeld,
Yair Shapiro⁴*

Recent new trends in the health system have the potential to affect the role of community nurses. These include population ageing, programmes to improve the quality of medical care, a shortage of medical and nursing manpower and the academisation of the nursing profession.

This study analyses changes in community nurses' roles following the big development in community medicine and examines the attitudes of nurse managers.

Using qualitative methods, we conducted in-depth interviews with 55 health fund managers, nurses, and relevant professionals from the Ministry of Health, Israel Medical Associations, hospitals and scientific societies, surveying respondents from different levels of management and regions. The diversity of interviewees allowed for a broad perspective on the processes that the nursing discipline is currently undergoing.

We found that in all the health funds nurses are engaged in a variety of activities, including: caring for chronic patients, health-promotion, active participation in improving quality etc. Further, in all health funds there was a sense that there are not enough nurses. At the same time, there is a trend toward expanding nurses' knowledge and training.

The study also highlights differences between the health funds, for example in the amount of responsibility given to nurses under Ministry of Health guidelines. In

1 Thanks to the Changes in Role of Community Nurses Study Group.

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some funds, more activities are executed by nurses, while in others they may perform activities only under supervision. Furthermore, there are differences in the way that nurses are included in health fund management, whereby in some funds they are fully incorporated, while in others only partially. The study also addresses nurses' perceptions of obstacles to the development of their profession. Community nurses have the knowledge and skills that enable them to take an increasingly important part in the care process.

The expected shortage of doctors and increase in morbidity present an opportunity for nurses to promote their profession and encourage a better division of labour. The integrative care model also allows them to be incorporated into more meaningful roles.

The fact that nurses are engaged in so many areas is a basis for recognition in law, to provide them with broader authority. This would fit in well with global trends, whereby community nurses have the status of experts in various areas and have been awarded increased responsibilities.

The study reveals that seniors in the health system feel that the community nursing profession has been changing rapidly and become more professional, as well as demanding more extensive training than in the past. The study also found that nurses are prepared for these changes, such that should the required organisational effort be invested, it would be possible to advance the profession to higher levels.