

**Unwanted & Unwelcomed Aid:** They refused the medical aid offered. They had not asked for help. News of the abhorrent conditions for the wounded was leaking out of the country. An estimated 8,000 British soldiers were suffering and dying. But the male army doctors did not want the female nurses there, though they had been authorized by Secretary of War Sydney Herbert.

After the *London Times* published the Crimean War casualties, as well as the prejudicial treatment against women's medical service, there was public outcry. The government was forced to relent and in 1853, the British Army permitted Florence Nightingale and her group of thirty-eight nurses to enter the main British camp based in Turkey. At the time, Nightingale was an unpaid superintendent at the Institute for the Care of Sick Gentlewomen in Upper Harley Street, London.

Nightingale found the health conditions in the army hospital appalling. Medicine was in short supply, hygiene was neglected, infections were common, many fatal. Diseases such as typhus, cholera, and dysentery were responsible for more deaths than the fighting. War wounds accounted for only one death in six. Nightingale also found military officers and doctors objected to her views on health reform. They viewed her innovative statistical reports as an attack on their professionalism.

*Times* editor, John Delane, championed her cause and exposed details of the British Army's brutal treatment of wounded male soldiers and sexist treatment of female nurses. This publicity allowed Nightingale to organize the hospital and improve sanitation conditions which included overcrowding, defective sewers, and poor ventilation. A few months after a sanitary commission flushed out sewers and improved ventilation, death rates sharply declined.

Nightingale developed new techniques of statistical analysis previously unknown. She revolutionized health care, specifically, her concept that social phenomena could be objectively measured and expressed in mathematical analysis. Her polar-area diagram, what we all know today as the pie chart graphic with statistics represented proportional to the area of a wedge in a circle, displayed the medical statistics she collected, tabulated, and interpreted. Her statistical presentations allowed for organizing and improving all areas of medical procedures. Her Model Hospital Statistical Form allowed hospitals to collect and generate consistent data and statistics. After the war, Herbert led a movement for War Office reform to which Nightingale was a key advisor.

In 1856, Nightingale returned to England a national heroine. She began a campaign to improve nursing and sanitary conditions in military hospitals. She collected and presented data to the Royal Commission on the Health of the Army. She wrote the Royal Commission's 1,000-plus page report that included her detailed statistics. Her auspicious report led to a major overhaul of army military care, to the establishment of an Army Medical School, and it initiated a comprehensive army medical records system. However, because she was a woman, Nightingale could not be appointed to the Royal Commission.

Nightingale's *Notes on Nursing* published in 1860 is the cornerstone of nursing curriculum and considered the classic introduction to nursing. It has been translated into eleven languages and is in print still today. She published over 200 books, reports, and pamphlets that continue to be a resource for nurses, health managers and health planners. Nightingale, literally, organized and developed modern day nursing. She pioneered the development of applied statistics and her feminist writings influenced John Stuart Mill's seminal work, *The Subjection of Women*.

As a young girl, her wealthy parents disapproved of her desire to become a nurse and preferred she marry. Nursing was associated with working-class women and was not considered a suitable profession for well-educated women. Still, Florence, who rejected many marriage proposals, preferred a career in medicine. At St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London she met

Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman in the United States to become a doctor. Blackwell had overcome disconcerting gender prejudice to attain her M.D. She supported and encouraged Nightingale to persevere. In 1851, at age thirty-one, Florence received her father's permission to train as a nurse. In 1869, Nightingale, along with Blackwell, opened the Women's Medical College in London.

Infected with disease, most likely during her time in the war zone, she worked in isolation from her room many years hence. In 1895 she became blind and infirm. For the next fifteen years, until her death in 1910, Florence Nightingale required and accepted, unwanted but welcomed, full-time nursing care.

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