

## Advanced practice nursing: specialized care and leadership in the construction of excellence in nursing

**A**cta Paulista de Enfermagem completed, in 2018, 30 years of commitment to the dissemination of knowledge in nursing and health. A scientific event was held to celebrate the anniversary, in which the future of the scientific journal was discussed, based on the historical recollection of its trajectory, scientific editing trends, altimetry, international relevance and compliance in the publications. In addition, this special edition on advanced practice nursing was edited.

Advanced practice nursing is a nursing area in which nurses work in the provision and coordination of patient care in primary and specialized health. Nurses can work in a wide variety of health settings, including hospitals, medical offices, nursing care offices, schools, and clinics. They take care of patients as well as interact with the public, often serving as a link between physicians and patients' families. Their advanced background means that they have a higher level of knowledge than general nurses, with greater decision-making skills and experience in areas such as diagnosis and evaluation, planning and implementation, health evaluation and records.<sup>(1)</sup>

In this nursing field, nurses become significantly more autonomous in their practice scope and faculty to rely on their own knowledge to make decisions concerning the health of patients. Nursing leaders need to be able to respond to a health environment that is constantly changing, including as regards organizational expectations and local and national policies.

This special edition of Acta allows the dissemination of what Brazilian nurses are producing in this field and, at the same time, reinforces the Nursing Now campaign,<sup>(2)</sup> launched by the World Health Organization and the International Council of Nurses to qualify nursing professionals to take over their places in the center of the challenges of the 21st century health system and maximize their contribution to achieving universal health coverage.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the role of advanced practice nurses is still not well established or recognized, which makes their activity a great challenge in the region,<sup>(3)</sup> with regulation needed to ensure legal protection of their practice. However, studies<sup>(4,5)</sup> indicate that the use of more strategic leadership and the support of organizations at all levels of management, including nursing organizations and unions; associated with a more realistic education of future advanced practice nurses regarding the challenges to

be faced, through continuous training and guidance, are strategies for the construction of excellence in nursing.

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