

Coping strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic in nursing school

Given the scenario imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic Brazilian public universities are required to organize their work process and measure problems and/or critical and emergency situations caused by this global sanitary emergency. The Paulista School of Nursing of the Federal University of São Paulo (EPE-Unifesp), an 81-years-old institution, became extremely involved in facing this reality and sought to adopt strategies to respond efficiently for teaching, research, extension, management and care demands.

As in other countries around the world⁽¹⁾, Brazil had suspended nursing students hospital care training practices and extension activities. After this decision, a number of actions were shared in relation to students' education and activities that would be conducted to avoid the academic curricula to be compromised.

At national level in education, a number of activities have been planned to keep students connected with colleges and university, even distant, as well as actions to rethink the curriculum of courses to guarantee the knowledge and social commitment needed for the education of qualified professionals for the Brazilian Public Health System (SUS). The EPE-Unifesp, followed by the orientation of undergraduate dean office of the Unifesp, adopted special distance activities as a strategy to guarantee continuing of theoretical activities. For students of the last year of the nursing undergraduate program, we opted to restart the face-to-face practical activities. Although the risk of COVID-19 infection during the care practice is considered high,⁽²⁾ students worldwide are concern with increase of consequences of the pandemic and they are seeking to propose actions that may reduce the negative impact that this situation may cause in their education.⁽³⁾ For this reason, the social commitment of EPE to educate future nurses for the SUS in such time of sanitary emergency was the guiding factor for planning the return of face-to-face practical activities, and the guarantee of the much safety as possible.

In terms of research activity, the public funding agencies destined resources to the country to contribute with development of new diagnosis methods, treatment and measures for interrupting the transmission of the virus. Actions involved investigations related to the natural history of the disease; the development and evaluation of tests, therapeutic alternatives and vaccines; the evaluation of health care attention at three levels of complexities facing the outbreak; the use of personal protective equipment

(PPE) in prevention actions, control, and management of the situation; the adherence and accomplishment of prevention and control measures; the management of services during the pandemic services, among others disease related topics. Research lines were established based on the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO) on topics aligned with national priorities defined in the discussions between the Brazilian Ministry of Health and experts in the country, considering the need of a rapid response and investments in more promising studies.⁽⁴⁾ Our university professors and researchers responded to this demand and submitted several grant proposals projects to express their commitment to respond with science to the pandemic (Chart 1).

Chart 1. Research projects written during the pandemic at the EPE-Unifesp

Research project	Level
Breastfeeding during the COVID-19 pandemic	Undergraduate studies
Nurse telephone counseling for patients with cancer and patient's progression during the COVID-19 pandemic: a retrospective study	Graduate studies
Analysis of effectiveness of text messages on the adherence of use of facemasks and social distancing in pandemic times	Graduate studies
Analysis and profile of low back pain in hospital environmental professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic	Graduate studies
Emotional and social aspects of health professionals in quarantine with suspicion or diagnosis of COVID-19 infection	Graduate studies
Association of early alarming signs with categories of risk classification in patients with suspicion or diagnosis of COVID-19 who were admitted to the emergency service	Undergraduate studies
Evaluation of quality of life in sepsis survivors due to COVID-19 in a tertiary hospital	Graduate studies
Evaluation of biochemistry changes and prognosis of patients with COVID-19 using the Markov chain	Graduate studies
Evaluation of personal protective equipment for health professionals: a systematic review	Graduate studies
Evaluation of nursing care for patients with COVID-19 at Brazilian teaching hospitals	Graduate studies
Knowledge, attitude, and practice of cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy during the COVID-19 pandemic	Undergraduate studies
Creation of a multidisciplinary center for development, prototype, optimization and validation of personal protective equipment for sustainability and safety in healthcare setting	Graduate studies
Multidisciplinary care to patient with COVID-19	Undergraduate studies
Evidences of validity of nursing results in response to mechanical ventilation: response to weaning and classification of nursing results in critically ill patients due to COVID-19	Graduate studies
Prevalence of COVID-19 infection among pregnant women: serological inquiries	Graduate studies
Oral hygiene in patients undergoing mechanical ventilation: protocol validation	Graduate studies
Infection by SARS-CoV-2 virus in kidney transplantation: health surveillance, screening, and associated risk factors	Graduate studies
Acute kidney injury by SARS-CoV-2 among patients with COVID-19: an integrative review	Graduate studies
Guidance for discharge by telephone counseling among patients with cardiovascular diseases: an alert for COVID-19 prevention	Graduate studies
Maintenance guidance for stability for RNI by telephone counseling in patients using warfarin and COVID-19 prevention	Undergraduate studies
Practice and perception of oncological patients in COVID-19 pandemic	Undergraduate studies
Prevention of symptoms and osteomuscular disorders in health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic: elaboration and validation of a spreadsheet	Graduate studies
Recommendation for RCP in patients with COVID-19	Graduate studies
Mother-child health among infected women by COVID-19 in the perinatal period	Graduate studies
Mental health of nursing professionals in Brazil during the COVID-19 pandemic: a cross-sectional study	Graduate studies
Guide on skin care for health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic	Graduate studies and Undergraduate studies

The extension activities, i.e., activities promoted by the university to interact with the community, were reorganized to the guarantee the exchange of general knowledge with scientific knowledge and to improve the interchange of new knowledge with the society to fight transmissibility of

coronavirus and to promote health information.⁽⁵⁾ Students and professor participated in immunization campaign, as well as developed, by employing technological resources, structures that allowed higher approximation of health care community with the society in order to reduce psychosomatic losses reported by the population during the social isolation period.

The EPE in a partnership with leading areas of the Unifesp (Human Resource and General Administration Section) facing the current scenario has implemented the remote working to enable their professors and administrative technicians to keep operating. We created list of employees for part time on-site work to allow flexibility of operation, tactic, and strategy of the institution. Professors and education administrative technicians who were not in the risk group, i.e., those older than 60 years, hypertensive, asthmatic, diabetics, and smokers, participated of scheduled extension activities as well as supervised clinical training curriculum of the nursing undergraduate students from the 4 academic year and also in other special remote activities designed for students from the three other academic years. The academic activities of graduate program were remote only. The operating team was divided to ensure the normal functioning of all administrative activities. A number of important sanitary, physical, and electronic safety measures were implemented as standard operating procedures during the pandemic. The administration of EPE established the mandatory use of facemasks within buildings of the college and protective barriers and place markers such as tapes or cones were placed at receptions and common areas every 1,5 meters to provide individuals with visible cues that support physical distancing. Alcohol gel dispenser were placed and sanitization of common areas occurred more frequently, in addition, the measurement of body temperature became mandatory to all entering in the building of the college. The board of director of EPE-Unifesp had faced a number of challenges to guarantee the functioning of the college, however, the emergence actions adopted named “crisis management” allowed, minimally, to keep the organizational structure working.

In care areas, important measures were taken to guarantee the safety of professionals and students to increase the dynamic aligned with relationship and integration of teams. Measures that were constant in professional and student practice became indispensable and fundamental to enable practice of care. The nurses and nursing technicians staff involved in activities of the Hospital São Paulo/Hospital Universitário (HSP/HU) and outpatient units associated with the EPE-Unifesp, were trained both face-to-face and remotely to delivery care for patients with COVID-19.

Considering the current scenario, the EPE-Unifesp was able to implement a number of the initiatives to guarantee teaching, research, extension, management, and management and health care assistance. To provide guidance for student community, their families, and collaborators of the college, the leadership groups and health professionals, especially in those of the nursing area, and the departments that compose the EPE-Unifesp designed digital materials (flowcharts, cartoons stories, educative poster, among others), mobilized students to participated in vaccination campaigns against

the influenza virus (H1N1 and H2N3) for older people, people requiring special conditions and military force, to stimulate and implement specific training for professionals who remained working during the pandemic to provide assistance, particularly auxiliary nursing, nursing technicians, and nurse of teaching hospital associated with the EPE-UNIFESP. In addition our college was contributed with the development of new discoveries, with funding from public agencies, during the social isolation period and he peak of transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It is important to highlight the campaign that was conducted for donation of PPE, as well as the providing of materials by the HU/HSP-Unifesp.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the essential role that nurses and other health care professionals play on protect people's health and save lives. A new report from WHO, titled "*The State of the World's Nursing 2020*", requests more investments in education, better working conditions, and promotion of the leadership role of nurses, as strengthen actions for the contribution of nurses to the health system.⁽⁶⁾ Still, a number of activities need to be done, however, social contribution and lessons learned during this pandemic would be permanent and they would help to establish new ways of doing nursing at the EPE.

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