

Dear Editor,

Bertolozzi and Padilha have presented a fascinating account of their plans to develop education for nurses at the doctorate level to create new research and education networks⁽¹⁾. The aims of their approach are also praiseworthy – particularly their aims to respond to the needs of the population and to reduce social inequalities. However there are a number of barriers that need to be overcome before their strategy will succeed.

First of all there is the goal of engendering better harmony between teaching and research. Although this is a reasonable goal, its achievement is not straightforward. In many third level educational institutions there is conflict between education and research. Many lecturers are contracted to teach but spend most of their time doing research. Indeed much of the funding that university departments receive is dependent on them applying for and winning research grants. Ironically this can lead some teaching units to neglect their teaching. More value and rewards need to be placed on those who simply deliver teaching within third level institutions.

Secondly responding to the needs of the population with particular reference to reducing social inequalities is also less than straightforward. Too much research in healthcare is biomedical research and individual biomedical research barons hold a great deal of power within the universities. Most research produced is quantitative scientific research. This makes it more of a struggle to produce qualitative research or social science research or indeed to win plaudits for such research. Once again a rebalancing is needed in this direction to produce more population level research and more social science research.

Thirdly and lastly ensuring more nursing input into research will also be a challenge. A network would be helpful as would a programmatic approach so that improvements are sustainable. Encouraging more interdisciplinary research would also be helpful and would likely involve partnerships and mentorship between very experienced researchers and those with less experience.

The authors have laid out a significant challenge – the next steps will be overcoming the barriers and designing long-lasting improvements.

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References

1. Bertolozzi MR, Padilha KG. Innovation and responsibility in education and research in Latin America [editorial]. *Rev Esc Enferm USP*. 2014;48(2):200-5.

Dear Dr Kieran Walsh

We would like to thank you for sharing your relevant comments related to our editorial Innovation and responsibility in Training and Research in Latin America, published in the Journal of School of Nursing of São Paulo University, in April, 2014.

We totally agree with your concerns about the lack of harmony between the dimensions of the university: teaching and research. In the School of Nursing of the University of São Paulo (EEUSP), we try to harmonize them to the activities of extension in services to the community. Professors at USP are hired to work, simultaneously, in these areas – graduation and post-graduation (Stricto Sensu), combining research to the activities to community – and the evaluation of the professors is focused on verifying their progresses in those three axes.

Unfortunately, there has been progressively in the global scene, almost absolute prioritization for publishing. We consider that the production of knowledge is beneficial and necessary, however the quantity of these publications do not always translate themselves into quality of innovative knowledge which should answer to demands of changes required in the nursing practice (in assistance, management and education).

In our belief, the researching development must make sense for our societies, which pay taxes for supporting public universities. We consider as a necessity to understand the health-illness as a process that is individual, taking into account subjectivities, but also intermediated by structural aspects, involving economy, politics, ideology and culture. This belief certainly produces Nursing practices considering the social and the health necessities of the population, also oriented to change the epidemiologic profiles and to mitigate the human suffering, which are also a result from the iniquities.

Considering the development of the Interinstitutional Doctorate (EEUSP-Chile), all researches that are being developed for obtaining the PhD must involve objects focused in themes associated to Chilean people. We believe that these researches can build important and innovative knowledge for Latin America and expand the dialog beyond the boundaries of the Southern-American continent.

Yours sincerely,
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