

The need to achieve excellence in nursing research

How do nurses take advantage of the opportunities to advance nursing science and technology? What political venue may perhaps be discussed or debated?

Nursing research and nursing knowledge have been growing in broadness, significance, and depth. We have been achieving recognition at the local, national, and international arena. There is an increase in the number of graduate programs in nursing worldwide that prepare and educate nurses at the master's and doctoral levels. There is also an increase in number of undergraduate programs in nursing. These facts are consistent with the steady demand for nurses who have been educated at the bachelor, master, and doctoral levels. The number of researchers and students are becoming well prepared to develop knowledge and publish quality research reports. However, comparing with other disciplines, nursing researchers continue to have difficulty competing with high quality publications. Even though nursing journals have been increasing their impact factors, they continue to have low impact in science compared to other disciplines with similar efforts for the advancement of science. Regarding the development of high impact technologies, nursing continues to be less effective in gaining respect and recognition for its innovations and science.

The process of knowledge development and the management of knowledge development involve productive potential and the development of competencies. It surpasses research methodology or political competencies to read reality and to focus on knowledge development with respect to interactions and production of knowledge that would be useful for the society. Envisioning the ways or steps can contribute to the advancement, stagnation, exclusion, or deny of the need of new knowledge. We need knowledge that contributes to better quality of life and better health to promote dignity and stable life conditions. There is a need for technology that extends life, that promotes the rights to be free of suffering, and that promote the exercise of citizenship even in the presence of limitations. We need the potential intellectual and ethical care to promote health, since health care is a value. We must be committed to human life and with the several possibilities of living.

The significance and the depth of nursing knowledge, in its broadness and specificity, are a constant advancement and retrocedence between the proper/specific, the collective/interdisciplinary, and the interface/approximation. These aspects strengthen the identity of the discipline of nursing, which lead to new perspectives of the practice and professional competencies. These facts generate some questions: where are we going? What sustains our profession? What are the nurse competencies today and what will be the perspectives of those competencies in 2020? How about in 2050? Will we survive? What sort of disunion and agreement will we have ahead? Will nursing research point out or direct a new trajectory or will we be carried away to conform to the influence of other disciplines and the establishment or established knowledge? What political forces legitimate nursing science and technology? What political forces are debated and come to an agreement among the members of the discipline of nursing? What pinnacle in nursing research should we reach? Why is it necessary to achieve the highest pinnacle in nursing research? What would be the trajectory of the development of knowledge that enhances the visibility and recognition of the discipline of nursing as a unique science, health science, socio-political science, and organizational and educational science? Or just the development of technologies or instruments that promote the health and well-being of human beings? And, at the same time allow us to focus on nursing care or actions according to the functioning and vital processes of the human body?

Certainly, the new pinnacles of nursing research are situated in the dominion of new research methodologies and in nursing practice informed by the findings by either theoretical/philosophical or clinical nursing research, and by nursing care or interventional research that lead to the

development of new knowledge or advanced science, high impact technologies and publications in top tier journals. These activities must involve a team of doctoral prepared researchers and experts in unique knowledge with recognized relevance. Perhaps, those new pinnacles will be achieved if they are guided by premises in agreement with the “Nursing Coordination Area” of the CAPES in directing the definition of the new profile of the doctorate in nursing (document presented during the II Meeting of the Nursing Coordination Area of the CAPES 2008-2010 with the coordinators of graduate programs in nursing in 09/25/2008 in Sao Paulo, SP) as follows:

Competencies in the state of the art of nursing and its thematic/area of practice, with abilities for dialogue at the international level as well as the understanding of similar accomplishment levels, meaning depth in the scope and laterality in the way of thinking to allow interrelationships in the scientific community to incorporate and produce nets for the development of knowledge;

- Skills/competencies for research, coordination of teams and project management skills (development of projects, budget, chronogram of activities, and other);

- Expertise in the scientific methods and/or development of new methods and technologies for the production of advanced knowledge;

- Competency in the specificity of the nursing discipline in respect to its broadness and depth and in specific thematic or its knowledge interface in order to contribute to its advancement by incorporating new knowledge and practice, which give direction for an interdisciplinary practice;

- Exercise of the educational process by collaborating in the education and training of new thinkers/ professionals in competencies/ability in the knowledge of the discipline of nursing and/or correlated areas of knowledge and having a critical, reflexive, and constructive point of view;

- Perception and interpretation of opportunities for the development of new knowledge by evaluating its theoretical and practical significance on the basis of knowledge of other disciplines;

- Prospectus in research opportunities by funding agencies;

- Capability for defending ideas to peers and members of other disciplines;

- Competency in the instruments and processes for dissemination/socialization of knowledge in top tier journals;

- Identification and promotion of new directions for the development of nursing knowledge by envisioning its scientific and technological uniqueness and social contribution in order to consolidate and strengthen its knowledge;

- Capability to develop a scientific career that includes leadership, depth of knowledge, academic recognition, professional experience, and personal needs or interest;

- Acknowledgment that the achievement of new pinnacles in nursing research is a great challenge for the practitioners of Brazilian nursing, especially nursing researchers.

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