

**Challenges and prospects for nursing in the next decade**

The foreseeable demographic and epidemiologic changes in Brazil, and in a good part of the world, are marked by the highest proportion of elderly in the population. It is probable that in 2021, we will have more than 13.0% of people who are over 60 years of age. Consequently, it is estimated that the increase in prevalence rates of chronic diseases and exogenous causes such as stress and physical exhaustion associated with lifestyle, and the sequelae resulting from accidents at work and in transit, trauma and addiction to illicit drugs, will cause major dependence of individuals and families on the care of nurses.

We have many canons and for a long time they will be necessary, both in care and control of transmitted and preventable diseases with agility in the system of immunization and epidemiological surveillance; coverage in the care of women during pregnancy and childbirth, childhood, and finally across the life cycle, in which professional nurses work.

The health indicators are poor and the ratio of 0.6 professional nurses per 1000 population contrasts with countries that have the best health indicators and in which the ratio varies from 9 per thousand inhabitants as nurses in Japan, 10 in the United States, 11 in Canada and 12 nurses per 1000 inhabitants in Germany.

With 1,480,653 members, the profession of nursing is the largest segment of the workforce of the country's health care. Within this contingent, only 18.4% are professional nurses, 43.5% are nursing technicians, 37.6% are nursing assistants, and 0.5% are clerks. They are present in home care, professional training, research, and especially in hospital services, next to the client, twenty-four hours a day<sup>(1)</sup>.

In 2021, 4.3 million people will be in the nursing profession; it is projected that 37.0% will be professional nurses, 61.5% technicians, and 1.5% nursing assistants. It is expected that the pyramid will be inverted due to actions already in practice. By 2021, the majority of the auxiliary nursing staff will be technical nurses, primarily due to the COREn-SP partnership with the Government of the State of Sao Paulo to create the Technical High School Network Program that will certainly have the backing of the federal government.

The nursing undergraduate degree will increasingly be an option for social and professional mobility for members of the nursing team. In general, nursing assistants and technicians step into the many undergraduate courses in private schools. On the other hand, public schools, besides forming their contingents, should offer specialized courses to graduates of private schools.

Opportunities for post-graduate programs with scholarships abroad, and the promotion of interchange of students and professors of higher education with foreign institutions is a current trend that will bring a positive impact on the future of nursing.

The teaching of nursing, which is aimed at human well-being, beyond the traditional biomedical teachings and the integration of technology and humanism, will use more simulation technologies and distance learning. Besides the research area, studies conducted about evidence-based health care, taking into account the preferences and values of the client, point towards the clinical decisions that ensure the best outcomes<sup>(2)</sup>. New communication technologies for learning will be key to the success of accession of injury prevention and treatment. Interactive management (multiprofessional) will offer windows of opportunity that will enhance the strategic vision shared by nurses and other professionals<sup>(3)</sup>.

Professional nurses will have new partnerships, for example, with engineering, with respect to innovation projects for equipment and commodities; with economy and information technology, which should contribute to the formation of the pro-active, entrepreneurial professional, with systematic clinical reasoning and the power of synthesis.

However, nursing as the science of care that works with and for people has as fundamental ethical relations permeating all areas of education, whether in technical courses, undergraduate, or graduate school.

Technology is increasingly an indispensable tool for the nurse, but it is not a substitute, because to meet the health needs of human beings, we will increasingly require competent nurses and supportive care.

## REFERENCES

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