

EXPERIENCE OF THE U-NURSING LATAM TEAM IN THE RESEARCH ENTITLED “NURSES WORKING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (ENTRADUP)”

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It is imperative to identify and give voice to the Nursing personnel that have remained in the first line of care to the population during epidemics and pandemics. Presenting the particular needs of these professionals through international perspectives will allow proposals to be made in the regional scope to improve the working conditions.

Cross-border research studies should also focus on one of the main actors suffering the effects of the pandemic (health personnel, and nurses in particular), as one of the groups most affected by all the changes required to face a problem of this magnitude, as safety of their practice must be guaranteed as part of their work, which is provision of care to the population¹.

However, in almost all of Latin America, the preparation to face the COVID-19 pandemic was insufficient and late, reason why, unfortunately, there were many human losses, both among the population and among the health professionals who did not manage to survive². It should be noted that at least three Latin American countries (Brazil, Mexico and Peru) were among the five nations in the world with the highest mortality rates³.

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During the pandemic, the care of people with COVID-19 was responsibility of the Nursing personnel⁴⁻⁵, as was the case in most countries, allocated to the first line of care, which led this group of professionals to face important changes in behavior and in the perceptions about the events that came along^{3,6}. This motivated us to devise strategies that would allow us to study and identify the conditions in which the Nursing personnel was and is developing their work activities.

As of spring 2020, the impact of the pandemic on the Nursing and Midwifery workforce was already being studied in the United States, such as in working documents for the National Academy of Medicine Consensus Study on the Future of Nursing 2020-2030⁷. The research project was carried out by Dr. Allison Squires in her capacity as Distinguished Nurse Scholar in Residence of the National Academy of Medicine, and its results were presented at the Academy sessions⁸.

The Latin American Nursing community at that time (May-April) began to feel the terrible effect of the pandemic already installed in Latin America⁴. It was at that moment that, using the recruitment strategy on social networks to collect information from the research project entitled "Nurses Working during the Pandemic (ENTRADUP)", Dr. Allison contacted the former National Nursing Director of the Mexican Health Department (Dr. Juana Jiménez Sánchez), to invite her to join the information collection phase. From this approach and recognizing the importance of knowing the effects for the Nursing personnel, the proposal arises for this project to be expanded to other Latin American countries, given the position of Dr. Jiménez at U-Nursing LatAm as regional director for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. Thus, the proposal arises to celebrate a Collaboration Agreement between the Growing Up Foundation and the University of New York, with the initial purpose of incorporating Nursing personnel from the Latin American region into the study.

It should be noted that the Growing Up Foundation is a non-governmental, civil and private, not-for-profit, social and community benefit organization, whose objective is to carry out activities that promote quality and sustainability of the groups of interest through the design, elaboration and management of proposals in the national and global contexts. The U-Nursing LatAm Campaign is within one of its lines, calling for the participation of people, associations and health and educational institutions, among others, to invite integration as a community, initially Latin American, but which, as it becomes known, gradually incorporates members from other continents⁹.

U-Nursing LatAm is organized in a General Directorate, another for the Global Coordination (North America, Europe, Middle East and Africa, and Asia-Pacific) and in three Regional Directorates (Mexico-Central America and the Caribbean, South America, and Colombia), and it is through these three regional offices that we joined the ENTRADUP research study⁹.

To this end, the Regional Directorate for Mexico-Central America and the Caribbean defined a work program to inform Latin American countries about the ENTRADUP project, validated by the University of New York Ethics and Research Committee. The countries assembled a work team with designation of a leader or coordinator and their performance was formalized by signing a Commitment Letter. After completing the minimum required sample, it would be their responsibility to make effective use of the information through scientific publication, executive presentations to opinion leaders and governmental authorities, dissemination at events and other mechanisms that would make the working conditions visible to generate policies that allow maintaining the workforce of nurses and midwives and favor improvements in the conditions and, based on this, support personal, professional and work recovery.

Currently, of the 16 participating countries, 50% have completed their sample and 4,215 surveys have been collected at the global level¹⁰. The U-Nursing LatAm Coordinating team is accompanying the remaining 8 countries in different academic and scientific events to guarantee completion of their data.

The participation and experience of the coordinating group from the Latin American region drives this type of research studies with a focus on contributing to Nursing evidence. In this integration and sharing scope, we set out to formulate collaborative and interprofessional research and innovation projects, conducting them in the various Nursing and Health Sciences approach areas.

The contributions of this research will make it possible to expand and identify, for the first time, the factors that influenced Nursing professionals' performance during the COVID-19 pandemic in a variety of contexts, in order to bridge gaps in the literature of studies that comprise the experiences of low- and middle-income countries. This will be of great relevance to the world literature, where Latin American Nursing is barely mentioned.

This is thus stated by Dr. Allison when she mentions that, if this evidence gap persists, the risk is for nurses and midwives from these countries to be overlooked in the political response during the rest of the pandemic and the recovery period; in addition to representing a threatening situation to sustainability of the Nursing workforce and to women's well-being, given their majority in the Nursing profession⁸.

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