

NURSING HISTORY: REFLECTIONS ON TEACHING AND RESEARCH AT UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL

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This study aims to contribute to the discussion on the development of a specific research line on Nursing History. It concludes by addressing the current situation of nursing teaching in undergraduate courses, its persisting difficulties and growing possibilities of this yet so little explored field.

DESCRIPTORS: history of nursing; nursing; teaching

HISTORIA DE LA ENFERMERÍA: REFLEXIONES SOBRE LA ENSEÑANZA E INVESTIGACIÓN EN CURSOS DE PREGRADO

El artículo busca contribuir para la discusión de las posibilidades de desarrollar una línea de investigación específica en Historia de la Enfermería. Al final, se presenta la situación actual de la enseñanza de este campo del saber de la enfermería en los cursos de pregrado, las dificultades aún persistentes y las posibilidades de crecimiento de este campo todavía tan poco explorado.

DESCRIPTORES: historia de la enfermería; enfermería; enseñanza

HISTÓRIA DA ENFERMAGEM: REFLEXÕES SOBRE O ENSINO E A PESQUISA NA GRADUAÇÃO

Este artigo busca contribuir com a discussão sobre as possibilidades para o efetivo desenvolvimento de uma linha de pesquisa específica em História da Enfermagem. Finaliza discorrendo sobre a situação atual do ensino dessa área de domínio do campo de saber da enfermagem nos cursos de graduação, as dificuldades ainda persistentes e as possibilidades de crescimento desse campo ainda tão pouco explorado.

DESCRITORES: história da enfermagem; enfermagem; ensino

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INTRODUCTION

The first curriculum at the University of São Paulo School of Nursing (EEUSP) was in close accordance with the program determined by the standard official school (Anna Nery School), as established by Decree 20.109/31, but, according to Ms. Maria Rosa Pinheiro, it was still stuck to the American model and only gradually acquired its own characteristics, adapted to the Brazilian situation⁽¹⁾. The curriculum resulting from Law n. 775/49 did not cause big changes in the previous program, as it maintained biological, social and human sciences and different nursing branches, without determining any hour load or duration of the training period, except for public health nursing training, which should correspond to three months.

In Brazil, the nursing history theme area has resisted practically unharmed to all curricular reforms occurred since 1923. Either as independent subjects or integrated in large disciplines or theme areas, like in accordance with current Brazilian curricular guidelines, the fact is that this subject has been included in legal reformulations and is still under discussion. The subject did not figure among the disciplines offered by the first school of nursing, created at the *Hospício Nacional de Alienados* in 1890. Reports about the foundation of a nursing course along Nightingalean lines by English nurses, at the Hospital Samaritano in São Paulo in 1894, on private initiative; and about the course by the Brazilian Red Cross, created in 1916, do not mention this subject either, perhaps because their founders were more concerned about technical professional training. From 1923 onwards, this theme was included in the subject list as "Historical, ethical and social bases of the nurse"; in 1931, it was called Nursing Ethics and History; in 1949, simply Nursing History.

At the end of the 1960's, the University Reform took place, during which Resolution n. 4/72 was approved, which is better known as the preceding Opinion n. 163/72. This Resolution gave rise to the subject Nursing Exercise, which included deontology and professional legislation, without mentioning History, but many faculty members still included historical aspects of Nursing, even without any legal obligation. In 1994, Decree n. 1721/94 established the minimum curriculum for nursing courses, which explicitly included Nursing History as one of the subjects in Nursing Fundamentals. This position was maintained by current curricular guidelines.

Nursing History, as a part of human sciences, is still relegated to a place squeezed in at the beginning or end of nursing contents that are considered noble, reducing the hour load to a minimum in comparison with the duration Alcântara mentioned in his article, i.e. 60 hours, which are ministered on two occasions, in the first and third year⁽²⁾.

This study aims to contribute to the discussion about possibilities to develop teaching and research in Nursing History at undergraduate level, as well as to encourage a scientific production that, in the future, will be more consistent in terms of research process, as mentioned by Barreira and Baptista, and more diversified in terms of foci and range⁽³⁾.

CURRENT TEACING OF NURSING HISTORY IN THE SCHOOL'S UNDERGRADUATE COURSE

Initially, the subject Nursing History was administered during the so-called junior period, that is, in the second semester of the theoretical undergraduate nursing course. At that time, there were four teaching periods: preclinical, junior, intermediary and senior, completing the course in 36 months of class, with two months of holiday during the entire course. At first, renowned faculty like Amália Corrêa de Carvalho and Maria Rosa Pinheiro were responsible for this teaching.

In the current undergraduate program, Nursing History is one module of the subject ENO 101 – Health, Education and Citizenship Policies, ministered to new students each year during the first semester. The subject contains four modules: Nursing History; Health Policies in Brazil; Nursing Work Process: care delivery and management; ethics and citizenship. This is the first nursing subject students have to take in the Undergraduate Program, at the School of Nursing itself. After the first class, students are invited to do a survey among at least three unknown persons, who are neither nursing team members nor the student's relatives, with a view to identifying how these people perceive the nursing profession, using a script called "What is a nurse and what do you think they do in their work?"

Another activity developed in this subject asks students to imagine themselves in the year 2050 and write a will, considering the situation they met and described the progress achieved by the nursing

profession. This activity aims to stimulate students' participation in group activities.

Management and Specialized Nursing, with Nursing History considered as a part of the latter⁽⁴⁾.

RESEARCH ON NURSING HISTORY IN THE UNDERGRADUATE COURSE

Research has been developed with different students, on a totally voluntary and extracurricular basis. Two of these studies have already been published in indexed journals, one is in print and a fourth one has been interrupted since 1998, due to data collection problems. All research started during the preliminary teaching of the Nursing History module and continued during the second and/or third period, when students move ahead with data collection. It is only when students reach the fifth period that the study reaches the phase of data analysis and report elaboration. In general, at the end of the fifth period, the study is ready for publication.

In recent years, research funding agencies have been studying and discussing knowledge areas. More recently, the Brazilian Scientific and Technological Development Council (CNPq) disseminated proposals to change these knowledge areas, with a view to mitigating the severe problem of interdisciplinarity. According to these changes, sub-areas were created in the composition of different knowledge areas, in order to cover various specialties. Thus, Nursing includes four areas: Medical-Surgical, Public Health,

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

At undergraduate level, history teaching should aim to expand students' cultural horizons and develop their ability to judge independently, their intellectual honesty towards research they read and quote, their tolerance, respect for other people's opinions and expressive capacity, in short, knowledge, ideals, attitudes and habits⁽²⁾.

The creation of Nursing History research groups in nursing schools is decisive to increase scientific production in general and these groups' production in particular. Hence, a better understanding about the trajectory of our profession, which is needed to form a critical conscience, also depends on our interest and awareness of past/present relations, making us value our historical roles as actors in historical movements⁽⁴⁾.

In terms of contents, Nursing History teaching cannot consist in a list of people who performed Nursing activities, simultaneously related to facts and events, without presenting an integrated understanding of all of these elements in different scenarios over time. In this perspective, it was acknowledged as early as the 1980's that Nursing History teaching did not appeal to students⁽⁵⁾.

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