Original Article

Overview of nurses' social image published in the print media

Panorama da imagem social da enfermeira divulgada na mídia impressa

Situación de la imagen social de la enfermera divulgada en los medios de comunicación impresos

Miller Fontes Brandão[1] https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4525-1845

Gilberto Tadeu Reis da Silva[1] https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0595-0780

Giselle Alves da Silva Teixeira[1] https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6245-302X

Leonardo Fernandes Nascimento[2] https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2929-1115

Paulo Joaquim Pina Queirós[3] https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1817-612X

Maria Angélica de Almeida Peres[4] https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6430-3540

Aline Di Carla Laitano[5] https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0317-6741

Victor Porfírio Ferreira Almeida Santos[1] https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7408-4150

Corresponding author
Miller Fontes Brandão
E-mail: miller_brandao_100@hotmail.com

Abstract

Objective: to present an overview of nurses' social image published in the Brazilian Printed Media from 1970 to 1999.

Methods: this is an exploratory, documentary, quantitative study, which used as a data source the editions published by *Estado de São Paulo* in the 30 years between 1970 and 1999, which mentioned the term "nurses", identified through web scraping. News processing and analysis carried out using the Sphinx software.

Results: 10,950 issues of the newspaper and 2,528 news items that mentioned the term "nurses" were identified. We identified an average of seven news a month about nurses. However, in 90.3%, nurses were only mentioned in the text, without any highlight or relationship with the main news. Furthermore, most articles were published in the classified section, in the form of an article or column, which, by constitutive characteristic, brings the opinion of the author on a given topic.

Conclusion: we can infer, based on the analyzed data, that despite the significant amount of news published on the subject during the analyzed period, this contributed little to constructing the image of nurses as health professionals in Brazilian society because most of the news only mentioned nurses in the text or used the term to characterize an object or situation.

Resumo

Objetivo: Apresentar um panorama da imagem social da enfermeira divulgada na Mídia Impressa brasileira no período de 1970 a 1999.

Métodos: Estudo exploratório, documental, quantitativo que utilizou como fonte de dados as edições publicadas pelo Jornal Estado de São Paulo nos 30 anos compreendidos entre 1970 e 1999, que mencionaram o termo "enfermeira" ou "enfermeiro", identificadas por meio de *webscraping*. O tratamento e a análise das notícias foram realizados com auxílio do software *Sphinx*.

Resultados: Foram identificadas 10.950 edições do jornal e 2.528 notícias que mencionavam os termos "enfermeiro" ou "enfermeira". Identificamos uma média de sete notícias por mês a respeito da enfermeira. Entretanto, em 90,3%, a enfermeira foi apenas mencionada no texto, sem nenhum destaque ou relação com a notícia principal. Além disso, a maior parte das matérias foi veiculada na seção classificados, no formato de artigo ou coluna, que, por característica constitutiva, traz a opinião do autor sobre determinado tema.

Conclusão: Podemos inferir, com base nos dados analisados, que apesar do significativo quantitativo de notícias publicadas a respeito do tema durante o período analisado, isso pouco contribuiu para a construção

[1]Nursing School, Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.
[2]Institute of Science, Technology and Innovation, Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.
[3]Escola Superior de Enfermagem de Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal.
[4]Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
[5] Emergency Mobile Care Service, City Hall of Salvador, Salvador, BA, Brazil.
Conflicts of interest: nothing to declare.

da imagem da enfermeira enquanto profissional de saúde na sociedade brasileira porque a maior parte das notícias apenas mencionou a enfermeira no texto ou utilizou o termo para caracterizar um objeto ou situação.

Resumen

Objetivo: Presentar cómo es la situación de la imagen social de la enfermera divulgada en los medios de comunicación impresos brasileños de 1970 a 1999.

Métodos: Estudio exploratorio, documental, cuantitativo que utilizó como fuente de datos las ediciones publicadas por el periódico Estado de São Paulo durante los 30 años comprendidos entre 1970 y 1999, que mencionaron el término "enfermera" o "enfermero", identificadas mediante *webscraping*. Las noticias fueron tratadas y analizadas con ayuda del software *Sphinx*.

Resultados: Se identificaron 10.950 ediciones del periódico y 2.528 noticias que mencionaron los términos "enfermero" o "enfermera". Identificamos un promedio de siete noticias por mes relacionadas con enfermeras. Sin embargo, en el 90,3 % de los casos, la enfermera solo fue mencionada en el texto, sin ningún tipo de énfasis o relación con la noticia principal. Además, la mayor parte de las notas fue publicada en la sección de clasificados, en formato de artículo o columna, que, por característica constitutiva, expone la opinión del autor sobre determinado tema.

Conclusión: Con base en los datos analizados, podemos deducir que, a pesar de la cantidad significativa de noticias publicadas sobre el tema durante el período estudiado, contribuyó poco en la construcción de la imagen de la enfermera como profesional de la salud en la sociedad brasileña, porque en la mayoría de las noticias solo se mencionó a la enfermera en el texto o se utilizó el término para caracterizar un objeto o situación.

Introduction

The positive image of any profession in society can result in power, recognition and status. Everything that is imagined about a given professional category is as relevant as what it really is, as the repercussion of a created image can favor or hinder the development of a profession, its valuation and its social recognition.[1]

In this sense, the media, as an instrument for conveying messages and information in society, takes a strategic role as a (re)producer of discourses that contribute to the formation of certain images of subjects, institutions and professions. However, it should be considered that this transmission channel always presents the facts from a certain perspective, which may be veiled or explicit in the news broadcast, and this impartiality is inherent to the journalistic activity.

It is also necessary to recognize the presence of biases in the dissemination and/or exposure of realities by the media.[2] The media discourse, therefore, when reporting events, producing meanings and seeking to influence its readers, shows the symbolic power of some agents and social groups.[3]

With regard to the health area, it is common for the media to privilege population's interests through the journalistic medium and the media exposure, given the legitimacy of the facts and events that took place, is biased in order to please viewers.[4]

In this context, we recognize the influence of the media in constructing the image of nursing throughout its existence, as a professional field, in Brazil. We also assume that the constant changes in the activities and profile of nursing professionals throughout history have contributed to the conception of what this professional field truly is and its social meaning.

However, the way in which nursing practice and its changes were communicated in society through the media is significantly important for the construction of the image of this profession, so much so that the weight of this disclosure still echoes in the image that a large part of society has about three categories that make up the field of Brazilian nursing: nurse, nursing technician, and nursing assistant.[5] It is common, for example, that the three professions are mentioned in reports without any differentiation between their knowledge and actions, in a sign that, for the media in general, nursing is a homogeneous mass translated exclusively in the figure of nurses.

In this context, nurses have been cited as one of the most impacted by the dissemination in the media, as they are present in almost all health services and generally take on the role of intermediary manager, i.e., they manage not only nursing care, but also health care. Thus, they end up exposing themselves more to different situations, including those with negative outcomes, which, although not always dependent on their performance, are directly attributed to them by the media.[5,6]

The high frequency with which this occurs makes it difficult for people not inserted in this daily life to properly identify and understand the various

responsibilities for these events, leaving the impression, as they are narrated by the media, that result from an exclusive act of a single profession and not of a confluence of actions and responsibilities.

We also consider it important to highlight that the media, while disclosing negative events, also highlights the struggles and movements undertaken by nursing in search of changes in education and health policies as well as in working conditions and relationships.[5,6]

We understand that nurses' professional image is continually constructed and influenced by the historical moment experienced. Under a retrospective analysis, the different images attributed by the press to this professional over the years are notorious, especially with regard to social movements and struggles in the category. At the same time, we also identified how much this disclosure reverberates in the socially constructed and propagated image of this profession, under several other aspects.[7-9]

Given the above, and aware that the printed media plays a crucial role in the recognition, power and status of nursing, this study seeks to present an overview of nurses' social image published in the Brazilian print media from 1970 to 1999.

As it is a means of communication that stimulates discussions and debates in various public and private spaces, informing and raising reflections in countless readers, we believe it is relevant, for a better understanding of the social construction of nurses' image, to know the history of reports published in this important national newspaper. We also emphasize that, in the period defined for this study, the aforementioned newspaper exerted great influence on Brazilian society.

Methods

This is an exploratory, documentary research, with a quantitative approach. The aim was to provide an overview of the news published in the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* about the work of nurses in the period from 1970 to 1999. Documentary research uses methods for the analysis and understanding of various documents and thus allows obtaining a

wealth of information for the study by bringing the object of study closer to its sources and historical and sociocultural contexts.[10] The source of data collection occurs through written documents or not, these being its primary source.[11]

We chose this newspaper because, in the decades investigated, it had great national repercussion, in addition to its wide reach, reliability and influence on the opinion of its readers. It is also the oldest newspaper still in operation in the country, with its foundation date January 4, 1875.

We used as a data source all editions published by the newspaper in the 30 years between 1970 and 1999. It is worth mentioning that this newspaper has daily circulation and that it was not published at any time in the studied clipping, which totaled 10,950 editions published in the studied time frame. The collection of this newspaper is available and the copies of the period of interest for this study are even digitized and available free of charge.

Thus, through web scraping techniques, an evident procedure for automated online data collection, also called Web Data Collection, 11,000 news published between January 1, 1970 and December 31, 1999 were identified.[12]

We adopted, as an inclusion criterion for this study, the mention of the term "nurses", as well as both words in their respective plurals, at any time in the text, in news published in reports, columns, headlines, articles and interviews. Thus, the study population consisted of 2,528 news items selected from the 10,950 issues of the newspaper analyzed because they were news that mentioned nurses at some point.

News treatment and analysis were carried out using the Sphinx software – a tool for analyzing quantitative and qualitative data. Sphinx works based on four stages: (1) elaboration of the questionnaire or research instrument; (2) collection of responses; (3) data preparation; (4) consolidated data analysis and reporting.

The first step was to insert a questionnaire into the software containing the following information about the news: date of publication, type of author of the news, section in which it was published,

format and characteristics of linking nurses' image (main figure, secondary figure or just quote). Then, the 2,528 news items were analyzed individually based on the investigated variables.

The Sphinx software allowed data tabulation characterized in each subject, generating graphs and tables with absolute and relative frequencies as well as the crossing between analysis characteristics.

The standards proposed by an Institutional Review Board defined in Resolution 466 of December 12, 2012, of the Brazilian National Health Council (*Conselho Nacional de Saúde*), documentary research and that uses public documents for free access to the population, it is unnecessary to submit to an Institutional Review Board. Thus, it is refuted against Resolution 510 of April 7, 2016, which will not be registered and assessed by an Institutional Review Board, surveys that use public information in terms of Law 12,527/2011 and surveys that use information in the public domain.

According to the legislation in force in the country, images and written journalistic reports are considered intellectual works protected by a specific law, according to Article 7 of Law 9610/98, which amends, updates and consolidates copyright legislation. Thus, all copyrights of the materials used in this research were guaranteed, as well as the actual description of the analyzed contents.

Results

The 2,528 news analyzed were published over 30 years, as shown in figure 1. The average of news published in the 360 months analyzed was seven news/month, with emphasis on the years 1979 and 1975, which presented, respectively, the largest (127 total and 10.58/month) and the smallest (52 total and 4.33/month) number of news published about it.

News in a newspaper can be written by different subjects – from journalists to readers, who can send their observations and suggestions to the editor. Thus, we classify the news according to the type of author (Figure 2).

We alert to the variety of authors and, at the same time, to the diversity of formats in which the news were published, understanding that the news format interferes with the emphasis and content presented (Figure 3).

The headline is characterized by being a headline in the newspaper, written in large letters, usually consisting of a concise catchphrase highlighted on the front page.[13] The article or column is an eminently opinionated text that brings with it the author's view on a certain subject.[14] The interview consists of collecting statements taken by the journalist for publication in the newspaper and, therefore, brings the interviewee's opinion or ideas.[15] The report is journalistic content based on direct testimony of facts and situations explained in words
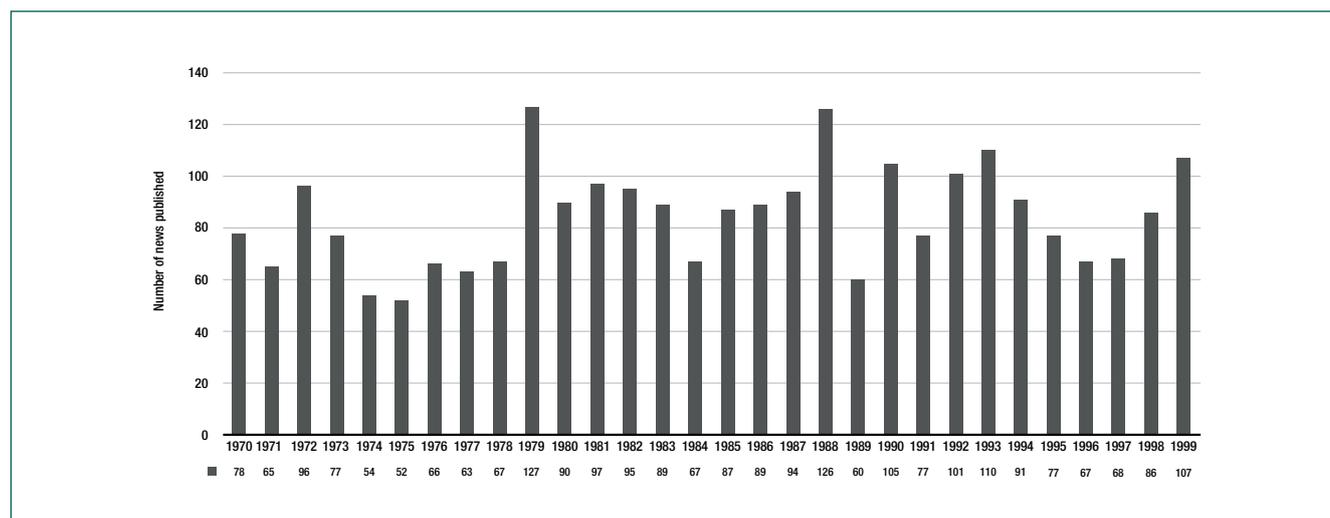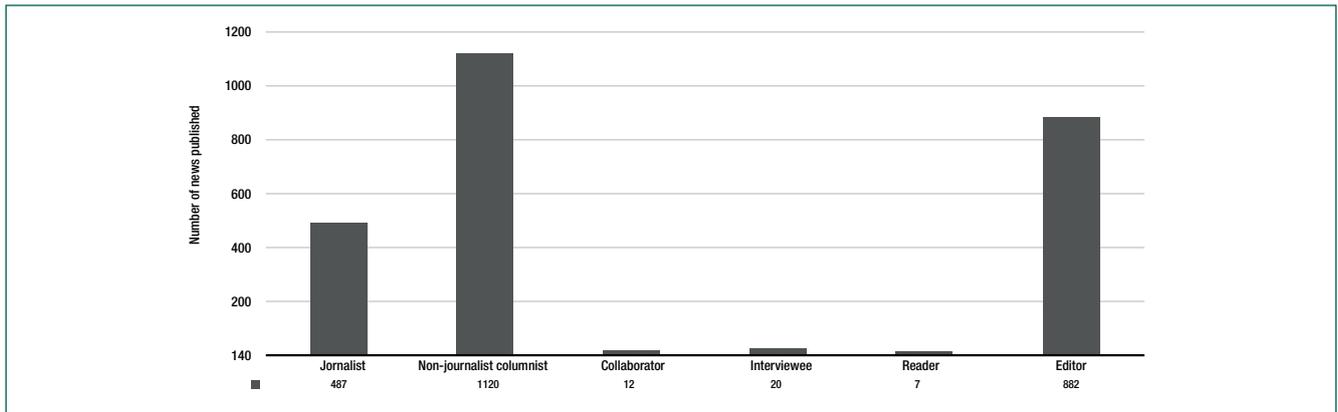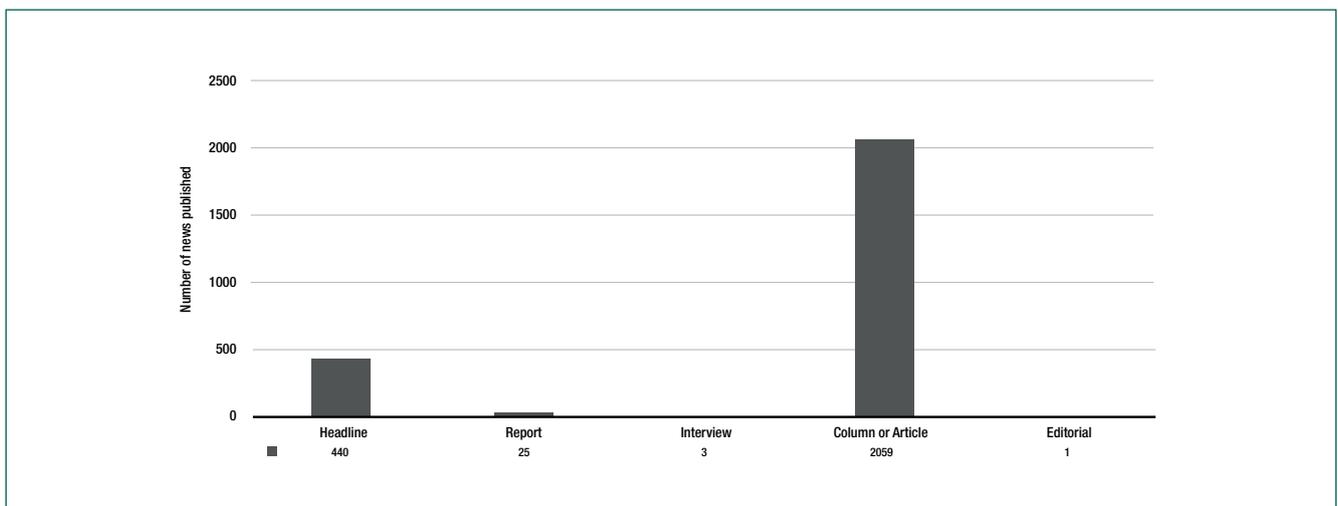

Figure 1. News published about nurses in *O Estado de São Paulo* from 1970 to 1999

Figure 2. News published about nurses in *O Estado de São Paulo* from 1970 to 1999 according to type of author

Figure 3. News published about nurses in *O Estado de São Paulo* from 1970 to 1999 according to format

and, from a more current perspective, by stories lived by people, related to their context.[14]

Finally, the news was classified according to the mention of the term "nurses". We considered three variables: central figure, when nurses were the main subject of the published news; secondary figure, when mentioned in the supporting role in the information disclosed and linked to the central figure; figure mentioned, when only mentioned in the news, without highlighting or focusing on the main theme.

In 2,276 news stories, nurses were only mentioned; they appeared as a central figure in 188 news and in 64 nurses was a secondary figure. When relating the three decades studied with the quantity of news in which nurses appear as the central figure, we identified 20 (10.6%) in the 1970s; 36 (19.14%) in the 1980s; 132 (70.21%) news in the 1990s.

Discussion

The results of this study point to the low visibility of tourists as a profession in *O Estado de São Paulo* in the analyzed period.

We identified that the figure of nurses was present in a considerable number of editions of *O Estado de São Paulo*. Over the period investigated, we identified an average of seven news per month about this professional.

However, in almost all (90.3%), nurses were only mentioned in the text, without any highlight or relationship with the main news. Furthermore, most of the articles were published in the classified section, in the form of an article or column, which, by constitutive characteristic, brings the opinion of the author on a given topic.

We recognize that the contribution of print media to the construction of knowledge/images in society is related to the guarantee of principles such as journalism of objectivity, impartiality and truthfulness of the facts. However, the frameworks adopted in the publication allow us to know under which perspectives the subjects are presented and also how the public image of those involved in the narratives will be built. Framing can shed light on specific aspects of an event or subject.[2,5]

Based on the results obtained and analyzed, we can affirm that the news published in *O Estado de São Paulo* in the period investigated contribute little to the construction of nurses' image as health professionals. These are news that, for the most part, use the term "nurses" as an adjective to characterize some object or situation that has little or no relation to professional practice.

Additionally, it is not uncommon for news regarding nurses to be linked to errors in the provision of care or to stereotypes created around the image of these professionals.

A study carried out with Israeli nurses[16] identified a tendency that the media and media reinforce negative aspects of the profession as a factor that contributes to the distorted stereotype of nurses in society, with impacts also on its devaluation.[17,18]

The stereotyped representation of nurses extends to her body, shape and color, by bringing her as a woman, white and beautiful. This construction originated from a gender-racial pattern that reinforces the formation of nurses' professional identity in an excluding and discriminatory way, since black women were considered incompatible with the desired professional profile and, therefore, should occupy less prestigious positions generally technical-level positions.[19-21]

Nurses' image in the printed media and the influence of this dissemination on the construction of the social image of this professional can be analyzed in different ways over the decades, since historical milestones contribute to these occasional events.[2,5]

This fact is evident when we analyze the amount of news that brought nurses as a central figure. In the 1990s, which recorded the highest amount (70%) of news mentioning nurses as the central figure, some important historical milestones for the profession deserve to be highlighted, one of them the creation of the Brazilian Unified Health System (*Sistema Único de Saúde*), regulated in 1990 by Law 8,080.

The SUS implementation process caused a change in care models in order to meet its structuring principles, universality, comprehensiveness and equity, which, in turn, demanded a change in the profile of health workers. As multidisciplinary health team members, nurses needed to redirect their professional practices and it was necessary to reformulate the current curricula, calling for discussion class entities, schools and health organizations, in search of a swift change in the training of nurses.

In this regard, the 1990s were a milestone for the professional category with regard to legal gains for professional practice. At the time, some achievements included the creation of entities representing the profession and greater political engagement to follow new paths capable of promoting professional appreciation and recognition.[7,9]

However, since the mid-1980s, this political movement in Brazilian nursing has already been observed through the approval of Law 7498/86. This Law regulated the professional practice of nursing and established as non-private activities for these professionals in nursing coordination, participation in teaching in nursing schools, management of nursing schools and participation in examining boards of nursing practices, in addition to the exercise of nursing.[22,23]

Thus, the results show how different political moments in Brazil unveiled different approaches to the image of nurses in the print media, as well as an increasingly frequent publication over the 30-year period, reiterating the influence of the printed media as a means of communication that reinforces the political, social and historical context, contributing to the solidity of nurses' image according to what is exposed at the present moment.

As a study limitation, we highlight the use of written text only, since the iconographic ma-

terial of the news was not analyzed. As the images published by the newspaper are intended to illustrate and/or reinforce the idea conveyed by the news, incorporating this analysis could have provided complementary findings, as well as the use of a single newspaper as a documentary source, with specific descriptors to portray the object of study.

Conclusion

The study presented an overview of nurses' social image, published in the print media in the period from 1970 to 1999. We can infer, based on the analyzed data, that, despite the significant amount of news published on the topic during the analyzed period, this contributed little to the construction of nurses' image as health professionals in Brazilian society because most of the news only mentioned nurses in the text or used the term to characterize an object or situation. The 1990s featured the highest number of news items in which nurses were mentioned as a central figure. This result may be related to the historical moment, which included the implementation of SUS, the regulation of the profession and the strengthening of the struggle movements of the category. It is considered that the present study expands knowledge about the dissemination of nurses' image in the print media by correlating information disclosed with historical moments of struggles and advances in the profession. We suggest carrying out further studies regarding the impacts and forms of use of the printed media, since these means of communication act strongly in the construction and deconstruction of nurses' professional identity.

Collaborations

Brandão MF, Silva GTR, Teixeira GAS, Nascimento LF, Queirós PJP, Peres MAA, Laitano ADC and Santos VFPA contributed to the project design, data analysis and interpretation, article writing and final approval of the version to be published.

References

1. Santos VL, Ferraz AF, Diogo AJ, Souza RM. A imagem de enfermeira e do enfermeiro percebida por alunos ingressantes no curso de graduação. Rev Bras Enferm. 1988;41(3/4):241–51.

2. Cavaca AG, Vasconcellos-Silva PR, Ferreira P, Nunes JA. Entre evidências e negligências: cobertura e invisibilidade de temas de saúde na mídia impressa portuguesa. Cien Saude Colet. 2015;20(11):3569-80.

3. Kneodler TD, Paes GO, Porto FR, Nassar PR, Oliveira AB. Nursing throughout war times: political propaganda and professional valorization (1942-1945). Rev Bras Enferm. 2017;70(2):407–14.

4. Martinez M, Pessoni A, Silva M, Ribeiro V. Assessoria de imprensa, narrativas midiáticas e saúde: simbiose de fontes, jornalistas, leitores, personagens e afetos. Intexto. 2017;0(38):197–224.

5. Silva AR, Padilha MI, Backes VM, Carvalho JB. Identidade profissional de enfermagem: uma perspectiva através das lentes da mídia impressa brasileira. Esc Anna Nery. 2018;22(4):e20180182.

6. Volpe CR, Aguiar LB, Pinho DL, Stival MM, Funghetto SS, Lima LR. Erros de medicação divulgados na mídia: estratégias de gestão do risco. RAHIS. 2016;13(2):97–110.

7. Sousa RC. Associativismo feminino e participação política: um estudo sobre as bases sociais de apoio à Ditadura Militar em Curitiba (1964-1985). Estud Hist. 2018;31(65):389–412.

8. Sreeja v N, Nageshwar V. Public Perception of nursing as a profession. Int J Res Appl Sci Biotechnol. 2018;5(5):15–9.

9. Laitano AD, Silva GT, Almeida DB, Santos VP, Brandão MF, Carvalho AG, et al. Precarização do trabalho da enfermeira: militância profissional sob a ótica da imprensa. Acta Paul Enferm. 2019;32(3):305–11.

10. Figueiredo AM, Souza SR. Como elaborar projetos, monografias, dissertações e teses: da redação científica à apresentação do texto final. 3rd ed. Rio de Janeiro: Lumen Juris; 2010.

11. Sá-Silva JR. Almeida CD, Guindani JF. Pesquisa documental: pistas teóricas e metodológicas. Rev Bras História Ciênc Sociais. 2009; 1(1): 1-15.

12. Marres N, Weltevrede E. Scrapin the social? J Cult Econ. 2013;6(3):313–35.

13. Amaral M. Oh, meu Deus! Manchetes e singularidades na matriz jornalística melodramática. Rev ECO-Pós. 2009;10(2):

14. Melo JM, Assis F. Gêneros e formatos jornalísticos: um modelo classificatório. Intercom Rev Bras Ciênc Comun. 2016; 39(1):39-56.

15. Lopes P. "Géneros literários e géneros jornalísticos: uma revisão teórica de conceitos." Biblioteca Online de Ciências da Comunicação; 2010. [citado 2020 Nov 25]. Disponivel em: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/54050682.pdf

16. Haron Y, Reicher S, Riba S. Factors influencing nursing career choices and choice of study program. Health Mark Q. 2014;31(2):167–77.

17. Colpo JC, Camargo VC, Mattos SA. A imagem corporal da enfermeira como objeto sexual na mídia: um assédio a profissão. Cogitare Enferm. 2006;11(1):67–72.

18. Andrade JB, Cavalcante MB, Apostolico MR. Marketing pessoal e enfermagem: projeção para visibilidade social do enfermeiro. Enferm Foco. 2017;8(1):82–6.

19. Oliveira EB, Carvalho RA, Teixeira E, Zeitoune RC, Sabóia VM, Gallasch CH. Factors Involved In The Training Of Resident Nurses: View Of Alumni From A Residency Program. REME Rev Min Enferm. 2017; 21:e-1064.

20. Lombardi MR, Campos VP. A Enfermagem no Brasil e os contornos de gênero, raça/cor e classe social na formação do campo profissional. Rev ABET. 2018;17(1):28–46.

21. Pizzinato A, Hamann C, Tedesco PC, Jalmusny YM. Aspectos étnico-raciais e de gênero na inserção universitária de jovens africanas no Brasil. Rev Bras Educ. 2017;22(70):732–51.

22. Brasil. Lei n° 2.604, de 17 de setembro de 1955. Regula o Exercício da Enfermagem Profissional. Diário Oficial República Federativa do Brasil; 1955 [citado 2020 Jul 25]. Disponível em: https://www2.camara.leg.br/legin/fed/lei/1950-1959/lei-2604-17-setembro-1955-361190-publicacaooriginal-1-pl.html

23. Silva AR, Padilha MI, Bellaguarda ML, Teodosio SS. O processo de (re/de) construção da identidade profissional de enfermagem na mídia jornalística brasileira: 1980-1986. Texto Contexto Enferm. 2019;28:e20170590.