



Citizens' right to fair access to advanced nursing care

O direito do cidadão à equidade no acesso aos cuidados de Enfermagem Avançada

El derecho del ciudadano a la equidad en el acceso a los cuidados de Enfermería Avanzada

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The proliferation of specialties in different areas within nursing is a positive development for the profession and the discipline, with an increase in knowledge and a focus on nurses' interventions. However, the increase in the number of professionals in practice with increased skills, obtained through master's degrees and doctorates, has not been translated into health policies, management, and organization of services, in order to guarantee citizens access to high-quality, specialized nursing care.

The demographic changes resulting from an aging population, the prevalence of people with chronic illnesses, disabilities, and dependency on self-care combined with low levels of literacy and the overload on health systems, which exceed the limits of their capacity to respond, are challenges that nurses must take on as a differentiated role in solving the population's problems and contributing to the sustainability of policies and organizations.

The International Council of Nurses, in 2020, advocated that Clinical Nurse Specialists possess specialized knowledge, complex decision-making skills, and clinical competencies that enable them to exercise advanced practice that provides expert clinical advice and care based on established diagnoses in specialized clinical fields of practice.¹

To corroborate the above, there is an emerging debate around the role and attributions of Advanced Nursing nurses, with the ability to plan person-centered interventions, promote autonomy and functionality, and empower the family to transition to the role of caregiver,² increasing the effectiveness of interventions and contributing to increased health gains.

The right to health protection and quality care is recognized as a fundamental right of all human beings. The development of nursing knowledge and the training of professionals with more complex clinical skills only make sense if they are put at the service of citizens, guaranteeing them quality care. Access to advanced nursing care is already a reality in some contexts, with benefits for people and repercussions on health indicators, but it is not yet a national or international reality and does not guarantee a basic principle of equity in access to it.

Policies and strategies need to be rethought so that decision-makers and nurses can ensure that every person's right to access specialized and differentiated nursing care is guaranteed.

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