

CHALLENGES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STRICTO SENSU PROFESSIONAL GRADUATION PROGRAM IN NURSING FOR THE FORMATION OF RESEARCHER NURSES

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The Professional Graduate Program is a modality that preserves the essential characteristics of articulation between research, education, and extension. However, technical production, innovation, and social inclusion are differentiating aspects of this program, which aims to train human resources to act and transform the world of work, qualifying the actions in nursing care, management, and education⁽¹⁾.

There has been a growth in Graduate Studies in the Nursing area, especially in the last decade, due to the need to qualify nurses for health services, in compliance with the National Graduate Plan 2011-2020 and consolidation of the Unified Health System⁽²⁾, highlighting the expansion of the professional master's degree programs (24 programs) and the approval of the first two doctorate programs in 2018.

As challenges for the formation of nurses in Professional Graduations, the difficulty of release from work activities stands out, requiring the replacement of the workload for the nurse to participate in academic activities and research. The distancing, in years, from the last academic formation before joining the program is also a concern.

In general, public, private, and philanthropic health institutions do not recognize the importance of training nurses at the masters level to qualify the service, leading to the lack of incentives and work position and salary plans by these institutions.

Another challenge refers to the lack of regular funding for technical productions and scientific publications, which has mobilized programs in search of partnerships and financial resources with public, private, and fostering agencies. In this sense, an example of a partnership was the financing approved by the Federal Nursing Council (COFEN) for the qualification of nurses from different regions of the country, through the CAPES – COFEN agreement signed in February 2017⁽¹⁾.

On the other hand, there are many contributions and advances in nurse education, among which is the strengthening of the professional identity, empowerment, and the resignification of professional practice.

Among the motivations to pursue a master's degree are the desire to broaden their knowledge, either to train for research and teaching, as reported by the master's degree students of academic programs or to improve practice. The professional appreciation through the scientification of the profession, the formation of criticality, and the redemption of commitments and ethical values, are also present in the statements of nurses inserted in professional programs⁽³⁾.

The professional program enables the formation of nurses with the ability to develop and consume research, apply evidence-based practice, and systematize information for decision making, adding value to their professional activities, based on the theoretical frameworks of nursing.

The consumption of research by the assistant nurse is related to the meanings attributed to the scientific production of nursing. Furthermore, there is a gap between what is produced in terms of science and what is consumed. Thus, there is a need to propose strategies that enable better connections between research and the nursing work process⁽⁴⁾.

In this context, the professional program makes an important contribution, which is the formation of researchers who investigate study objects during practice and often identify needs with the team and conduct scientific investigations directed to local, regional or national demands, transferring knowledge to the institutions in which they operate. Thus, it is the contribution of the professional program to conduct research aimed at solving practical problems, with the introduction of technological innovations and new forms of work organization, essential to redesign the articulations between institutions, strengthening the teaching-service integration.

The technological incorporation and innovation in health and nursing can increase the quality of life, effectiveness of care, develop new care techniques, and increase equipment availability, resulting in impacts on the lives of individuals and communities⁽⁵⁾.

In view of the pursuit of technological innovation in health, the professional program empowers nurses to conduct research related to the creation or implementation of entirely new or improved techniques, products, processes, and assistance, managerial, and educational services focusing on the political, economic, and organizational. However, the National Agenda of Health Research Priorities safeguarded on the particularities of each service and its users, should be considered regardless of the various possibilities of technological production⁽⁶⁾. The agenda is an excellent guide that, in addition to indicating the areas most demanding of research attention, strengthens nursing as a science and graduate degree.

In conclusion, the professional program is a relevant strategy in nursing for the formation of qualified professionals, capable of developing and transferring innovative technologies and knowledge to solve high complexity problems in their field, based on scientific evidence, presenting political, social, and economic commitment.

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