

A ENFERMAGEM FORENSE E SEUS CONTEÚDOS CURRICULARES NOS CURSOS DE GRADUAÇÃO EM ENFERMAGEM

FORENSIC NURSING AND ITS CURRICULUM CONTENT IN UNDERGRADUATE NURSING COURSES

ENFERMERÍA FORENSE Y SU CONTENIDO CURRICULAR EN CURSOS DE PREGRADO EN ENFERMERÍA

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RESUMO

Objetivo: Identificar os conteúdos curriculares de enfermagem forense, nos cursos de graduação em Enfermagem. **Método:** Trata-se de uma pesquisa quantitativa, descritiva e exploratória, realizada com coordenadores dos cursos de Enfermagem de 88 Instituições de Ensino Superior. Utilizou-se o Teste Exato de Fisher, para verificar a significância entre as variáveis dependentes (Instituições de Ensino Superior públicas e privadas). **Resultados:** Ao cruzar as variáveis, as Instituições de Ensino Superior privadas (76,5%) tiveram mais respostas em relação às públicas (50,0%) que fornecem tais conteúdos nas suas receptivas disciplinas. Para tal, os conteúdos de enfermagem forense por Instituições de Ensino Superior foram sobre pessoas que sofreram violência no trabalho, vítimas de desastre em massa, pessoas sob uso e abuso de álcool e outras drogas e internações compulsórias. **Conclusão:** Foi possível identificar os conteúdos ministrados nos cursos de Enfermagem, salientando-se a necessidade da existência de uma disciplina específica de enfermagem forense a ser ofertada no projeto pedagógico de curso.

Descritores: Enfermagem Forense; Currículo; Educação; Educação Superior.

ABSTRACT

Objective: To identify the curricular content of forensic nursing in undergraduate nursing courses. **Method:** This is a quantitative, descriptive and exploratory research carried out with coordinators of the Nursing courses of 88 Higher Education Institutions. Fisher's exact test was used to verify the significance between the dependent variables (public and private higher education institutions). **Results:** When crossing the variables, private Higher Education Institutions (76.5%) had more responses than public ones (50.0%) that provide such content in their receptive disciplines. To this end, the content of forensic nursing by Higher Education Institutions was about people who suffered violence at work, victims of mass disaster, people under the use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs and compulsory hospitalizations. **Conclusion:** It was possible to identify the contents taught in nursing courses, emphasizing the need for the existence of a specific forensic nursing discipline to be offered in the course pedagogical project.

Descriptors: Forensic Nursing; Curriculum; Education; Higher Education.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Identificar el contenido curricular de la enfermería forense en los cursos de pregrado en enfermería. **Método:** Se trata de una investigación cuantitativa, descriptiva y exploratoria, realizada con coordinadores de los cursos de Enfermería de 88 Instituciones de Educación Superior. La prueba exacta de Fisher se utilizó para verificar la importancia entre las variables dependientes (instituciones de educación superior públicas y privadas). **Resultados:** Al cruzar las variables, las instituciones privadas de educación superior (76.5%) tuvieron más respuestas que las públicas (50.0%) que proporcionan dicho contenido en sus disciplinas receptivas. Con este fin, el contenido de enfermería forense por parte de las instituciones de educación superior fue sobre personas que sufrieron violencia en el trabajo, víctimas de desastres masivos, personas bajo el uso y abuso de alcohol y otras drogas y hospitalizaciones obligatorias. **Conclusión:** Fue posible identificar los contenidos enseñados en los cursos de Enfermería, enfatizando la necesidad de ofrecer una disciplina específica de enfermería forense en el proyecto del curso pedagógico.

Descriptores: Enfermería Forense; Currículo; Educación; Educación Superior.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the teaching of nursing had changes its epidemiological, economic, social and cultural context, being replaced by a unique and dynamic scientific model, aiming to form nurses not only generalists, but also researchers, qualified educators to act in the different scenarios of the profession⁽¹⁾, through postgraduate programs geared to professional qualification, inserted in the development of researches positively impacting the society⁽²⁾.

However, the training of nurses with bachelor's degree is governed by the National Curricular Guidelines for Nursing Courses (DCN/ENF)⁽³⁾, which brings the generalist, humanist, critical and reflective profile. In addition, the guidelines determine that Higher Education Institutions (HEI) that provide such courses should include, in their Pedagogical Political Projects (PPPs), curricular contents present in basic and vocational disciplines, as well as develop competences and general and specific skills, among others.

In addition, this is no different when it comes to the insertion of new knowledge among the curricular dynamics and their syllabus, in particular, the content related to the theme of violence in the HEI, which appear in a cross-sectional manner within the subjects of Child Health, Women's Health and Public Health⁽⁴⁾. In this sense, there seems to be deficits in PPPs on the content of violence addressed in higher education, emphasizing that professionals do not receive adequate training concerning this topic, which is reflected in the lack of unique abilities of these professionals for a qualified assistance in relation to episodes of violence.

Regarding this subject, the HEIs are sites that allow discussing and developing studies with this perspective of changes in the profile of professional teaching, which brings the Forensic Nursing as important role to fight cases of violence⁽⁴⁾. This science was consolidated in the mid 1990's, in the United States of America (USA)⁽⁵⁾, when providing care in different scenarios in which violence is present, whether victims, perpetrators and family involved in this criminal perspective⁽⁶⁾.

In Brazil, the Brazilian Federal Nursing Council (COFEN) establishes the Forensic Nurse by means of Resolution 556/2017⁽⁷⁾, in penitentiary services, psychiatric institutions, among other scenarios in which violence is, highlighting its general and specific skills. It is important to

emphasize that the specialization of Forensic Nursing was legally recognized by COFEN/Regional Nursing Councils Systems through Resolution 581/2018, which updates the list of postgraduate degrees granted to nurses⁽⁸⁾.

In this way, for professionals to be able to work in these fields, they must be bearers of the degree of Specialist, MSc or PhD,) with an emphasis in Forensic Nursing, issued by HEI recognized by the Ministry of Education (MEC), or by means of Councils/Societies, to exercise their activities as Forensic Nurse in the country⁽⁷⁾, highlighting the existence of postgraduate programs in Forensic Nursing in Brazil⁽⁴⁾.

On the other hand, addressing the practice of Forensic Nursing in undergraduate courses provides students with a benefit referring to the theoretical-practical field of this subject. However, there is a certain need for including these contents in the nursing curricula⁽⁹⁾. Furthermore, the lack of a specific subject focusing on preparing students to forensic cases makes HEI establish the desirability of introducing this theme in undergraduate education, to arouse the interest of entrants, in the field of Forensic Nursing, which stresses the lack of knowledge and training in the courses of Higher Education⁽¹⁰⁾.

When the HEI provides such subject or course, it is clear that students become more informed, prepared and trained for coping with forensic episodes in the professional field, which positively affects their education. It is important to acquire knowledge about the Forensic Nursing during the college, as well as insert forensic knowledge in nursing curriculum, in addition to providing certification courses to students, aiming to empower them still at the university⁽¹¹⁾.

In the private and public HEIs, the contents of violence are offered in optional and mandatory subjects; however, they appear briefly in the subjects by vital cycle, such as, in the subjects of child health and women's health, consequently bringing losses for the teaching of future nursing professionals⁽⁴⁾.

About the impact of the violence in society and in the care with survivors, perpetrators and family by nursing professionals in different scenarios of clinical practice⁽⁶⁾, there is need for a specialized professional to provide care and assist the legal system, involving crimes of a violent nature⁽⁴⁾.

Therefore, this science needs to be addressed in the HEIs, aiming to develop researches in relation to those contents not only

in subjects offered in their dynamic curriculum, but in exploring studies so that students are inserted for a better assistance to victims and perpetrators. Furthermore, it will contribute to future nurses become familiar with this theme, so that their service is qualified and humanized, and they can be a help between the health, social and legal system. Thus, this study aims to identify the curricular contents of Forensic Nursing in nursing undergraduate courses.

METHOD

This is a quantitative, descriptive and exploratory study, conducted with coordinators of the Nursing courses at 88 Higher Education Institutions (HEI), public and private, which were found by the Interactive System of the Ministry of Education (MEC), which offers, free of charge, the consultation of the HEIs in every region of the country.

The criteria for inclusion were the coordinators who accepted and respected the period stipulated by the researchers. The exclusion were courses whose classes had not begun, those that were extinct, deactivated, those that refused to participate in the study, in addition to those that showed no interest.

Between September 2018 and March 2019, the researchers created a dichotomous questionnaire with open questions, empirically validated by four experts in the field of Forensic Nursing. The same who validated the instrument analyzed the proposed items and, after this refinement, the questionnaire was adapted to the electronic tool from Google Forms, being in the public domain and free.

The data collection period was between April and August 2019, using the Software Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for data analysis, for the descriptive and inferential statistics, and the R software, for the Fisher's Exact Test (5% of significance), in independent (positive and negative answers), and dependent (public and private HEIs) variables.

To this end, the research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee at the Federal University of Alfenas, under Opinion: 2.893.206, CAAE: 97046718.0.0000.5142. Thus, the coordinators received, by means of the instrument developed on Google Forms, the Informed Consent Form (ICF) electronically, and the judges that validated the instrument received a copy of the informed consent form, safeguarding

their anonymity and confidentiality between those who comprised this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the results of this research, the contents of Forensic Nursing are offered, in their majority, in private HEIs, located in the southeastern region. It is important to highlight that the Fisher's exact test allowed identifying which contents were significant, through the crossings between the dependent variables (contents of Forensic Nursing; private and public HEIs).

Thus, it was possible to verify the category on curriculum contents of Forensic Nursing, in Higher Education institutions, to compose the discussion in the present study, which relate to the violence at work, victims of mass disaster, victims of wounds from firearm and white weapon, use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs and people in compulsory admissions.

Curricular contents of Forensic Nursing in Higher Education Institutions

Upon crossing the dependent variables, using the Fisher's exact test, the content of Forensic Nursing that appeared in private and public HEIs, Table 1 unveils those that stood out in relation to their significance ($p < 0.05$), and the selected variables were statistically significant and the private HEIs had higher highlights in relation to the public HEIs.

Regarding these contents, the choice considered those with statistically significant value, being related to the Nursing evaluation/intervention of people victims of violence at work; Policies and nursing prevention/promotion actions for people victims of violence at work; Policies and nursing prevention/promotion actions for people victims of mass disaster; Nursing evaluation/intervention of people victims of injury by firearms and white weapon; Nursing evaluation/intervention of people in use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs; Nursing evaluation/intervention in compulsory admissions; Policies and nursing prevention/promotion actions for people in compulsory admissions.

There was a greater relevance in private HEIs than in public HEIs, relating the contents about victims of wounds from firearm and white weapon and people in use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs, and, in private HEIs, such

contents reached a percentage above 60%. In public HEIs, they reached an average of 40%.

In addition, in Brazil, Nursing Higher Education follows the DCN/ENF of 2001, which brings demands for how the courses of bachelor's degree in nursing should be governed⁽³⁾. In the past twenty years (1995-2015)⁽¹²⁾, there was a very significant elevation of the provision of nursing courses, in Brazil, increasing from 108 to 887 courses (721.3%), resulting especially from the offer by private HEIs, with higher concentrations in the Southeast (with larger offer of courses and vacancies); Northeast (provides half of them); South, Mid-west and North, which offered around 1,488,445 vacancies, and the growth of its graduates, from 4,733 to 34,640 (632.0%), totaling 80.7% of nurses already graduated in this period.

Therefore, the previous study corroborates the results in table 1, because, of the HEIs that reported offering such contents in their educational institutions, the highest concentrations of responses were in private HEIs, emphasizing that, in Brazil, the largest number of nursing courses are distributed in private institutions than in state and federal courts institutions.

In relation to the contents of Forensic Nursing about the victims of violence at work, nursing professionals suffer serious physical and psychological consequences related to violence in the workplace, causing serious health problems and mental distress⁽¹³⁾. According to the Regional Nursing Council of São Paulo⁽¹⁴⁾, the types of violence that affect these professionals were verbal and psychological harassment, in which the patients executed this type of violence, due to failures in the care, among other situations. Therefore, the managerial, administrative and academic sectors must outline proposals for prevention/promotion of the health and safety of these professionals in their professional field⁽¹³⁾.

In relation to nursing prevention/promotion policies and actions for people victims of violence at work, it is understandable⁽¹⁵⁾ that they are related to interventionist actions, in order to prevent these episodes, in which the existence of programs in this perspective end up helping the professionals in cases of suffering violence, in particular in the sectors of urgency/emergency and psychiatry, as well as the development of new institutional policies, which, in addition to combating violence, can bring comfort and safety to the nursing professionals at work.

Table 1 – Distribution of the frequency of Forensic Nursing contents in relation to Higher Education Institutions. Alfenas, MG, Brazil, 2019 (n = 88).

Forensic Nursing Contents	N	HEI (%)*		p-value†
		Private	Public	
1. Nursing evaluation/intervention for people victims of violence at work	38	50.0	20.0	0.021
2. Prevention/promotion policies and actions for people victims of violence at work	36	47.1	20.0	0.039
3. Prevention/promotion policies and actions for people victims of mass disaster	21	29.4	5.0	0.034
4. Nursing evaluation/intervention for people victims of firearm and white weapon injury	53	66.2	40.0	0.042
5. Nursing evaluation/intervention for people in use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs	62	76.5	50.0	0.029
6. Nursing evaluation/intervention for people in compulsory admissions	22	30.9	5.0	0.019
7. Prevention/promotion policies and actions for people in compulsory admissions	22	30.9	5.0	0.019

Source: Data created by the authors. *HEI: Higher Education Institutions. †: Application of the Fisher's Exact.

Concerning prevention/promotion policies and actions for people victims of mass disaster, in Brazil, some public policies aim to guarantee the rights of these victims, many times, whether survivors or not, aiming to protect their dignity and rights, and to minimize their suffering, among others⁽¹⁶⁻¹⁷⁾. On the other hand, one of the strategies for preventing the occurrences of these disasters is an assertive management planning in public health services, particularly in emergencies, to avoid possible future catastrophic events, such as in sporting, cultural events, and so on⁽¹⁸⁾. The authors⁽¹⁸⁾ still extol the importance of aid from other spheres, such as security, logistics and health, among others, so that the professionals in these sectors, especially those of health, are prepared to act in a qualified and empowered manner regarding these mass events.

The nursing professionals have a vital role in the provision of care to victims of mass disasters, along with the multidisciplinary team, for whom the education proves to be an effective tool to empower and train in the direct assistance to multiple victims⁽¹⁹⁾. The Multiple Victims Incidents⁽²⁰⁾ are a problem for the Unified Health System (UHS), in particular, for nurses' professional teaching, being necessary to explore, in the academic context, their performance before those cases, especially in the development of professional competences and skills. Thus, it is important that the professor be a mediator to collaborate in the teaching-learning process related to these mass scenarios.

In what concerns the nursing evaluation/intervention for victims of wounds from firearm and white weapon⁽²¹⁾, its highest prevalence was of young male victims, who were sober, in which the assault had greatest records, followed by homicides during the weekend. The clinical procedures performed to victims of traumas were since dressings until therapy, using specific protocols for the care with the traumatized, stressing that these types of violence generate expenses not only for the health sector, but also for the economic and social sectors.

Furthermore, these authors published another study in the same year on the epidemiological profile of the victims by white weapon⁽²²⁾, revealing a young male profile, however the higher incidence of these occurrences was by interpersonal violence and suicide attempt, in which these victims were sober during the violent act, and the clinical procedures

were the same as those cited in the previous study⁽²¹⁾. The authors⁽²²⁾ emphasize that the location of these injuries occurred in the regions of the abdomen, chest and lower limbs, stressing the need to fight this type of violence, through actions of health promotion and education in these scenarios of victims of trauma.

As for the field of mental health on Nursing evaluation/intervention for people in use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs⁽²³⁾, the nurses who work in the Family Health realized that the theme on this subject is a public and social health problem, and Community Health Workers and their relatives are bridges to detect these individuals. Nevertheless, the authors⁽²³⁾ emphasize these professionals' difficulty to intervene concerning the treatment at the health unit, as well as the users about their problem related to the consumption, in which nurses reported that the will and choice needs to arise in the own individual, and there is certain resistance to treatment adherence, lack of qualification of these professionals, and provision of therapeutic groups for coping with these cases.

In relation to the content of Forensic Nursing concerning the Nursing evaluation/intervention and prevention/promotion policies and actions for people in compulsory admissions, mental health nurses comprise the care with these admissions (compulsory and involuntary), which require evaluating the case, so that the individual needs can be met, in particular in family and sociocultural context, however, many times, the beds are overcrowded. This makes these families seek aid from the judicial sector itself to intervene in this situation, causing suffering among patients and their relatives⁽²⁴⁾.

Furthermore, the authors⁽²⁴⁾ emphasize that the admissions should be the user's own will, but that never happens, which generates health consequences, such as anguish and anxiety. The professionals, when the user reaches these circumstances, feel some frustration, for feeling they failed to provide an integral quality assistance and, consequently, generating a poor communication between the team treating those patients.

One of the alternatives that could resolve these conflicts in mental and psychiatric health services would be using permanent education as a tool to generate these discussions in the work environment, such as listening to what these

professionals have to say about their questions and concerns, in order to try to maintain good interpersonal relationship between the team⁽²⁴⁾.

Regarding the Law n. 10,216 of April 6, 2001⁽²⁵⁾, which provides for the protection and the rights of people with mental disorders, the compulsory admission is seen as determined by justice, being the State responsible for developing policies for actions of promotion and prevention in the care with this population, as well as the due participation of civil society and the family, among other rights.

Therefore, it is notorious the participation of nurses in these scenarios of violence as was seen in this category, and how these contents are addressed in the private HEI. It is important to emphasize the need for addressing these contents in nursing schools/courses in the country, as well as working with the Forensic Nursing still during graduation. Moreover, the coordinators and professors should review how these contents related to the Forensic Nursing are being inserted into the pedagogical project of the course, so that the student will be able to assimilate what he/she is learning in the classroom, to apply in the curricular internship.

CONCLUSION

It was possible to identify that the curricular contents of Forensic Nursing in nursing undergraduate courses are offered in private HEIs, than in public HEIs. For this, it is crucial that the nursing schools include, in their curriculum, dynamic contents specific to Forensic Nursing, both in the subjects that appear in a cross-sectional manner, as in child and adolescent health, women's health, among other subjects. In this sense, professors will be able to work this theme with the students, combining theory with practice, as evidenced in the literature, the relevance of the existence of a subject about Forensic Nursing in nursing higher education.

Therefore, more studies should be developed on the Forensic Nursing in child health, women's health, adult health, elder health, collective health, emergency care and mental health, in which such contents may also appear, in order to allow for a nursing care more articulated with this scenario still in the teaching process of future nurses, in order to arouse the interest of students entering the field of forensic sciences, such as in the desire of seeking a specialization in Forensic Nursing.

Although the contents have appeared vaguely by data intersection, few HEIs agreed to participate in the study, requiring extending the period of data collection, since the coordinator of the course has several work activities, so that he/she can give his/her contribution in the best possible way. Thus, studies have shown that there are few researches in Brazil on the area of Forensic Nursing education, which suggests the development of new studies in this same perspective.

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