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Contemporary professional requirements and Nursing education: Call for reflection

Requisitos profesionales contemporáneos y educación en Enfermería: llamado a la reflexión

Exigências profissionais contemporâneas e educação em Enfermagem: chamada à reflexão

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Nursing professionals are part of the human resources in health in the world, playing a fundamental role in meeting the health needs of populations and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by nations (1). In this perspective, nursing knowledge, skills and values make their contribution unique and indispensable for the improvement of global health conditions, contributing to gender equality and strengthening economies (1).

In general, nurses in leadership positions participate in making decisions that impact people's health and society, as well as being responsible for clinical care for patients, their families, and other groups in a context of technological innovation, new social configurations and ongoing production of knowledge, which can directly influence the professional skills expected in the performance of this profession, with balance and excellence.

The current context requires and values a set of professional skills that accompanies changes in society. Cultural and technological competence, emotional intelligence, and clinical reasoning are some skills currently valued among nursing professionals, considering the advances in technology, data management and migratory flows, the importance of interprofessional work for comprehensive health care, and the need to solve problems or conflicts in clinical, managerial and educational practice. In this context, incentives to increase the autonomy of nurses are growing, aiming mainly at their effective leadership in the design and implementation of public policies (2-3).

Therefore, it is increasingly expected by organizations that nurses act based on scientific evidence, promoting the translation of knowledge and improvements in health. In this way, the period

of nursing professional education is especially important for future nurses to be able to respond adequately to the demands of services, their staff, and the population.

In this sense, it is important to reflect on: To what extent is the education of nursing professionals in line with these new requirements or expectations? Has nursing education accompanied changes in society, promoting skills that will be required of nursing professionals when they start their profession?

There have been changes in health care and the scope of nursing practice in recent decades, which require revisiting expectations related to learning outcomes and understanding which experiences allow them to be generated safely, in order to assume educational practices combined with new expectations (4). McKenna *et al.* (4) describe that despite these changes, clinical education often remains structured as it has always been offered. When nursing education does not keep pace with changes in society and work, nurses are exposed to the risk of lacking sufficient skills to practice excellence in nursing now and in the future.

We do not expect with this text to discuss the best practices for the promotion of skills during nursing education, but to call on training institutions and teachers to reflect on the role and responsibility of the education of nurses, who will integrate the health workforce in systems all around the world.

Many of the nurses enter clinical practice in health institutions as soon as they finish the education necessary for the profession. In these work areas they usually lead the nursing or the multidisciplinary team. In this position, it is essential that nurses have attributes and skills that are not always fully encouraged during education, such as technological and computer skills, conflict management and problem-solving skills with different levels of complexity regarding emotional dimensions, besides technical-scientific knowledge and governance skills to encourage collective health improvements (5-8). Weaknesses in skills considered relevant to the practice of nursing and leadership have been described in the literature, reflecting on implications for nursing education (5-6).

Since the context of the performance of nursing professionals is dynamic, constant searches, obser-

vations and reflections are essential for institutions to train nurses who respond to contemporary demands. Analysis of teaching practices and the insertion of nurses in different fields of action can contribute significantly to understanding the different scenarios and developing nursing curricula that consider expected professional competencies and the first experiences of nurses at work, as well as their personal and professional demands (8-9).

In 2020, the International Year of the Nurse is celebrated for the bicentennial of Florence Nightingale's birth, and this year also ends the Nursing Now campaign started in 2018 with the objective of expanding the potential of nursing contributions to global health and providing transformations to the healthcare model (2, 10). It is expected that both the number of nurses and their leadership in the health sector increase in order to face the challenges imposed by new times and regional specificities, which are strongly related to the professional education and social insertion of nursing, considering that the resolution and scope of improvements regarding health issues ask for qualified nurse leaders to undertake and lead such reforms (2, 8, 10).

Undoubtedly, the insertion of nursing in the world has changed over time, and the social, scientific and technological dynamics that affect the profession require special attention for making appropriate investments during educational processes. This period is a good opportunity to bring future professionals together around the context of contemporary work and its requirements, promoting skills that contribute to nurses' well-being at work when they enter health services and can advance in their careers as a result of their skills and contributions to society.

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