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Editorial

The Importance of Graduate Education for Nursing Care

La importancia de la educación del postgrado en el cuidado de enfermería

A importância da educação da pós-graduação no cuidado de enfermagem

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Graduate nursing education faces various challenges related to the competencies to be developed for graduating nurses that provide quality care. Among the multiple levels are specialties, master's degrees, and doctorates, the last two focused primarily on research. However, current trends point to graduate courses that must solve practical problems, making master's degrees and doctorates disjointed, with an even more significant disadvantage: the type of delivery format. Mostly, they are of school type and not accessible to practicing professionals (1). Therefore, those with more advanced study degrees continue to be the scholars.

It is imperative that those who work in academia, whether universities or institutes, focus on new ways of organizing the training of nurses with research skills that can be translated into practice (2). This means that innovation is one of the main characteristics that graduate programs should privilege, understanding innovation as the knowledge that solves a problem in practice and is helpful for the user. Accordingly, the research products at this level must concentrate on practices, objects, products, services, or processes that must be innovative and creative. It implies not only new knowledge, but also previous knowledge with added value because it is new for those who adopt it and provides a solution to their practical problems.

There are several types of innovations that are not exclusive to research. We can classify them into:

- Technological: aimed at developing new products, processes, or services that can be used in the clinic at different levels of care, with a high impact on the competitiveness and productivity of nurses.
- Organizational: essential for those programs aimed at training leaders in practice who will be decision-makers. These should focus on new organizational methods oriented to good practices and the patient-nurse-health institution relationship.
- Social: integrating the values of nurses and covering the public, social, educational, and cultural sectors. They have loomed large since their impact is on social welfare.

So, it is imperative that we reflect on the competencies graduate students must acquire to cater to the population's needs and contribute to improving social well-being. This falls not only on the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that must be developed; products must give rise to technological developments that can be classified as inventions and copyrights. The former includes patents, utility models, and industrial designs, which have an added value since the knowledge transfer method is natural and allows the cycle of action that contributes to knowledge application to care to continue. Thus, for the graduate program to impact nursing care, knowledge transfer must be critical in reference models and syllabi (3).

Knowledge transfer refers to a complex multidimensional process that requires various mechanisms, methods, and measurements to be considered in the training of advanced practice nurses. It should

be noted that factors influencing individual and interaction levels are considered in the transfer process (4). Put differently, it is necessary to generate innovative nursing knowledge made available to interested users, i.e., all those involved in the knowledge transfer process. With a more significant number of nurses with a graduate degree engaged in this transfer process, the products and tools to be used in practice will be more, so the nurses in the services may select those most appropriate to contribute to the solution of health problems.

Consequently, in recent years there has been talk about the importance of advanced practice nursing involving professionals with graduate training. We could place them in two positions according to the activity. The first is as users of protocols or clinical guidelines that may occur at the specialty, master's, and doctoral levels. The second is as generators and processors of evidence after master's degrees or doctorates. In the case of doctoral training, educational institutions could consider:

1. Nursing professionalizing doctorates
2. Doctorates specialized in research lines to solve practical problems
3. Doctorates with high technology and innovation content
4. Doctorates with high degrees of engagement and internationalization

The research lines of the programs should focus on solving problems in practice to develop, refine, and expand knowledge for the benefit of health systems (5).

Generating clinically appropriate, cost-effective evidence with positive results is essential for graduate nurses. Thus, we could frame the following training trends: using multiple strategies for evaluating knowledge, i.e., through qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methodologies at the individual, health professional, and organizational levels. Graduates must have the skills to understand and synthesize the available evidence through systematic reviews and meta-analyses that allow them to generate or apply knowledge to nursing care. Engagement becomes an indisputable ally to solving immediate problems resulting from the analysis of intervention needs, leading us to the implications of collaborative work (6).

One of the main characteristics of nurses with graduate training is attributable to their roles within work teams to solve pressing health problems. Educational institutions must have a support infrastructure and be responsible for developing interdisciplinary syllabi, coordinating management strategies that address student learning, and providing an environment for harmonized communication among those interested in problem-solving. On the other hand, nurses with graduate preparation must be sensitive to culture and consider the real contexts where practices occur, assessing patients' beliefs, values, vulnerability, and diversity.

In conclusion, graduate preparation is a continuous curricular revision process at all levels. It is necessary to review both the teaching-learning methods and the assessment instruments of knowledge transfer in nursing. The primary challenge we face is to change the traditional way of teaching to train highly collaborative nurses who have the necessary skills to meet the complexity of current health problems. Academies and institutes must train graduate nurses capable of generating, applying, transferring, and disseminating knowledge that solves complex problems in convergence with multiple fields of expertise.

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