

## PROFILE OF NURSING PROFESSORS IN A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY: WHAT DO WE NEED TO GO FORWARD?

Perfil dos enfermeiros-docentes em uma universidade pública: em que precisamos avançar?

Perfil de los enfermeros-docentes en una universidad pública: ¿qué necesitamos ir adelante?

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### SUMMARY

**Objective:** to analyze the profile of nurse-teachers of undergraduate nursing at a public university. **Method:** a quantitative-descriptive-cross-sectional study, with data extracted from the curricula of 57 teachers linked to the nursing department of a public university in Minas Gerais, from 2012 to 2018. **Results:** the teachers have on average 12 years of experience in Higher education, 15 years of professional experience, most have graduated from public institutions, have master's and doctorate degrees. Regarding the areas of knowledge most covered in the publications, the prevalence of the adult health area was identified, with quantitative approach studies and in less relevant QUALIS journals. **Conclusion:** The results showed that nurse-teachers are concerned with teaching performance and sought for proper training in *stricto sensu* postgraduate programs, but need to emphasize acting as a researcher in order to provide greater visibility, recognition and consolidation of nursing as science.

**Descriptors:** Nursing faculty; Higher education; Professional practice; Nursing education; Nurse's role.

### RESUMO

**Objetivo:** analisar o perfil dos enfermeiros-docentes da graduação em enfermagem de uma universidade pública. **Método:** estudo quantitativo-descritivo-transversal, com dados extraídos dos currículos de 57 docentes vinculados ao departamento de enfermagem de uma universidade pública em Minas Gerais, entre os anos de 2012 a 2018. **Resultados:** os docentes possuem em média 12 anos de

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experiência na educação superior, 15 anos de experiência profissional, a maioria se graduou em instituições públicas, possuem titulação de mestrado e doutorado. Em relação às áreas do conhecimento mais contempladas nas publicações, identificou-se a prevalência da área saúde do adulto, com estudos de abordagem quantitativa e em periódicos QUALIS de menor relevância. **Conclusão:** Os resultados demonstraram que os enfermeiros-docentes se preocupam com a atuação docente e buscaram por formação adequada em programas de pós-graduação de *stricto sensu*, mas necessitam enfatizar a atuação como pesquisador, a fim de proporcionar maior visibilidade, reconhecimento e consolidação da Enfermagem como ciência.

**Descritores:** Docentes de enfermagem; Educação superior; Prática profissional; Ensino de enfermagem; Papel do profissional de enfermagem.

## RESUMÉN

**Objetivo:** analizar el perfil de enfermeras-docentes de enfermería de pregrado en una universidad pública. **Método:** un estudio cuantitativo-descriptivo-transversal, con datos extraídos de los planes de estudio de 57 docentes vinculados al departamento de enfermería de una universidad pública en Minas Gerais, de 2012 a 2018. **Resultados:** los docentes tienen en promedio 12 años de experiencia en Educación superior, 15 años de experiencia profesional, la mayoría se han graduado de instituciones públicas, tienen maestrías y doctorados. Con respecto a las áreas de conocimiento más cubiertas en las publicaciones, se identificó la prevalencia del área de salud de adultos, con estudios de abordaje cuantitativo y en revistas QUALIS menos relevantes. **Conclusión:** Los resultados muestran que las enfermeras-docentes están preocupadas por el desempeño docente y buscaron una capacitación adecuada en los programas de posgrado estrictos, pero deben enfatizar la actuación como investigadores para proporcionar una mayor visibilidad, reconocimiento y consolidación de la enfermería como ciencia.

**Descriptor:** Docentes de enfermería; Educación superior; Práctica profesional; Educación en enfermería; Rol de la enfermeira.

## INTRODUCTION

Health services have been undergoing important changes brought about by economic, technological and social policies. These transformations require changes in the nursing work profile so that it can meet the new demands. Among the multiple work environments of nursing, are the universities.<sup>1</sup>

Teaching is currently the second most significant job option for nurses in Brazil. Analysis of the Higher Education Census data revealed an increase in the number of new courses and university centers opening between 2001 and 2011. Public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) enrollment increased by 260%, while in private schools the increase was 512%, almost double that of the public sector and it is assumed that this expansion was accompanied by the growth in teaching staff.<sup>2,3</sup>

Brazilian nursing education has been undergoing transformation due to the increasing demand for professional development of human resources aligned with the socio-political-cultural needs of society. Thus, nurse training is a process that requires permanent reflection on the nature, objectives and purposes of the health service and

its operationalization, ensuring a critical and contextualized understanding of the particularities and complexity that involves the practice that future professionals will come to exercise.<sup>4</sup>

The exercise of teaching requires social and moral commitment to education, ensuring flexibility, diversity and quality of teaching offered to the students, stimulating the adoption of concepts that develop investigative, reflective, transformative practice in the various areas of activity such as care, teaching, research and extension.<sup>5</sup>

Analysis of the trajectory of teachers suggests indicators of the trends of Brazilian nursing, explaining relevant aspects in the production of knowledge, emerging research themes or even silenced or little explored themes as well as providing visibility to nursing profession.<sup>6</sup>

In this sense, this study aimed to analyze the profile of undergraduate nursing professors in a public university in Minas Gerais, Brazil.

## METHODS

This is a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional study that analyzed the curricula of 57 nursing professors linked to the nursing department of a state university in Minas Gerais.

Data collection took place in May and June 2018 and was carried out through the Curriculum Direct Search Access component on the Lattes Platform of the National Research Council (CNPq). Lattes integrates information from researchers' resumes as well as research group and institutions information in an online database and operates based on the principle of public access to information.

The information extracted from the professors' curricula was from 2012 to 2018, including: typology of the undergraduate training institution; title; teaching time; time of professional experience; participation in scientific events; articles published during the study period; methodological approaches used; types of study and context of these publications.

The articles were classified according to QUALIS of journals in Brazil in the interdisciplinary category, classification established by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES). They were also classified by the Impact Factor, a procedure performed annually by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) of the University of Southern California<sup>7</sup> and by level of evidence, according to the seven-level hierarchy system.<sup>8</sup>

The themes preferred by the professors in their publications were categorized according to the guidelines of article 1 of Resolution No. 290/2004 of the Federal Nursing Council (COFEn), which deals with Nursing Specialties.<sup>9</sup>

The data collected was recorded in a form duly prepared for this purpose, previously tested to verify its adequacy. After collection, data were grouped by year of study,

from 2012 to 2018, and finally, a descriptive analysis was performed.

It is noteworthy that, the CVs were published in the public domain, thus research used them as a secondary database, not requiring prior submission to the Research Ethics Committee.

## RESULTS

This study analyzed the professional profile of 57 nursing professors of a state university in Minas Gerais. When analyzing the educational institution, it appeared that most professors, 46 (80.7%) graduated from public universities distributed as follows: 29 (50.8%) received training in the state network and 17 (29.9%) in the federal network.

The faculty had, on average, 12 years of experience in higher education and 15 years of professional experience in area related to the course. In terms of degree we found that most completed a *stricto sensu* postgraduate studies, with 36 (63.1%) obtaining masters and nine (15.7%) doctoral degree.

During the period analyzed, the nursing professors at an undergraduate program were present at scientific events, mostly at the municipal and international levels (Table 1).

**Table 1** - Participation of Nursing Graduate Nursing teachers in scientific events. 2012-2017. Montes Claros, MG, Brazil, 2018

Event level	n	%
Municipal	159	59,1
Regional	05	1,85
State	03	1,11
National	40	14,8
International	54	20,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>100</b>

We found that most of the studies published by the nursing professors were in journals classified as QUALIS B4 and B3, considered of minor relevance, weighing 40 (Table 2).

**Table 2** - QUALIS of the journals of the nursing undergraduate nursing publications. 2012-2017. Montes Claros, MG, Brazil, 2018

QUALIS	n	%
A1	12,0	1,90
A2	20,0	3,20
B1	60,0	9,50
B2	117	18,5

QUALIS	n	%
B3	169	26,7
B4	215	34,0
B5	28,0	4,40
C	11,0	1,70
<b>Total</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>100</b>

Regarding the Impact Factor in the JCR statistical base, 17 (2.68%) journals were classified. Among these periodicals, two (11.7%) had a level above 6,000, with Hypertension receiving the highest rating of 6,857; followed by Molecular Neurobiology, with 6,190. However, most 12 (70.5%) journals were rated between 2007 and 5,487; followed by three (17.6%) with a rating lower than 1,000. These ratings are considered low due to the low number of citations received.

In terms of areas of knowledge most covered in the analyzed articles, we identified the prevalence of adult health, women's health and health service management, respectively (Table 3).

**Table 3** - Areas of knowledge contemplated in the publications by nursing professors of the Undergraduate Nursing Program. 2012-2017. Montes Claros, MG, Brazil, 2018

Knowledge areas	n	%
Adult Health	96	15,1
Women's Health	90	14,2
Healthcare Management	71	11,2
Child health	66	10,4
Caring process	62	9,8
Nursing Education	57	9,0
Family Health	53	8,4
Health and nursing policies and practices	50	7,9
Elderly Health	46	7,3
Worker's health	33	5,2
Ethics and Bioethics	10	1,6
<b>Total</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>100</b>

The most used methodological approach in the publications was the quantitative one; followed by review articles and those with qualitative approach (Table 4).

**Table 4 -** Methodological approaches used in the publications of undergraduate nursing nurses. 2012-2017. Montes Claros, MG, Brazil, 2018

Methodological approach	n	%
Quantitative	216	34,2
Qualitative	163	25,8
Qualitative/Quantitative	83	13,1
Review	170	26,9
<b>Total</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>100</b>

Most of the studies performed by the professors were descriptive, 300 (47.4%); followed by literature review, 115 (18.1%) and integrative literature review 55 (8.70%). Regarding the level of evidence of these publications, we found that 379 (59.9%) are level 6; 216 (34.1%) level 5; 20 (3.16%) level 3; 14 (2.21%) level 4 and three (0.47%) level 7; indicating the lack of studies with better levels of evidence.

The most common study locations were Hospitals, Primary Health Care, followed by the University (Table 5).

**Table 5 -** Research locations in the publications of nursing professors of the undergraduate nursing program. 2012-2017. Montes Claros, MG, Brazil, 2018

Research Locations	n	%
Hospital	147	23,2
Primary Health Care Unit	119	18,8
University	27	4,3
School	13	2,1
Long Term Institution	06	0,9
Penitentiary	01	0,2
Beauty salon	01	0,2
Missing *	148	23,4
Not applicable**	170	26,9
<b>Total</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Data not included in the methodology of the articles.

\*\*Data from literature review articles.

## DISCUSSION

We found that most of the Nursing professors in Undergraduate Nursing program of the university studied graduated from public universities with masters' and doctoral degrees. They had, on average, 12 years of experience in higher education and 15 years of professional experience in area related to the course.

Having graduated from a public school may be related to development opportunities linked to the public school,

where the professor attended undergraduate programs that usually have a tradition in research and postgraduate education.<sup>10</sup> This is a faculty that meets the requirements of higher education under the Law 9,394 / 96, which establishes the guidelines for vocational training and determines that the university faculty must be formed by at least one third of masters and doctoral degree holders.<sup>11</sup>

Considering their degrees, the faculty can promote the dissemination and provision of services and improving the quality of assistance and / or teaching. *Stricto sensu* postgraduation is considered an essential factor in university teaching.<sup>12</sup> Thus, aiming at a career in higher education, the search for adequate training was perceived as necessary by the faculty.

With regard to professional experience in nursing, we observed that the vast majority of teachers have considerable professional experience. The knowledge gained through the experience represent the contribution that the teachers bring. It includes their experiences as students and how they perceived their teachers, acquired through the lifestyle and influence of the social, political and economic context of teaching profession; through actions already performed and, consequently, arising from routine activities. They should be considered, at the same time, starting point and arrival point for this reflection and fundamental in the construction of the teacher's identity process.<sup>13</sup>

With experience in higher education and professional experience, undergraduate nursing program teachers can become agents of transformation in how student act and think, once they are prepared and qualified for such competencies, through the pedagogical act constantly searching for improvement in order to ensure quality in professional practice. The educator's search for training motivates the student in the learning process, and the teacher is his portrait.<sup>14</sup>

From 2012 to 2018, nursing teachers took part in scientific events, mostly at municipal and international levels. Scientific events, whether national or international, enable the development of science through the dissemination of new knowledge, and allow authors to receive recognition for their production in presentations of works. They also contribute to the scientific debate and the socialization of intellectual production with the community.<sup>15</sup>

According to the QUALIS classification, the publications were in journals with strata B4 and B3, considered of minor relevance. Nursing undergraduate professors are recommended that, in order to achieve a better standard of quality in terms of journals, it is necessary to break some barriers, such as the production of new knowledge that generates innovation capable of arousing interest; agility in publishing; adoption of standards that can be recognized by researchers from around the world, so that they can be accepted in international indexing data-bases, disseminating them in the scientific world.<sup>16</sup>

We also verified that most of the journals selected for the teachers' publications presented intermediate IF, with a classification  $\leq 2,007$ . This result can be explained since most Brazilian researchers publish in Brazilian journals. The number of citations received by these journals does not, for the most part, provide metrics for rating in the best rankings, thus justifying the result. However, for the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), using isolated IF evaluation is not beneficial because it can discourage publications on less cited topics, and sometimes it can overwhelm high impact journals.<sup>17</sup>

As for the areas of knowledge most covered in the teachers' articles, we found, that most were in the area of /adult health; followed by women's health and management. These results reflect the teachers' concern with the academic preparation on the themes present in the publications of the nursing program professors.

Scientific research carried out by nurses addresses the needs of health services, impacting the field of science, innovation and technology for the development of society and the various ways of working in nursing. This research by nurses is directly linked to the returns of these studies produced, either in terms of the format of the process or in the form of product, and the results provide the direction and strengthen nursing practice from the perspective of science under construction.<sup>18</sup>

The concern with the quality of care reflects greater interest of professionals for research in the care area. However, the diversity of related themes demonstrates that, mainly, certain sets of propaedeutic actions are contemplated: health protection actions; health promotion; disease prevention; curative actions and rehabilitation actions. We identified absence of studies with themes related to teaching; the organization of services; new modalities of assistance such as the health work process; systematization of care; attention and home care, among others, also identified in a previous study in this same context.<sup>19</sup>

Considering the methodological approach, the most used in the publications of teachers was the quantitative method. Quantitative research is highly valued by researchers because it uses mechanisms to control the situation under study so as to minimize bias and maximize the accuracy and validity of research, thus it is a useful method for testing theories; the researcher uses deductive and logical reasoning to examine the particular and arrive at generalizations.<sup>20</sup>

The Integrative Review, also present in the studies of undergraduate nursing teachers, is another approach that has had a remarkable presence in the field of nursing in the last decade and is associated with the tendency to understand health care, individually or collectively, as a work complex that requires collaboration and integration of knowledge from different disciplines.<sup>21</sup> It represents one more resource for the construction of knowledge in nursing, and due to its nature can support the development and

accuracy of clinical practice and consequent interventions that result in the safety of the patient.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, regarding the methodological approach, we found that most studies were classified low in terms of level of evidence. It means that such research does not present strong evidence due to the lack of carefully elaborated studies, thus preventing evidence-based practice.<sup>23</sup> To break with this context, it is essential to develop skills that allow the professional to interpret and integrate evidence from client surveys and clinical observations, considering that incorporating evidence-based practice in nursing allows for improved quality of care provided to clients and family members, as it enhances clinical decision-making of the practitioner.<sup>24</sup>

It is necessary to organize better nursing teachers, subjects of this study, in order to carry out studies of greater methodological rigor, to ensure decision-making based on high quality scientific evidence and improvement of care provided. To this end, their training is essential in trying to link research and care.<sup>25</sup>

It is also recommended to invest in opportunities for Scientific Initiation (IC) scholarships, which stimulate the engagement of students in academic research after the graduation, which prepares these professionals better for the labor market, and encourages them to enroll in graduate school.<sup>26</sup>

The most popular study locations found in the publications examined were hospitals and primary health care units. Perhaps the preference for these locations is explained by the ease of access to these services, which are the main environments of supervised curricular internships, as identified by a previous study.<sup>19</sup>

Evidence-based practices in hospital-based nursing promote the improvement of quality of care, increasing the reliability of interventions, ensuring the sustainability of their incorporation in hospital organizations.<sup>27</sup> However, this fact can also be linked to the direct influence of the Flexnerian approach on nursing schools in Brazil, prioritizing hospital teaching and practice. We observed that the biomedical model is still present in the studies developed by the academics and the existence of a culture focused on a hospital-centered curative care guides the practice of nursing, leading the production of knowledge unrelated to the focus of Primary Health Care (PHC).<sup>28</sup>

The Family Health Strategy (FHS) was another significant focus option for teachers, an important locus for the use of soft technologies by nurses. In this environment, the nurse is responsible and is a fundamental professional in the monitoring of SUS patients and when working in the FHS make use of different technologies that include both the technical-care and the technical-relational dimensions that include the interactions between users and families as well as the collective-social dynamics of those involved in the work process, thus contributing to the planning of the

continuity of the expansion of FHS care and strengthening the PHC.<sup>29,30</sup>

The limitations of this study should be considered, since research was conducted with nursing teachers of a single nursing program, located in a region with peculiar characteristics in relation to other locations and contexts. Nevertheless, it may provide contributions to managers and teachers, by facilitating planning of programs for individual and institutional development and instigating other researchers to search for new clarifications, enabling the expansion of knowledge on the subject under study.

## CONCLUSION

The results showed that nursing professors are concerned with teaching performance and sought proper training in *stricto sensu* postgraduate programs. However, for greater appreciation of scientific production, it is necessary to include nursing professors in research and scientific initiation groups, providing greater visibility, recognition and consolidation of nursing as a science.

We emphasize that attention should be given to the new paradigms of interdisciplinarity, complexity and appreciation of subjectivity, which represent an expectation that research and work in health care will be more effective is based on a contextualized perspective and respect to the various forms of knowledge.

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