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THE IMPACT OF NURSING ASSOCIATIONS AND JOURNALS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCG CULTURE IN NURSING

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Abstract. *The path to health lies in continuous research and the acquisition of new knowledge. The purpose of nursing research is to add new knowledge to the existing body of knowledge in nursing. The aim of this paper was to present the impact of nursing associations and journals on the development of a research culture among nurses and nursing technicians. Nursing associations play a key and multidimensional role in developing a research culture in nursing, as they act as a bridge between clinical practice, education, and scientific research. Activities such as seminars, workshops, congresses, and conferences are organized, where nurses are introduced to contemporary research methods, data analysis, and principles of scientific writing, which contributes to the development of research competencies, especially among nurses who do not have formal education in scientific research. This reduces the gap between theory and practice and strengthens readiness to apply scientific evidence in everyday work. Nursing associations provide support in conducting research, including mentorship, methodological guidance, assistance in writing papers, and encouragement of publication in professional and scientific journals, thereby increasing the visibility of the nursing profession in the academic and broader social community, and affirming nurses as active contributors to knowledge creation. Networking of associations through cooperation with national and international organizations, universities, and research centers enables the exchange of experiences, joint projects, and access to contemporary trends in nursing, which strengthens research culture, awareness, and the development of a global perspective of the profession. Research awareness includes recognition that knowledge gained through research can have significant implications for both nurses and patients. An example of such practice is the newly established scientific-professional journal* NurseNexus Journal *in Republika Srpska. The journal represents an available source of documentation and a place where different strands of nursing work* theory, practice, and science *are brought together. Knowledge gained through science is power, and in the context of health, it is also a responsibility. Associations and journals have an advocacy role in promoting research culture in nursing, influencing health policies, and encouraging investment in the development of science and the education of nurses. In this way, they contribute to building professional identity and strengthening the position of nursing as an independent, scientifically grounded discipline.*

Keywords: *Nursing associations, journals, research, nurses.*

Introduction

The path to health leads through continuous research and the adoption of new knowledge. The purpose of nursing research is to add new knowledge to the existing body of knowledge available within nursing. Nurses and nursing technicians represent the foundation of every healthcare system and play a key role in delivering high-quality healthcare. Over the past fifteen years, many countries have made significant progress in improving their professional status through the development of educational programs, changes in health policies, and improvements in the financial status of employees [1]. Despite this, a large number of nurses and technicians still work under difficult conditions, with limited opportunities for professional development, insufficient professional support, and inadequate social recognition of their profession [1–4].

Nursing associations play a key and multidimensional role in the development of a research culture in nursing, as they act as a bridge between clinical practice, education, and scientific research. They organize activities such as seminars, workshops, congresses, and conferences, where nurses are introduced to modern research methods, data analysis, and principles of scientific writing. This contributes to the development of research competencies, especially among nurses who do not have formal education in research methodology. In this way, the gap between theory and practice is reduced, and readiness to apply scientific evidence in everyday practice is strengthened.

The aim of this paper was to present the impact of nursing associations and journals on the development of a research culture among nurses and nursing technicians.

Review of Available Studies

Numerous studies indicate that healthcare professionals in the nursing field face staff shortages, increased workload, inadequate equipment, and limited material resources, which negatively affects the quality of care and patient safety [2,5]. Prolonged exposure to such working conditions contributes to professional burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and an increased intention to leave the workplace or migrate to more developed countries that offer better working conditions and opportunities for professional advancement [1,6].

The global unequal distribution of healthcare workers further exacerbates this problem. High-income countries have a significantly higher number of nurses compared to low-income countries, which represents a serious challenge for the functioning of healthcare systems and access to quality care [7]. The shortage of nurses is particularly evident in countries facing a high burden of infectious and chronic diseases, where limited human resources directly affect treatment outcomes and the quality of care provided [8–11].

Professional nursing associations play an important role in improving the status of the profession and the development of nursing. Through advocacy for the interests of their members, participation in health policy development, organization of continuing education, and strengthening of professional competencies, these associations contribute to improving healthcare quality and the development of the nursing profession [12,13]. Numerous studies show that strengthening the organizational capacities of professional associations improves their ability to support members, develop professional standards, and participate in health policy-making [12]. The importance of institutional capacity development has also been recognized by the World Health Organization, which emphasizes that improving governance, strategic planning, monitoring, and evaluation is one of the key prerequisites for strengthening health systems [14,15].

In line with these recommendations, numerous international programs have been developed aimed at strengthening professional nursing and midwifery associations. One of the most significant programs was the African Health Regulatory Collaborative for Nurses and Midwives (ARC), which demonstrated that improving leadership, management, strategic planning, and organizational capacity contributes to strengthening professional associations and improving regulatory processes in nursing and midwifery [6,16]. Research also shows that continuous education, mentorship, and the development of research competencies significantly contribute to the professional development of nurses and the improvement of healthcare quality [17–21]. Although there is substantial evidence of the importance of professional associations for the development of nursing, research evaluating the effects of strengthening their organizational capacities and their impact on work quality remains limited [22].

A program aimed at strengthening nursing professional associations has shown a significant contribution to improving their organizational capacities. The greatest progress was achieved in the areas of resource mobilization, financial management, strategic planning, as well as monitoring and evaluation. Thanks to acquired knowledge and skills, associations became more capable of independently planning activities, managing available resources more efficiently, and ensuring the sustainability of their work. Interestingly, participants reported improved research competencies, although the development of research activity was not among the main objectives of the program. During training on resource mobilization, the importance of research as a potential source of funding and professional development was emphasized, which increased interest in this area. At the same time, it was shown that most members of professional associations have limited experience in conducting scientific research, which is linked to the small number of members holding master's or doctoral degrees [23].

Significant progress was also achieved in the area of monitoring and evaluation. Although respondents did not initially express a need for additional training in this area, they assessed that their competencies had significantly improved after the training sessions. It is possible that participants were not fully familiar with all aspects

of monitoring and evaluation, and therefore did not recognize the need for further education. On the other hand, training in financial management proved highly useful, as individuals responsible for financial tasks acquired practical knowledge they previously lacked, which improved the financial operations of their associations [24, 25].

The findings of the research also confirm the recommendations of the World Health Organization, which highlight the importance of collaboration between professional associations, regulatory bodies, and other organizations involved in the development of the nursing profession [7]. The program contributed to strengthening cooperation between associations through joint trainings, workshops, and exchange of experiences. Improved organizational capacities increased the credibility of associations and their ability to more actively participate in health policy development and advocate for the interests of nurses and technicians.

The beginnings of nursing research are associated with Florence Nightingale. In her work, she studied the impact of various environmental factors on achieving and maintaining mental and physical health. Her research on drinking water quality, sanitation conditions, proper nutrition, mortality, and morbidity had a significant impact on health in many communities. Nursing associations provide support for research activities, including mentorship, methodological guidance, assistance in writing papers, and encouragement to publish in professional and scientific journals, thereby increasing the visibility of the nursing profession in academic and social communities. Nurses are thus affirmed as active participants in knowledge creation. Through networking and cooperation with national and international organizations, universities, and research centers, nursing associations enable the exchange of experience, joint projects, and access to contemporary trends in nursing, which strengthens research culture, awareness, and the development of a global perspective of the profession.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are numerous factors that hinder the implementation of scientific research and the application of research findings in nursing practice. Some barriers relate to nurses themselves and their professional preparedness, including insufficient theoretical and practical knowledge in research methodology, lack of experience in applying evidence in everyday practice, negative attitudes toward nursing research, and low motivation and professional satisfaction. In addition to individual factors, organizational conditions within healthcare institutions also play a significant role. An insufficient number of nurses, heavy workload, dominance of administrative and routine tasks, inadequate recognition of the nursing profession, poor work organization, weak interprofessional collaboration, and inadequate implementation of clearly defined nursing standards represent serious obstacles to the development of a research culture. Broader social and economic factors also influence the development of scientific research. Low salaries, limited opportunities for professional advancement, migration of nurses to more developed countries due to better working conditions, as well as nepotism and other systemic issues, further reduce motivation for professional development and involvement in

research activities. All of the above slows down the development of evidence-based nursing and hinders the improvement of healthcare quality.

Research awareness includes the recognition that knowledge gained through research can have significant implications for both nurses and patients. An example of such practice is the newly established scientific-professional journal *NurseNexus Journal* in the Republic of Srpska. The journal publishes articles in English and Republic of Serbian, and it is issued twice a year. There is no publication fee. The publisher of the journal is the Association of Graduate Nurses of Health Care of the Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina (URL: https://nursenexusjournal.com/). The journal serves as a platform where different aspects of nursing work intersect: theory, practice, and science. The launch of a scientific-professional journal intended for nurses represents an important opportunity for developing research competencies and improving professional practice, as well as for learning how to write scientific and professional papers under the mentorship and educational support of a nursing association as the journal's publisher. Publishing in a nursing journal contributes to the dissemination of knowledge, the application of evidence-based practice, and the strengthening of the professional identity of nurses and technicians. Therefore, it is necessary to further explore ways in which professional associations can contribute to improving nurses' competencies, the quality of healthcare, and the development of health systems.

Conclusion

Evidence-based nursing refers to the integration of knowledge and skills through which nurses make clinical decisions based on the best available scientific evidence, clinical experience, patient preferences and attitudes, and available resources. Knowledge derived from science is power, and in the context of health it is also a responsibility. Nursing associations and journals have an advocacy role in promoting a research culture in nursing, influencing health policies, and supporting investment in the development of science and education of nurses. In this way, they contribute to building professional identity and strengthening the position of nursing as an independent and scientifically grounded discipline. We believe that NurseNexus Journal will awaken the research awareness of nurses and medical technicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and beyond.

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UTICAJ SESTRINSKIH UDRUŽENJA I ČASOPISA NA RAZVOJ ISTRAŽIVAČKE KULTURE U SESTRINSTVU

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Sažetak. *Put ka zdravlju vodi kroz stalna istraživanja i usvajanja novih znanja. Svrha sestrinskih istraživanja je dodavanje novog znanja već postojećem fondu znanja kojim sestrinstvo raspolaže. Cilj ovog rada bio je prikazati uticaj sestrinskih udruženja i časopisa na razvoj istraživačke kulture kod medicinskih sestara i tehničara. Sestrinska udruženja imaju ključnu i višedimenzionalnu ulogu u razvoju istraživačke kulture u sestrinstvu, jer djeluju kao most između kliničke prakse, obrazovanja i naučnoistraživačkog rada. Organizuju se aktivnosti poput seminara, radionica, kongresa i konferencija, gdje se medicinske sestre upoznaju sa savremenim istraživačkim metodama, analizom podataka i principima naučnog pisanja, što doprinosi razvoju istraživačkih kompetencija, posebno kod sestara koje nemaju formalno obrazovanje u oblasti naučnoistraživačkog rada. To smanjuje jaz između teorije i prakse, jača spremnost za primjenu naučnih dokaza u svakodnevnom radu. Sestrinska udruženja pružaju podršku u realizaciji istraživanja što uključuje mentorstvo, savjetovanje u vezi sa metodologijom, pomoć pri pisanju radova, kao i podsticanje publikovanja u stručnim i naučnim časopisima, povećava se vidljivost sestrinske profesije u akademskoj i društvenoj zajednici, medicinske sestre se afirmišu kao aktivni učesnici u stvaranju znanja. Umrežavanje udruženja kroz saradnju sa domaćim i međunarodnim organizacijama, univerzitetima i istraživačkim centrima, sestrinska udruženja omogućavaju razmjenu iskustava, zajedničke projekte i pristup savremenim trendovima u sestrinstvu što jača istraživačku kulturu i svijest i razvoj globalne perspektive profesije. Istraživačka svijest obuhvata priznanje da znanje stečeno kroz istraživanje može imati značajne implikacije kako za sestre tako i za pacijente. Primjer takve prakse je novoregistrovani naučno-stručni časopis NurseNexus Journal u Republici Srpskoj. Časopis predstavlja raspoloživu dokumentaciju i mjesto gdje se nalaze različite niti sestrinskog rada: teorija, praksa i nauka. Znanje koje se dobija i pomoću nauke je moć, a u kontekstu zdravlja ono je i odgovornost. Udruženja i časopisi imaju zagovaračku ulogu u promociji istraživačke kulture u sestrinstvu, utiču na zdravstvene politike i promovišu ulaganje u razvoj nauke i obrazovanja medicinskih sestara. Time doprinose izgradnji profesionalnog identiteta i jačanju pozicije sestrinstva kao samostalne i naučno utemeljene discipline.*

Ključne riječi: *Sestrinska udruženja, časopisi, istraživanje, medicinske sestre.*