

AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM PROPOSAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NURSES IN PUBLICATION SKILLS IN LATIN-AMERICA.

PROPOSTA DE UM PROGRAMA EDUCACIONAL PARA A CAPACITAÇÃO DE ENFERMEIROS NA ÁREA DE PUBLICAÇÃO EM LATINO AMERICANO

PROPUESTA DE UN PROGRAMA EDUCACIONAL PARA LA CAPACITACIÓN DE ENFERMEROS EN EL CAMPO DE LA PUBLICACIÓN EN AMÉRICA LATINA.

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ABSTRACT

Current trends suggest that the dissemination of nursing knowledge and published papers in high quality journals bring further development in the professionalisation of nursing. There is limited understanding of the factors that enable nurses writing for publication but an educational programme on writing for publication at all levels of nursing could act a catalyst in this process of change. Nursing leaderships also accounts for the responsibility to contribute to the nursing knowledge base through publication, but also to prepare future nurses in the same area. The aims of the paper to examine some issues regarding nursing publications, postgraduate nurses in particular, and suggest a framework for the professional development of nurses in how to write for publication.

Key words: Nursing; Education, Nursing, Graduate; Information Dissemination; Scientific and Technical Publications; Periodicals; Authorship and Co-Authorship in Scientific Publications

RESUMO

Tendências atuais sugerem que a disseminação do conhecimento em enfermagem e a publicação de artigos em revistas de alta qualidade propiciam maior desenvolvimento na profissionalização da enfermagem. Há pouca compreensão dos fatores que tornam os enfermeiros capazes de escrever para publicação. Contudo, um programa educacional sobre como escrever para publicação em todos os níveis da enfermagem pode funcionar como um catalisador nesse processo de mudança. As lideranças de enfermagem não só têm a responsabilidade de contribuir com a base de conhecimentos da enfermagem por meio de publicações, mas também de preparar futuros enfermeiros na mesma área. Neste artigo são investigadas algumas questões relacionadas à publicação em enfermagem, particularmente em nível de pós-graduação, e sugerido um arcabouço para a capacitação profissional dos enfermeiros na área de publicação.

Palavras-chave: Enfermagem; Educação de Pós-Graduação em Enfermagem; Disseminação da Informação; Publicação Científicas e Técnicas; Publicações Periódicas; Autoria e Co-Autoria na Publicação Científica

RESUMEN

Tendencias actuales sugieren que la diseminación del conocimiento en enfermería y la publicación de artículos en revistas de alta calidad propician mayor desarrollo en la profesionalización de los enfermeros. Poco se sabe sobre los factores que permiten que los enfermeros escriban artículos para publicación. Sin embargo, un programa educacional sobre cómo redactar para publicación, a todos los niveles de enfermería, puede funcionar como catalizador en este proceso de cambio. Los líderes de enfermería no sólo tienen la responsabilidad de contribuir a su base de conocimientos por medio de publicaciones sino también de preparar futuros enfermeros en la misma área. La finalidad de este artículo es investigar algunas cuestiones referentes a la publicación en enfermería, particularmente a nivel de posgrado, y sugerir un referente para la capacitación de enfermeros en el campo de la publicación de artículos.

Palabras clave: enfermería; educación; publicación; posgrado; coautoría

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INTRODUCTION

Current trends suggest that the dissemination of nursing knowledge and published papers in high quality journals bring further development in the professionalisation of nursing. Publishing is an important means of disseminating nursing knowledge and is a goal of graduate education.¹ When research reveals new knowledge or understanding, researchers want their discovery to be shared with those who can make use of it.² There is a broad spectrum of publications ranging from opinions' letters to printed books. However, there is a need to examine an "upstream" approach and tackle the root of the problem in the development of nurses in publications' skills. The aims of the paper is to examine some issues regarding nursing publications, postgraduate nurses in particular and, suggest a framework for the professional development of nurses in publications' skills.

BACKGROUND

The need for nurses to write and published research studies for international high quality journals is beyond dispute. A review³ of the high content ranking nursing journals in the year 2000 provides a baseline indication of the extent of international publications of published articles. The findings showed that at least 30% of articles published in international nursing journals met at least a definition of international authorship. In addition, the authors found that nearly 70% of articles published in journals edited in other countries were written by authors in countries different than those of the journals editors. This, in effect, means that quite a high proportion of foreign or overseas authors are publishing in high authoritative nursing journals. However, there are no indications about the percentage of papers published from Latin American and other sources. There is no available data comparing publications in English by Latin American authors with authors from developed and developing countries whose mothers' tongue (primary language) are not English. The questions relates to what is the total number of papers submitted from Latin America and their acceptance rates compared to authors from other countries.

The main contention here is that why so few papers and research studies from this region are submitted to international nursing journals, published in English Language. Instead of looking at external constraints that may inhibit such development, a more proactive approach is needed. That is, finding solutions of how to facilitate graduates nurses to understand and apply the process of publications skills. There are several benefits for postgraduate nurses to write for publications and these include: adding some nursing knowledge, the applications of research to practice, increased confidence and an achievement for the author(s) and institutions. Publication of the results of postgraduate research confers benefits upon a range of recipients.⁴

A quick scan of a few journals in this region would reveal some quality nursing journals, peer-reviewed, with publications in Portuguese, Spanish and English languages. Positive developments in the journals such as having book reviews and students sections provide access to new and

potential authors. It has been suggested that bilingual proficiency in English and Spanish (or another language) should be regarded as an authentic clinical skill supporting nurses' cultural and clinical competencies.⁵

STUDENT EXPERIENCES WITH WRITING FOR PUBLICATION

There is limited literature on postgraduate students' perceptions of writing for publication.⁶ This dearth of publications is also relevant to nursing. What we do know is that there is a lack of understanding of the process of students' learning to publish. In addition, few postgraduate nurses write for publications or converting their research studies for journal publications. The literature on how to write for publications provide limited guidance for nurses and some of them are out-dated.⁷⁻⁸ Some of the guides written for nurses are specific to a particular style and publication formats of the journals.⁹⁻¹⁰ For postgraduate nurses turning a master or doctorate degree into an acceptable publications are a daunting challenge as writing can be difficult for both experienced, as well as, inexperienced writers.¹¹

Some of the factors that may inhibit publications by postgraduate nurses include the interpersonal relationships between the supervisor and supervisee, emotional factors, time factors due to other activities and the student and supervisors' interests and motivations. Two further likely explanations for this are nurses' lack of knowledge about the writing and publishing process, and insufficient encouragement of their efforts during this process.⁹ Postgraduates will encounter emotions when writing for publication, which have been identified as part of the process of becoming scholarly writers.⁶ Postgraduate publications are mandatory in several countries prior to obtaining a higher degree.

A FRAMEWORK FOR NURSING PUBLICATION

There is limited understanding of the factors that enable nurses' publication skills but continuing professional courses in this area would act a catalyst in this process of change. We need to examine a new framework of education and other strategies to encourage postgraduate **nurses** to share their clinical knowledge at local, national and international levels through publications. Course programmes in the development of publications skills have been developed, implemented and evaluated.¹³⁻¹⁴ There is limited evidence to show how effective were these strategies in the preparation of nurses in publication skills.

We need to examine the whole process of writing and publication skills and examine postgraduate nurses' attitudes, values and preferences and the most effective way they can learn the publication process. Although it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss all the content required by nurses, suffice it to say that a study module for postgraduate nurses should be developed for skills in writing research reports, literature reviews and critical appraisals, book reviews, publication process, writing process and ethics of publication. In a course how to write for publication for graduate nurses, the contents included essentials of writing, components of a manuscript, the peer

review process, and the assignment of authorship.⁸

A systematic training needs analysis in publications skills would provide an indication of the level of knowledge and competency required for postgraduate nurses. However, the core content for inclusion in the educational programme would undoubtedly depend on a number of factors such as the length of the course, its potential audience, the extent of prior learning and learning needs, and the nature of the course. Accredited modules should be offered to postgraduate nurses and other healthcare professionals. A study¹³ found that the factors that have positive effects on publication success were: a) having a clear topic for publication at the outset of the educational program, and b) holding a positive perception of the value

placed on publication within one's practice environment

There is little evidence so far whether process of writing for publication is well understood by professors and teachers of nursing. However, it has been suggested that academics are generally unaware of the scholarship of academic writing.¹⁵ Academic staff should be targeted with the provision of continuing professional development to make them being better informed publications skills and about their responsibility attached to facilitate postgraduate nurses publication skills' development. Co-authors or supervisors should be clear about the implications of facilitating postgraduates to write for publication. A general recommendation¹⁶ for all stakeholders in writing for publication and policy development is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1 - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NURSING PUBLICATIONS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop skills in writing and publication process. • Writing book review or short pieces of work. • Co-authoring as a means of gaining publications. • Learn from the experienced authors. • Read a variety of journals. • Understand that rejection is part of the learning process. • Prepared to accept constructive criticisms in the writing and publication process. • Clear about ethical best practises when co-authoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop skills in writing and publication process. • Understand the implications of co-authoring. • Regard co-authoring as a means of supporting postgraduate writing for publication; • Clear about ethical best practises when co-authoring. • Integration of publication's skills development in nursing curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a postgraduate and staff publications policy • Develop postgraduate journal clubs for dissemination and discussion of published papers • Further develop scheme for postgraduates to be involved in research and publication groups. • Rewarding postgraduate publications. • Publicise guidance of how to write for publication and the publishing process. Include guidance on ethics of publication
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Source: Adapted from Hughes M 2004¹⁶.

CONCLUSION

We need to be conceptually shifting our nursing curriculum to meet the healthcare needs of the population and the demands of the nursing profession. We need to provide more access for nurses to journals and libraries and on-site computer search in academic and clinical settings. Writing an opinion letter or book review should be the first step in the writing and publication process. Co-authoring should also be regarded as a means of gaining further publications.

Nursing leaderships also accounts for the responsibility to contribute to the nursing knowledge base through publication, but also to prepare future nurses in the same

directions. The knowledge and information technology explosions have a profound impact on publication skills and other nursing activities. Professional development will always be most effective when it is part of a strategic plan to create an organisational learning culture^{17,18,19}. The challenges are here!

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