

Research: The issue nurses have been least able to discuss during the coronavirus pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic that began in late 2019 led to significant and complex crises all over the world that have continued for more than a year. While this has challenged all segments of society, one of the most affected groups has been healthcare professionals. One of the main reasons was the uncertainty associated with a novel virus. Little was known about the means to provide protection or treatment. Finding answers to these questions in order to control the situation was an imperative for healthcare professionals and the larger community. However, accurate information was limited. A lack of scientific knowledge that can form the basis for action naturally increases anxiety and adds to difficulties. The coronavirus pandemic was a reminder of this for all of society. Initial studies provided important guidance and we have made valuable progress. As our collective knowledge increased, responses were modified accordingly. Just imagine what the global situation might be right now if studies had not been conducted to examine the structure, spread, prevention, and treatment of the newest coronavirus. Humanity has once again recognized just how vital the role of research and scientific information is to our daily lives.

The World Health Organization declared 2020 the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife and the International Council of Nurses published a valuable advocacy report, "Nurses: A Voice to Lead Nursing the World to Health." It is very interesting that these coincided with the year of the pandemic. The nursing profession had more publicity across all forms of media than ever before. While this is very gratifying and beneficial, unfortunately, the scientific aspect of our profession has not received as much attention. How often and on which issues has the expertise of nurses been applied to individual, family, and public health? It is time to ask ourselves once more what we want the nursing profession to be and to emphasize this important aspect of our work.

The continuous development of any profession depends on the research-based development of field-specific knowledge. It is not a choice, but a professional imperative. According to Bassett and Bassett,^[1] Greenwood noted that "Research is a way of thinking. A critical approach to knowledge requires the ability to formulate relevant questions and search for answers." Nurses can influence healthcare policies through research-based knowledge, thus shaping healthcare services and nursing practices, which will make additional contributions to human well-being. If nurses are to achieve the fullest version of their professional identity and be a leading voice in achieving health goals, they must take responsibility and contribute to decisions about care with research/evidence-based knowledge. Yet there is a significant gap between nursing practices and practices and research results. It has been referred to as a research-application/practice gap, evidence-to-application/practice gap, and a know-do gap.^[2] Nurses must accept the challenge to conduct research to overcome the challenges they experience, find the answers to important questions, increase their knowledge, close the know-do gap, and promote the highest-possible quality care.

Where to start?

First, we can all start by asking ourselves some of the following questions. This is a step toward closing the gap between research and practice.

- What is the internalized concept of nursing? Educators should consider what they provide to students, and practicing nurses should reflect on what they really do and why.
- Which roles do we nurses resist the most, including students? Why?
- How do we make decisions about nursing initiatives, no matter which field we work in, including education?
- Do we know and promote our contributions to individual, family, and public health?
- What are our attitudes and behaviors regarding reading, conducting, and using research results during our undergraduate, master's, and doctoral studies? And beyond?
- What are our goals when planning research? (increased competence, contribution to science, etc.)
- What is my research area of interest? What topic would I like to work on?

What do you say? Isn't it time to answer these and other questions and come up with some plans for the future? We look forward to hearing your thoughts on the role of nursing.

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1. Bassett C, Bassett J. The importance of research in nursing practice. *Br J Perioper Nurs* 2003;13:30–1.

2. Konwar G, Kalita J. The barriers and challenges of conducting nursing research and communicating research findings into practice. *Int J Health Sci Res* 2018;8:216–22.