

Status and Image of the Nurse as Perceived by the Public

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Abstract : The International Council of Nurses-ICN defined nursing as a sphere integrating autonomous and collaborative care intended for the individual, family and community within and outside of the care setting. Nursing as a care profession has developed broadly over recent decades in terms of its essentials, expertise and primarily academically. Despite the impressive growth of the profession, there is still extreme diversity in the public's perceptions and opinions of the profession and its professionals and in the knowledge on the fundamentals of its true function and spheres of engagement. The current study examines the existing knowledge among the general population regarding the nursing profession. The population consisted of 498 respondents, 236 women and 262 men, age 18-81. The respondents noted that nursing focuses on the technical, and the emotional aspects and promotion of health for the patient are not the nurse's responsibility. Most of the respondents saw nurses working mainly in hospital and community-based clinic settings. They considered nursing to be a high prestige profession in general, but less prestigious among respondents exposed to healthcare provision. Most of the respondents considered nursing to be a humane profession but without independence and with no need for academic studies. The findings are incompatible with the definition of nursing and its spheres of action as defined in the ICN Code of Ethics. Two suggestions are to work through nursing schools addressing the student nurses, as ambassadors for the profession. The second is using the healthcare encounter between the nursing staff and the public to improve the image of nurses.

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