

The Importance of Nursing in Nursing Publications

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The nursing literature serves as a primary means of communicating new knowledge to nurses. Readers turn to the literature to learn about new studies, locate evidence to guide and change their practice, and keep up to date. Students learn about nursing as a discipline through the literature and gain an understanding of how their role as a clinician differs from other healthcare providers. Development of nursing as a discipline depends on research studies and other forms of scholarship that build on nursing's holistic perspective and differentiate nursing and nursing care from that of other healthcare professions.

Journal articles, websites, books, and other publications provide our primary means of communicating this knowledge and new information to others. A bibliometric analysis of the literature can be used to explore patterns, trends, and advances in a field; characteristics of research; impact of specific authors and collaborations among them; use of research findings in practice; citation patterns; and information sources used to develop the content of an article, among other purposes (Anderson, Keenan, & Jones, 2009; Carter-Templeton, Frazier, Wu, & Wyatt, 2018; Hunt, Watson, Jackson, & Cleary, 2012; Li & Hale, 2016; Nicoll, et al., 2018; Oermann, et al., 2008a; Wong, Tam, Wong, & Cheung, 2013; Železnik, Blažun Vošner, & Kokol, 2017). By analyzing the content of journal articles using bibliometric methods, we can learn more about the current focus on nursing as a discipline.

REFLECTION OF NURSING AS A DISCIPLINE IN THE NURSING LITERATURE

In a recent study, we analyzed 79 articles in varied types of nursing journals to explore the extent to which they reflected four characteristics of nursing as a discipline: holism, social context, goal of health, and consistency with common definitions of nursing (Chinn, Nicoll, Carter-Templeton, & Oermann, 2019). To better understand nursing's current view on holism as represented in the literature, we read each article to determine if it provided a holistic view of nursing and nursing practice in the content or focused only on physical needs and care of patients, or on emotional, social, or spiritual aspects without presenting a holistic view important in nursing (Chinn et al., 2019). We also examined the content to assess if it included consideration of the patient's culture and background, family, or community. One of the areas in which nursing differs from other health care disciplines is our focus on health and wellness versus disease and medical diagnosis; this was another area we examined in the articles. Because

these were articles in *nursing* journals, we also analyzed the content to determine if it focused on nursing as a discipline.

Some articles, such as updates on medications, did not mention nursing or nurses. However, among the other articles, nearly 60% reflected nursing as a discipline and used the language of nursing and nurses versus healthcare professionals, providers, and clinicians. These articles described nursing care and nurses' relationships with the patient and family; they included emotional, social, and other contexts that nurses consider in care of their patients; and partnering with patients and families for managing self-care and promoting health. More than half of the articles published in nursing journals, most of which were intended for clinicians, provided a nursing perspective.

Of concern, however, was the lack of published nursing literature used as information sources for the content of these nursing articles. Less than one-third (28%) of the citations, which reveal the sources of information used to develop the article, were from nursing publications. There was a mean of 34.6 references in nursing articles. Of those references, fewer were from nursing sources (nursing journals and books, $M = 9.9$) than from medical journals ($M = 11.9$) and other sources ($M = 12.8$). These findings suggest that many articles published in nursing journals use medical and literature from other disciplines as the main sources of information rather than from our own literature (Chinn et al., 2019). In a study of information sources for developing the nursing literature, done more than 10 years ago, most of the citations were to articles in medical journals ($n = 7719$, 40.8% of all the citations) (Oermann, et al., 2008b). Only 18.4% ($n = 3473$) of the citations used in nursing journal articles were to nursing publications. Nursing has a large and diverse body of literature: research studies and practice and educational innovations in nursing that build predominantly on this literature may more easily capture and integrate the values and perspectives of nursing.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NURSE AUTHORS

1. Regardless of the topic of your manuscript, if intended for nurses, it should reflect a nursing perspective. Four questions you should use as an author to assess if your paper includes this perspective are:

- a. Do you address more than only physical or emotional care and instead provide a holistic view?
- b. Do you consider the patient's culture, background, family, and community?
- c. Is there a goal of promoting or improving the health of the patient, family, community?
- d. Does your manuscript focus on nursing and nursing care?

2. Many areas of healthcare, such as patient safety, are not unique to nursing. Articles published in nursing journals, though, should provide some discussion about the nursing perspective and nurses' contributions to these health care initiatives: we cannot afford to lose our nursing perspective. Review your article with this point in mind.

3. In writing about inter-professional education, inter-professional collaborative practice, team-based care, and related areas, make sure to should include contributions that nurses bring to these new ways of delivering care.

4. In developing new studies, evidence-based practice projects, innovations, and new initiatives, look to the published nursing literature as your primary source of information.

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