

THE BRAZILIAN NURSING WORK FORCE AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Nowadays, we find ourselves astonished watching, around the world and in the country, as this covid-19 pandemic unfolds. And ... what do we observe? Who is on the front line caring for the victims of the coronavirus, in every corner of Brazil? It is the nursing; represented by nurses, technicians and assistants, always active in any circumstances of patient care, from emergency care units to hospitals, exposed to all kinds of risks arising from the precariousness of health services. We highlight here the poor working conditions of these professionals, who do not even have the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment, for their longest shift of 8 or 12 hours a day with patients. We have also seen pot-banging and other public manifestations of praise and thanks to the nursing staff! This recognition is very fair, with its benefits being perceived at this time of pandemic. However, nursing has always been this way, in the silence of its daily professional function. Apart from everything, there is a call for a decisive commitment by the authorities in favor of safety at work of the professionals who care for patients with covid-19, so that they are not the next victims.

Also very fair, WHO¹ elected 2020 as the International Year of Nursing, at its 72nd General Assembly, to honor all nurses and midwives from different countries in the world, for the fundamental evidence of daily contributions, in their work, in the care of the health and well-being of the populations. A year in which Florence Nightingale, the precursor of modern nursing, is honored, in the second centenary of her birth.

With the collaboration of the ICN - International Council of Nurses and the Nursing Now campaign group, WHO published the first important “State (of the art) Report on Nursing in the World”². It portrays the nursing workforce in the world, the largest professional group in the health sector representing around 59%, demonstrating that this class is essential to fulfill the central role in universal health coverage, with global efforts, promising to “leave no one behind”, with a view to the Sustainable Development Goal. It published 14 articles related to the synthesis of the research report: Nursing Profile of Brazil 2010-2015, carried out by an agreement between COFEN and FIOCRUZ. According to the report of the Nursing Profile in Brazil, this proportion of the nursing staff in relation to other health professionals is even higher.

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Considering the current context of care for suspected or confirmed patients for covid-19, especially in public health services, it is estimated that the proportion of the nursing team's performance goes to over 62%.

The Report presents detailed levels of nursing development in different countries, thanks to the technical reports provided by nursing associations at local, regional and national levels. It emphasizes necessary investments with intersectoral and governmental efforts with policies to increase the nursing workforce and its empowerment; highlights the pressing need for investments that reinforce nursing education and the training of nursing professionals able to meet the demands of the labor market, seeking better performance in leaders in different contexts of health service management; encouraging health service organizations to open up employment opportunities for nursing professionals, in order to fully satisfy their needs. Finally, in partnership with ICN and NURSING NOW, WHO calls for support of the government of the countries and other partners who can introduce incentives able to make nursing an attractive practice, reinvigorating the much-needed Nursing Workforce.

Of all the efforts required, the role of Nursing worldwide, including our territory, must start from itself, rescuing the profession's self-esteem, flying the flag of struggle and seeking the necessary conquests. The NURSING NOW campaign represents the movement of this protagonism in solidarity. Let's go together! Add yourself to it!

REFERENCES

- 1 World Health Organization. States of the World 'Nursing 2020, investing in education, jobs and leadership. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020.
- 2 Nursing in Focus [Internet]. 2016 [cited on 24 Jun 2020]; 7 (n esp): 5-88. Available at: <http://revista.cofen.gov.br/index.php/enfermagem/issue/view/21>. doi: <https://doi.org/10.21675/2357-707X.2016.v7.nESP>