Some considerations on the situation and perspectives of nursing profession.

Case study: the situation of nurses in Romania

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The shortage of nurses.

Determined by:

1. Demographic changes:

Population aging → increasing the need for medical services → Increasing the need for nurses → Declining number of young population
A third major structural problem is added: the continuing decline in the attractiveness of this profession

Some (traditional) causes:

• Long duration of training;
• Modest level of benefits;
• Much lower social status compared to the social role.
The COVID-19 pandemic:

• Has exacerbated the side effects of nurses shortage

• Pointed out other consequences:
  – further increase in the need for nurses
  – increased occupational risk of nurses
  – the need for additional incentives for nurse retention
Some current professional issues:

• Bureaucratization of the profession;

• Changing the structure of the profession (level of training, access conditions);

• Continuous increase of professional requirements.
Additional professional demands caused by the COVID-19 pandemic:

• Rapid change in working and protection procedures.

• The necessity of acquiring new professional skills in a very short time.

• The effects of depersonalization of patient relationships generated by the PPE use.

• Increasing professional and personal risks.
For making appropriate estimates of the nursing profession evolution we should be able to estimate within reasonable limits:

a) The directions of healthcare systems evolution, respectively:
   - Patient-centered care;
   - Or the paternalistic model.
For making appropriate estimates of the nursing profession evolution we should be able to estimate within reasonable limits:

b) The place that healthcare will occupy in the structure of citizens' values;

c) The impact of new technologies:
   - on medical services;
   - on labor force (the nurses will be replaced by robots?);
Other threats to the nurse profession

• The consequences of technological change;

• The pressure of patients' cultural diversity, which is constantly increasing

• Uncertainty of public-private balance (affects career path estimation);

• The impact of the unknown (e.g.: Covid-19 pandemic).
The impact of new technologies on the nurse profession

• In a simplistic approach: the introduction of new technologies should reduce the nurse's workload.

• However, the reality does not always confirm such a trend.
New technologies:

- generate new types of investigations/working tasks;
- often reduce the working time with patients (a paradoxical effect: they increase the working time allocated to bureaucratic procedures);
- are often introduced without proper training of nurses for their use (increasing the general level of the profession difficulty).
The impact of information technology:

• New challenges to the profession.

• Nurses often face the lack of support structures to maintain their level of competence in new cognitive contexts.

• Nurses are in a constant competition with the „Google-nurse”. (In the context of expert advice, they tend to weigh less and less).
The impact of informatic technologies

- Online communities tend to become more important than traditional professional communities.

- The diversity/absence of standards in the area of medical information technologies significantly complicates the process of nurses adaptation to new technologies.
The impact of new contexts

• Professional bodies ankylosed in bureaucratic models, unable to react with the necessary speed.

• Poor training for new procedures.

• Inappropriate reactions from the responsible institutions
The impact of new contexts

- COVID-19 is an example of insufficient institutional support for nurses:
  - Insufficient personal protective equipment (PPE)
  - Absence of standards regarding the use of PPE
  - Late provided professional and occupational safety training informations
  - Asymmetry of relevant informations.
• In early March we released a series of videos with instructions on the use of personal protective equipment.

• The impact of almost 6 million views for a video demonstrates the need for information that health employees had.
Federația "Solidaritatea Sanitară" din România: Echipamentul de protecție al personalului medical în cazul COVID-19...

Cum arată de fapt echipamentul personalului medical, ca la carte, în lupta cu COVID-19. (Ne așteptăm ca organismele profesionale să fie sursa unor astfel de instrucțiuni. Deoarece asta nu se întâmplă, încercăm să suplimin noi aceste lipsuri. Pe măsura...

| Incărcare: 17.03.2020 | Deținut: | Apare o dată | Vezi linkul permanent |

Acest clip video este folosit în 1 postare

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Federația “Solidaritatea Sanitar...”
17.03.2020
5,9 mil.
In the context of the deficit of useful/relevant information, we built an information portal: https://covid.solidaritatea-sanitara.ro/

Asymmetry of relevant informations.
The attractiveness of the nursing profession decrease

- We can estimate that the increase of danger level and work difficulty tasks for nurses on the COVID-19 pandemic context already generates a negative impulse towards the desirability of this profession.
Training of nurses

Initial training
Initial training

• The main feature of this profession is the diversity of training types and competences.

• It raises the issue of multitude's meanings where we currently use the term 'nurse' in the E.U. space.

• Attempts to unify the diversity of nurse's training types have already been generating tensions between different categories of nurses.
To remedy this situation two solutions are possible:

(1) Amplifying the career path by recognizing intra-professional differences (and building appropriate reward structures). It involves clarifying the situation by introducing new professional subcategories.

(2) Professional unification. However, this is possible only by taking the maximum level of training/skills as a benchmark.

Both solutions must include the possibility of logical transitions, from one level of training to another, using the mechanism of recognizing formal and informal competences.
Do we need to reduce the level of initial training to cover the nurses shortage?

- This is not an appropriate solution in the current context. Such an approach will accentuate the existing problems of this profession.

- There is another solution, based on an essential feature of the nurse-specific skill set: the very large differences between them in terms of complexity degrees
An additional solution: ensuring the skills deficit by assigning skills with a low level of difficulty/complexity to another profession

• It`s preferable:
  – to add other professional categories in the area of care by introducing auxiliary staff
  – to transfer the professional attributions with a low degree of difficulty to the auxiliary staff.

• It is a model partially used (formal and especially informal) in Romania.
Training of nurses

Continuous training
The continuous professional training should focus on:

- Strengthening and updating the competencies already held;

- **Training of new skills.** This approach raises several issues:
  - How to select new skills;
  - What is the ratio between the competencies already held and the new ones;
  - How the new competencies will affect the structure and status of the profession.
Who should organize continuous professional training?

o Traditional answers:
  - State;
  - Professional bodies;
  - Employers.

o An atypical answer: (also) the European Union. Including for core of common, universal competencies, centered on E.U. values.
Who should carry out the continuous professional training?

- We are witnessing the monopoly of two structures:
  - Universities;
  - Professional bodies.

- Both are highly bureaucratic structures, unable to react in a timely manner in urgent situations;
The costs of continuous professional training:

It is about:
- Time;
- Money;
- Energy.

- Who has to bear the financial costs of continuous training?
  - Not nurses (except for the exercise of profession as a freelancer).
  - The traditional financiers
  - Financing training through E.U. founds/projects
Modernization of training involves

• Flexibility and recognition of new learning contexts.

• Recognition of informal/non-formal skills is a key element.

• A *training crisis cell* could be useful?
Thank you!