

EDUCATION IN MASTER STUDY PROGRAM NURSING IN SLOVAKIA

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Abstract

Nursing is regulated profession and the education of nurses is focused on acquiring specialized skills. Specialized skills comprise knowledge, skills, values, which allow one to work as independent professional. According to the System of the fields of study, study program Nursing can be studied in the first university education degree (bachelor), in the second university education degree (master) and in the third university education degree (Philosophiae doctor). Nowadays, nurses can study the program Nursing at universities in two graduates and a post-graduate level. In our article, we compared the content of curriculum in master graduate program Nursing on individual universities.

Key words: nursing, education, master study program

Introduction

The historical development of health care, which includes also nursing care and education of nurses, was influenced by the social and socio-economical conditions. Nursing was significantly influenced by cultural traditions, religion, wars, development of medicine, social, economical situation and the comprehensive health condition of population.

Nursing from the point of view of history

The roots of nursing stretch back to the past. Nursing can be divided in three historical periods – nonprofessional, charitable and professional.

Nonprofessional nursing constitutes the longest period. The man had the need to take care of himself, his health and health of his relatives. The dominant position was represented by women, who were spreading their knowledge and experience from generation to generation. The sick were nursed in domestic environment and natural sources were used for treatment. This type of treatment lasted in the territory of Slovakia until the arrival of Christianity and in some versions still exists until now.

Charitable nursing evolved simultaneously with Christianity. It focused primarily on the sick, the poor, orphaned children and individuals depending on the help by others. This period is connected with establishing of monasteries, convents, asylums and hospitals. Charitable nursing focused on satisfaction of basic life needs – providing shelter, providing food, hygiene, spiritual support and later also medical care.

Professional nursing was developed simultaneously with the rise of medicine and hospitals. The period of “nursing reformation” marked the beginning of the professional nursing. The professionalization of nursing was influenced by personalities like Florence Nightingale, Nikolaj Ivanovič Pirogov and Henry Dunant. The professionalization of Slovak nursing was influenced by social, cultural, economical conditions, standard of health and medical care, but also the right of nation to education [1, 2].

Education in nursing

Education is the process of adoption of knowledge, activities, creation of knowledge, skills, development of physical and psychical skills and interests [3].

Education of nurses in the field of nursing care was essential for development of professional nursing. Significant was also expert education in nursing schools, which rouse in Europe since 19th and mainly in the first half of 20th century. Nursing schools were established based on the need to treat and take care of the sick in hospitals. Education in this field at universities was a qualitatively higher degree of development of nursing as profession.

Apart from Great Britain, Canada and USA, the university education started also in Czechoslovakia. The university education started in Slovakia in 1962 at Comenius University in Bratislava [4].

The most outstanding changes in education in the field of nursing started after 1989. In regard to political and social changes, change occurred also in the health care system and in the education system. As the nursing was changing, also the system of education in nursing was changing. The content of nursing education included not only knowledge from nursing, but also targets of health service transformation in Slovakia [1]. Graduates of nursing are able to meet the requirements of discipline, which integrates nursing theory with knowledge from other disciplines necessary for the provision of public health services in primary, secondary and tertiary prevention as well as illness care, rehabilitation and aftercare. Graduates are able to provide nursing care to individuals, families, groups and communities in health and disease and contribute to the health, healing and peaceful and dignified death and dying [5, 6].

Since 2004, a new trend of education for nurses has been set in Slovakia. The education can start only after completion of secondary school education with school leaving examination. Following documents were used at pursuing changes in education:

- Guideline of EC No. 77/452/EEC, No. 453/EEC, No. 80/154/EEC, No. 80/155/EEC,
- Materials of International Council of Nurses – ICN, Geneva, 1996,
- European strategy of World Health Organization for nursing and midwifery education, Copenhagen, 1999,
- Declaration of Bologna, 1999,
- Declaration of Munich, 2000,
- Recommendation of WHO from 54th World Health Assembly on 21st May 2001.

New means of education was also approved by the expert mission TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument), which examined the legal, social and economic status of nurses and midwives in the (at that time) associated EU countries. A team of experts from EU member states executed an evaluation mission. The reviews were mainly good. Based on the remarks, TAIEX approved the possibility to study nursing at universities like in other countries of the world. Nowadays, the education of nurses takes place at universities and graduate schools [7].

Nursing is field of study from the System of fields of study, administered by Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, as field of knowledge, in which the graduate of field of study acquires the specialized capability/competence to pursue his original occupation, or will be prepared to continue in the following graduate study [8].

Nursing as science discipline is standard taught in EU countries and is required by the European Committee, as well as our legislation to acquire the specialized skills in the regulated non-medical profession nurse. According to the System of fields of study of higher education in the Slovak Republic, implemented by the decision of the Ministry of Education of the SR No.2090/2002 of 16th December 2002, Nursing can be studied in the first university education degree (nurse - bachelor), in the second university education degree (nurse – master) and in the third university education degree (nurse – Philosophiae doctor).

The nurse – bachelor independently provides individual nursing care – preventive, supportive, therapeutic, rehabilitation or assistant – to individuals, families and groups by means of nursing process, maintains and supports the optimum health condition of individuals, families, groups and communities in various situations, which require nursing care, acquires active participation of individuals, families, groups and communities in the process of maintaining and supporting health, therapy and care, observes the need of nursing care including education of individuals, families and groups and provides in mutual cooperation its maximum quality in line with ethical principles, rights of patients with emphasis on maximum quality and efficiency. She is able to think critically and work with the results of reliable researches.

The nurse – master independently provides individual nursing care and develops nursing practice in all areas and facilities of the health care system, is able to think critically and work with the results of reliable researches, participates on scientific and research activities and utilizes scientifically justified work methods, procedures, techniques which can be realized by qualified experts in nursing, identifies nursing issues which can be subject matter to nursing research, uses and applies the results of research in nursing practice in line with ethical principles, rights of patients, with emphasis on maximum quality and efficiency.

The nurse – Philosophiae doctor is able to pursue independent scientific and research activities in the field of Nursing and significantly participate on development of nursing as discipline [9].

Definition of research problem

The problem of our research was to identify what are the differences in the curricula in the master study program Nursing at Slovak universities.

Targets of research

1. Identify the differences in curricula in master study program Nursing at 11 universities in Slovak republic.
2. Compare differences in curricula in master study program Nursing according to groups of courses:
 - a) Clinically-theoretical courses related to Nursing
 - b) Other courses of knowledge core
 - c) Courses of final state examination
3. Based on detected analysis forecast the quality of education in master study program Nursing with formulation of actions in case excessive differences are identified.

Methods and techniques of research

In order to acquire a coherent result of analysis, we needed to evaluate curricula of individual universities. We addressed to study departments of all universities per mail. Curricula of all universities were delivered.

Characteristics of research specimen

We included into our analysis all universities in Slovak Republic, which have the accreditation in the field of study Nursing. Universities can be divided into state, public and private.

Public Universities:

Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice (UPIŠ)

Jessenius Faculty of Medicine in Martin (JLF UK)

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra (UKF)

Catholic University in Ružomberok (KU)
Alexander Dubček University of Trenčín in Trenčín (TnUAD)
Trnava University in Trnava (TU)
University of Prešov in Prešov (PU)

State Universities:

Slovak Medical University in Bratislava (SZU BA)
Slovak Medical University in Banská Bystrica (SZU BB)

Private Universities:

St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Work in Bratislava (VŠZaSP)
Institute of Health and Social Work in Nové Zámky (IZaSP)

Discussion

In the first part, we focused on individual courses, in which way they are lectured on all universities with accreditation in the field of study Nursing. We evaluated 82 courses altogether.

In our work we wanted to discover, to which extent are the knowledge core courses implemented in the course structure. The knowledge core includes: clinical nursing, clinical courses, nursing research and thesis.

According to the curricula that we received, 46 courses were included in the main core. Nursing research is not included in the curricula of IZaSP Nové Zámky and VŠZaSP of St. Elizabeth in Bratislava. The concept propaedeutic of scientific work is included in the curricula of KU Ružomberok and SZU Banská Bystrica. We suppose that they deal with research within this course. The thesis course is included jointly, differences occur in clinical and clinically-theoretical courses related to nursing. The curriculum of UKF in Nitra contains the most courses (20), the fewest courses are included in the curriculum of JLF UK v Martine (9). We state that knowledge core courses are not included in curricula at all universities equally.

We discovered the biggest differences in the rate of clinical nursing courses to the clinical courses. There are 42 courses with the same basis. When analyzing curricula, we found out that there are 24 courses with the same basis which can be included in the category of clinical nursing. We called this category Clinically-theoretical courses related to nursing. We included 18 courses in the category of clinical courses and called them Clinical and theoretically-medical courses.

We found out that the self-standing course Nursing is being taught at nine universities. Other universities teach nursing together with the clinical course. The most clinically-theoretical courses related to nursing are taught at TnUAD in Trenčín (13), the fewest at SZU Banská Bystrica (3). On the other hand, the most of clinical courses are taught SZU in Banská Bystrica (11) and self-standing clinical courses are not taught at TnUAD in Trenčín and TU in Trnava.

We included into the analysis 24 courses of clinical nursing. The most clinically-theoretical courses are taught at TnUAD in Trenčín (13). In this part of clinically-theoretical, we would like to bring into attention the clinical practice. According to our findings, the course Clinical practice is not included comprehensively in the curricula. We do not find in the curricula of SZU Bratislava and SZU Banská Bystrica. Based on the submitted analysis, we can state that clinically-theoretical courses related to Nursing are included in the curricula differently, too.

Besides from courses of basic knowledge core, we have also courses of other knowledge core. We arranged them into categories according to content: courses of

pedagogical focus, socioscientific courses, courses related to management, courses related to statistics and other courses of knowledge core. We evaluated 36 courses altogether.

At evaluation of core courses, we discovered only a small percentage of similarity. The course range is very wide. We found accordance only in following courses: Management in Nursing, which is included in curricula of all universities. We found the next accordance in the subject Health Insurance, which is taught at ten universities. We do not find it in the curriculum of PU in Prešov. There is a partial accordance in the course Economics in Health which is taught at nine universities. This course is not taught at VŠZaSP of St. Elizabeth in Bratislava and IZaSP in Nové Zámky. Other courses have different focus; some are related to the characteristics focus of the university. By this we mean KU Ružomberok, where are included courses of religious character. Based on the introduced analysis, we state that the courses of other knowledge core are compliant at a rate below 50%.

In identification of study field Nursing in structure, courses of state examination for second degree are defined to the following extent: vindication of thesis and oral and practical examination which verifies the knowledge, abilities and skills for solving the tasks of nursing practice.

In analysis of curricula, we evaluated 4 courses, which were included in it. The courses were: Practical examination from clinical nursing, Vindication of thesis and oral examination from courses Nursing and Management in Nursing. We find differences in the arrangement of practical state examination which is pursued solely at TnUAD in Trenčín and UKF in Nitra. We find further differences in the course Management in Nursing, which is not included in the content of state examination at JLF UK in Martine, UKF in Nitra and LF UPJŠ in Košice. KU Ružomberok declares as part of state examination also the courses Psychology and Pedagogy. TnUAD adds to the course Clinical Nursing also the course Research in Nursing.

Proposals and recommendations for practice

Based on the analysis of processed results, we can state that we found significant differences in education at individual universities.

In order to be able to speak about internationalization of education, it is inevitable that the education at all universities with accreditation for study field Nursing, administered by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (§ 51 Art. 1 Act No.131/2002), would be aligned.

Conclusion

Slovakia systematically tries to educate sufficiency of own specialists in Nursing with the highest level of specialization possible. Since 1960s until now, approximately 11844 graduates in bachelor degree and 7809 graduates in master degree have accomplished the university education, and 271 PhD. titles were awarded [4]. Education in nursing thus significantly participates in increasing the quality of the provided health care.

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