

DENOSA Position Statement on Nursing Research

1. Introduction

Nursing in South Africa has made remarkable strides as a profession over the past few decades and as part of this development, it is compelled to develop a research presence. On the African continent, South Africa is one of the few countries with well-developed research infrastructure and therefore uniquely positioned to reinforce the research capacity among the health professionals. This would be further strengthened by embodying research in the nursing curricula and ensuring that research become part of nurses' professional development. Nurses do not only make up the majority of health professionals in South Africa but also work in all spheres of healthcare. They are therefore well-positioned to participate in the wider field of research. This could be possible through inter-professional research collaborations, team-based research work, and increased cluster research that is results-driven and therefore contributing towards generating the research- accumulated body of knowledge in the nursing profession.

2. Definitions

2.1 Nursing research:

(Polit & Hungler, 2001) define nursing research as 'A systemic search for knowledge about issues of importance to nursing.'

According to (Abdellah & Levine, 1994) nursing research can be defined as 'A systemic detailed attempt to discover or confirm facts that relate to a specific problem to improve the practice and profession of nursing'.

2.2 Research capacity

Research capacity is defined as 'the ability of individuals, organizations and systems to undertake and disseminate high quality research effectively and efficiently.' (DFID, 2008)

2.3 Research strategy

A research strategy can generally be defined as a broad research plan that provides direction for research activities and sets out critical research issues.

3. DENOSA believes that:

3.1 advocacy for nursing research support is crucial for the enhancement of research in the nursing profession, as its membership is inclusive of nursing educators as well as nursing students and nursing practitioners.

3.2 nursing research should reflect the multi-disciplinary nature of the health sector and therefore accommodate; value and benefit from the diverse health service expertise.

3.3 a well-developed nursing research capacity would not only benefit the profession but have a potential to improve the health indicators of the population of South Africa

3.4 research in nursing is essential particularly with regards to consolidation of the profession's contribution to evidence-based health and healthcare practice.

3.5 nursing research require extensive support that includes among other things:

- i. an enabling environment and culture that is supportive of nursing research;
- ii. funding mechanisms for nursing research programs;
- iii. programs designed to ensure sufficient and appropriately educated nursing research workforce.
- iv. a strategy that would steer nursing research and science towards generating recognized body of knowledge in the health sector.

DENOSA position:

- DENOSA supports the advancement and development of a research culture in the nursing profession
- Considers nursing research as an essential mechanism for the promotion of evidence-based practice in healthcare.

- Nursing as a cross-cutting discipline in healthcare, is well-equipped to address issues that impact on health through research
- Advocates for and supports equitable access to research funding for nurse researchers in the nursing education institutions.

Conclusion

DENOSA as a profession of dominance in the healthcare system of South Africa, is of the view that nursing should be geared towards a research-active discipline responsive to the healthcare challenges of the population. In this context, a research culture needs to be encouraged and built, the one that would focus on evidence-based practice in the nursing profession.

References

Abdellah, FG. & Levine, E. 1994. Preparing nursing research for the 21st century. New York. Springer.

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