

The Insertion of the Nurse in a Project Management Team

Denila Bueno Silva¹; Maria Lúcia Alves Pereira Cardoso²

¹Graduate Program in Nursing Care Practice Services, Faculdade De Educação Em Ciências Da Saúde, FECS, Hospital Alemão Oswaldo Cruz, São Paulo/SP, Brasil.

¹denilabueno@gmail.com

²Ph.D. in Science at Escola Paulista De Enfermagem, UNIFESP, Faculdade De Educação Em Ciências Da Saúde, FECS, Hospital Alemão Oswaldo Cruz, São Paulo/SP, Brasil.

²mlcardoso@haoc.com.br

Abstract

The nurses are in many hospital sectors and can take on many different responsibilities and activities. The hospitals that develop social's projects have to include nurses in their team's projects. The objectives are to characterize these nurses about gender, age, education, professional experience time and to know the nurse's motivation and perception about working in a project management tea. The study is exploratory and descriptive, with a quantitative and qualitative approach through applying a questionnaire sent to 26 nurses that work in two hospitals in São Paulo. In the qualitative axis, content analysis was used, according to Bardin, and a statistician analyzed the quantitative axis with descriptive analyzes of the variables. There is a 77% presence of women in the teams; most of them are over 40 years old, with an average experience of assistance of 12 years. As a motivation, nurses work in project management for having received an invitation and also for the opportunity to work on projects related to Brazilian Health Unic System. Nurses point out that their activities consist of planning and executing the project itself, team management, and the applicability of their care knowledge. The nurses have essential characteristics, since their graduation, that enables their presence in project management.

Key-words: Projects, Hospital Management, Nursing.

1. Introduction

The current context of health in Brazil and in the world includes the change in the epidemiological population profile what in turn increase the complexity of hospital management; the search for human resources with new professional skills; the effective use of technology, and the

balance of financial resources in order to health care would be not hindered. (FARIAS e ARAUJO, 2017; SILVA e CAMELO, 2013).

This scenario requires health professionals to develop innovative forms of management to deal with the consequent changes in their work processes and generate not only wealth but also development. (MATOS e NUNES, 2016).

Since Florence Nightingale, a symbol of modern nursing, changes in the management seems to improve the care and, consequently, the usage of the available resources. In the Crimean War, Florence intervened in the care of the injured people and, based on her knowledge in epidemiology and infection control, she improved the sanitary conditions to stop the proliferation of diseases among the soldiers. (GILL, 2005). In this scenario, not only the changes in Nursing were indeed responsible for changing proliferation of infectious diseases, but Florence perpetuated the figure of the nurse in the hospital. The so-called Ladies Nurses constituted themselves as the care leader, being instructed in administration, besides to hospital practices. (SOARES, 2009).

Nowadays, taking into account the Nightingale principles, Nursing focuses on the management of Nursing care (SOARES, 2009), in which it implements and organizes the care that must be provided to the patient, also considering the material, physical and technological resources available. In other words, Nursing has a leading role in assisting patients and organizing work.

Project management (PM) has been valued as a necessary tool in the organizations (PATAH and CARVALHO, 2012) for changing and developing the work processes. A project is a task that involves a set of studies and planned activities for the decision-making on the use of resources to achieve a defined goal within a specified time. (VIDAURRE, 2016).

According to Dsimore, P C; Silveira Neto (2007), PM can be defined as the way to execute and specialize the knowledge to facilitate the execution of a variety of activities or specific tasks of an already planned project. In addition, according to the authors, project management is characterized by the following steps: Initiation, Planning, Execution, Control, and Closing. Although little implemented in the hospital environment, PM can present reasonable solutions for the improvement of its processes, for the administration of financial resources - remarkably scarce, mainly in the public sector - and also for decision making in which to choose a “something” Can have consequences for many aspects of management. (FARIAS and ARAUJO, 2017).

In some hospitals, notably in those where there are social development projects or in the public sector, the nurse began to be inserted discreetly in PM teams. When the nurse’s presence starts to be recognized, even if on a small scale in PM, there is a need to understand the profile of the professional inserted into a PM team and their view on the activities performed.

Therefore, this study aimed to outline the profile of nurses considering the gender, age, education, general professional experience and specific experience in the hospital project unit and to comprehend their motivations and activities, when inserted into a team of a project management professionals.

2. Method

It is an exploratory and descriptive study with quantitative and qualitative analyzes, an investigation using the application of a questionnaire, considered as the best method to capture the behavior that the research subjects attribute to the investigated phenomenon since it is based on the direct knowledge of reality and the perception that the subjects have of themselves. (GIL, 2002).

The study was carried out in two private philanthropic hospitals located in the city of São Paulo, which enable health development projects in the public sector in numerous fields around the states of Brazil.

The nurses from the project management teams of the two hospitals mentioned above participated in the study, chosen at random and regardless of position. It was established as a selection criterion to be a nurse and to have worked in a project management team for more than a year. This period was considered to be sufficient to further understand the tasks of project management.

The number of professionals participating in the study was delimited utilizing sample calculation, with a significance value of 95%, with a margin of error of 5%, reaching a minimum sample of 29 participants. Questionnaires were sent to 32 nurses, 26 of whom responded.

Regarding the study variables, the quantitative axis presented discrete variables such as number of male or female nurses, number of nurses by type of specialization, master's or doctorate, number of nurses with a specialization in project management, number of nurses by type of executed project. There were also continuous variables such as age, length of experience in assistance, and length of experience in project management. The qualitative axis presented nominal variables, depending on the categories identified by the researcher.

The questionnaire was designed with 13 questions, varying between multiple-choice and dissertation, for better objectivity in capturing the phenomenon and was previously tested to verify the understanding of the subjects, as well as their ability to enable the expression of the behavioral dimension to be unveiled. The filling time was 10 to 15 minutes.

Data collection was carried out from May to June 2020. The questionnaire was applied in person and individually or online after the nurse agreed to participate in the study and signed the Free and Informed Consent Form.

To achieve these results, descriptive analyzes of the variables were used, and the qualitative axis was investigated by the researcher through Content Analysis, specifically the thematic analysis, according to Bardin (2016).

Thematic analysis was chosen to treat the data due to its ability to extract from the word, which is an expression of the values, beliefs, and attitudes of the individual, categories with meanings whose presence or frequency mean something to the target object. (BARDIN, 2016).

In accordance to Resolution 466/12 about the Guidelines and Norms of Research on Human Beings (CONSELHO NACIONAL DA SAÚDE, 2012), this study was approved by the Research Ethics Committees of the field of study institutions on May 7, 2020 (Opinion Number: 4.014.163), on May 18, 2020 (Opinion Number: 4.034.107).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Nurse's Profile who Works in a Project Management Team

Regarding the profile of nurses who work in a project management team, it was possible to identify some trends, such as the majority female presence (20 participants) and the majority aged 40 or over (Table 1).

In relation to the positions, the most of the nurses occupied the position of a project specialist (46%, that is, 12 nurses), which can be defined, according to the job description of the hospitals where they work, how to produce, systematize and disseminate innovative knowledge in the field of health policies, systems, networks, and services, from the planning, execution, and evaluation of projects (Table 1).

All nurses have at least one specialization as a continuity in their training, described in table 1 below. About the participants' professional experience, 92% worked in assistance, with an average performance of 12 years.

Despite having a varied role in care, nurses work on projects related to patient quality and safety, health service management. The sector with the most significant number of participating nurses is Intensive Care, but focusing on patient safety.

Finally, only 19% of nurses have specific training in project management.

Table 1- Summary of the Profile of Nurses in Project Management

Genero Profile	N	Percentage
Men	6	23%
Women	20	77%
Age Profile	N	Percentage
25 to 40 years	11	42%
40 years or more	15	58%
Training Area	N	
UTI	7	
Urgency and emergency	4	
Home care	3	
Others areas	12	
Expertise in Projects	N	
ICU and Safety and Quality Management	7	
Health Management	3	
Primary Care and Public Health	2	
Home Care	1	
Oncology	1	
Nutritional Therapy	1	
Not informed	11	
Training in project management	N	Percentage
Yes	5	81%
No	21	19%

3.2. Motivation of Nurses to join a Project Management Team

As mentioned before, the thematic analysis according to Bardin was used for the analysis of the qualitative axis. Two pre-readings were carried out to list the words and the captured meanings that were repeated in accordance with the objectives of the study. The second stage of the analysis consisted of grouping these meanings according to their affinity to, in the third stage, define the categories and subcategories. The fourth stage of the analysis consisted of interpreting and connecting the meanings of the categories listed.

Thus, the nurses interviewed point out that their change from the practice of caring to project management becomes interesting because of these three categories:

Opportunity / Invitation

Of the 26 interviewees, 16 nurses reported that leaving assistance was not exactly a choice, but an invitation presented by the institution to migrate to project management, or a work proposal received:

“At first, it was an invitation that I received, and I did not have much knowledge about this area. However, it was new learning that I acquired, and I intend to continue and learn more.” E3

“The opportunity to work in the project management area presented itself to me, and I decided to embrace this opportunity, as I liked the possibility of working on projects involving the Unified Health System and expanding my management skills.” E9.

Way to Contribute to the Unique Health System (SUS)

SUS is undoubtedly a guide in the training of all health professionals since, due to its political and civil importance for Brazil, it requires professionals who understand its guidelines, the ways of providing health care, and its perspectives.

In paragraph 1 of Resolution 573/18 (BRAZIL, 2018), which deals with the Curriculum Guidelines for Nursing, SUS is presented as the training principle of the Bachelor of Nursing, as a field of practice and professional practice, whether in the public, philanthropic sphere and/or private. In addition, Article 200 of the 1988 FC (BRASIL, 1988) provides that it is up to the SUS to order the training of health professionals regarding social health needs.

The interviewees’ speeches show that it is no different with Nursing that works in project management.

The possibility of directly contributing to the quality of care as a motivating factor for working on projects is mentioned by seven nurses interviewed.

“In addition to being challenging, it is a way to contribute to SUS.” E4

“Because I identify with SUS Support Projects. I have always worked with Social Responsibility, and my care experience ended up directing me.” E5

In addition to the factors already explained, it was possible to identify other motivations, such as better salary, affinity, the possibility of improving skills, and interest in projects.

Thus, nurses aim for new opportunities to not only expand their performance but also to seek new tools to contribute to SUS and the quality of health care.

3.3. Perception of Nursing Work in a Project Management Team

The nurse’s perception of the activities performed in project management was possible to be classified into three categories:

Project Management

Project management has been identified as an innovation tool to achieve the institution's strategic objectives. For the health area, it can be considered as a specific sector. It also monitors and evaluates the indicators and the activities carried out to control the execution of strategic planning (BERALDO, 2015).

Based on the speeches of seven nurses interviewed, it was possible to recognize these same attributions:

“When working in project management, the nurse's job (as well as that of any professional who plays this role) consists, among others, in planning, assessing risks, facilitating the logistics of execution, organizing and integrating the team to the project's objectives.” E11

“Manage the project based on the listed objectives and pre-established actions.” E4.

“The nurse who works in project management needs to raise a problem, analyze the complexity of the problem, write the project, apply and evaluate the effectiveness of decision-making.” E26

“Evaluates, monitors, and supports the development of novel methods and monitors the established indicators for the monitoring and effectiveness of the project's actions.” E24

The low number of responses mentioning the specific functions of a project's office may be associated with the lack of technical knowledge in project management (Table 1). Thus, it can be difficult for nurses to use more targeted concepts to project management.

However, the presented speeches make remarkable the nurse's ability to adapt themselves to new activities, even without receiving specific training for this and despite being so adapted to the patient care.

Technical Knowledge Applicability

One of the factors related to this paradoxical compatibility of the nursing profile with project management is the training itself and the activities that nurses perform in their regular hospital activities.

According to Dias (2017), the nurse is always involved with the multidisciplinary team and has a role in the care and the management within the hospital dynamics.

According to Wanda Horta (1974), the Nursing care is the application of the nursing process to create actions premeditated in a care plan that coordinates the activities of the Nursing team according to what the patient must respond from the diagnosis received.

This facet of nurse's activities also provide knowledge about protocols, patient safety, and work processes. According to the participants, nowadays, eight of the nurses who work in PM are involved with projects related to quality and patient safety.

On the other hand, the managerial role of nurses is the planning, estimating, provision, and control of material and human resources of a hospital or health service (DIAS, 2017), which is also essential for the organization of the Nursing team and the project management.

According to the nurses interviewed, these facets of Nursing work complement each other in a project management and constitute the main element of their activities:

“Support in the organization of processes.” E7

“The nurse is important in the team, as a strategic professional in the health field, working in several areas, such as healthcare, management, academic, and research.” E23

“Nurses have a fundamental role in project management since they have technical and scientific knowledge about quality, management, education and can contribute a lot to improving care and management processes through new projects. The nurse, through their experience, knows a lot about the processes inside the hospital.” E21

“The training of nurses already has a character of a systemic view of the health sector. The nurse inserted in projects contributes to the experience of interlocution with several areas, being able to predict risks and manage conflicts of interest among stakeholders, in addition to being a professional focused on the care of the population.” E15

Therefore, the training and experience of nurses in the care seem to be what initiated the way for the creation of projects of quality and patient safety areas, which makes nurses see themselves as capable of carrying them out.

This panorama can be the lever to perpetuate the presence of the nurse in a PM team since nurses see how their technical knowledge can be applied not only in the scope of direct care to the patient but also in all other areas of PM team.

Multiprofessional Team Leadership and Management

The nurse is identified as a team leader and the person responsible for managing the human and material resources of the care practice since the beginning of Nursing in the world. In the Law of

Professional Nursing Practice (Brazil, 1986), Article 11 points out that the organization, coordination, and direction of Nursing services is one of the nurses' private activities and their participation in the planning, execution, and evaluation of health programs.

Souza (2013) shows that leadership for nurses means being with the team and guiding them with responsibility, as a reference that has the knowledge to be at the forefront of the organization of work processes and team training.

According to Amestoy (2014), the importance of cooperation and working together with the team strengthens the search for achieving common goals, which, in the case of the hospital environment, is patient care.

The speeches of 13 nurses who work in a PM team were in this same direction and highlighted that this position as a nurse leader is one of the skills used in their activities in the PM:

“Project management goes beyond bureaucratic and routine processes. It needs to be strategic, articulate, and with people and conflict management. Among health professionals, the nurse professional has this characteristic for this activity.” E19

“Always works in a multidisciplinary team, leads teams.” E1

PM teams also usually have a figure that centralizes the planning and organization of the activities and deliverables of the project, respecting a schedule and budget.

In industries, in general, this leading figure is the project manager (BERALDO, 2015). In the health area, nurses see themselves as one of the pillars to exercise this function of directing, coordinating and controlling projects, even due to the well-known constitution of the Nursing team.

This leadership characteristic was shown to be fundamental for the presence of nurses in project management.

4. Conclusion

In relation to the characterization of the nurses, there was an expressive female presence, as well as in health assistance, with an average experience of 12 years. The nurses' motivation to join a PM team occurred, mainly through invitations and occasional opportunities, which means they did not previously look for employment in this sector. Despite this, when starting activities in PM, the nurses dedicated themselves to projects that strengthen the SUS, which made them even more identified with the execution of these projects.

The role of Nursing in a project management team, in a leadership position of the team, facilitates their performance, as their perception. In addition, the specific undergraduate knowledge

can be applied not only directly in the care practice but also as an essential tool for planning and executing projects.

The basic training of nurses permeates all of their performance and the professional growth of Nursing, opening new opportunities to continue contributing, with their knowledge and work processes, to the quality and safety of the patient, even if not directly in the assistance.

References

- Amestoy, S. C. *et al.* Nurses' understanding of the exercise of leadership in the hospital environment. *Journal of Cogitare Nursing Curitiba/PR*, 19(3), 475-482, 2014. <https://revistas.ufpr.br/cogitare/article/view/35006BARDIN>, Laurence. Content analysis. 70th ed. Lisbon: Persona, 2001. 3rd reprint 2016.
- Beraldo, C.G.L.; Junior, A.P.S.J.A.C.P; Jardim, C.P.G. The role of the project management office as a promoter of the innovative performance of organizations. *Geintec Magazine*, 5(2), 1969-1985, 2015. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/4c60/655db38f93380df33f9b75c0083ef3871c50.pdf>.
- Brazil. Constitution (1988). Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil. Brasília, DF: Federal Senate: Graphic Center, 2020. http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/constituicao/constituicao.htm.
- BRAZIL. Law No. 7,498 of June 25, 1986. Provides for the regulation of Nursing Practice, and other measures. Presidency of the Republic. Civil House. Deputy Chief of Legal Affairs. Brasilia, 1986, Section 1, 9275-9279. 2020. <https://www.nescon.medicina.ufmg.br/biblioteca/imagem/Lei7498.pdf>
- BRAZIL. Resolution No. 573, of January 31, 2018. Establishes the National Curriculum Guidelines for the Undergraduate Nursing Course (DCN/ENF). Official Gazette of the Union, Brasilia. DF, v. 213, no. XX, November 6, 2018. Section 1, page 38. https://www.in.gov.br/materia/-/asset_publisher/Kujrw0TZC2Mb/content/id/48743098/do1-2018-11-06-resolucao-n-573-de-31-de-janeiro-de-2018-8742847#:~:text=1%C2%BA%20%2D%20A%20presente%20Resolu%C3%A7%C3%A3o%20institui,de%20Enfermagem%20das%20Institui%C3%A7%C3%B5es%20
- Dias, A.K.G. The perception of nurses in relation to their managerial role in the hospital environment. *UFPE Nursing Journal online*, Recife/PE, 11(5), 2185-2194, 2017. <http://www.reme.org.br/artigo/detalhes/265>
- Dinsmore, P.C., Neto, F.H.D.S. *Project Management: How to manage your Project with Quality, within the Expected Time and Costs*. 7. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Qualitymark, 2012.
- Farias, D.C.; Araujo, F.O.D. Hospital management in Brazil: literature review aimed at improving administrative practices in hospitals. *Science & Public Health, Rio De Janeiro*, 22(6), 1895-1904. 2017. 2019 <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/csc/v22n6/1413-8123-csc-22-06-1895.pdf>
- GIL, A.C. *How to design research projects*. 4. ed. São Paulo: Atlas, 2002.
- Gill, C.J., Gill, G.C. Nightingale in Scutari: Her Legacy Reexamined. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, Oxford, 40(12), 1799-1805, 2005. 2020 <https://academic.oup.com/cid/article/40/12/1799/314039>
- Horta, W.D.A. *Nursing: theory, concepts, principles and process* 2020. https://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S0080-62341974000100007&script=sci_abstract&tlng=pt

Matos, A.A.; Nunes, Alexandre Morals. Innovation in Public Hospital Management in the Portuguese Health System. *Journal of Health Systems Management, São Paulo*, 5(2), 14-23, 2016. 2010 <http://www.revistargss.org.br/ojs/index.php/rgss/article/download/290/183>

Patah, L.A; Carvalho, M.M.D. Project Management Methods and Project Success: A Quantitative Study of the Relationship between these Concepts. *Management and Projects Magazine, São Paulo*, 3(2), 178-206, 2012. <http://www.revistagep.org/ojs/index.php/gep/article/view/94>

Silva, V.L.D.S; Camelo, S.H.H. The competence of nursing leadership: concepts, essential attributes and the role of the nurse leader. *Journal of Nursing at UERJ. Rio de Janeiro*, 21(4), 533-539, 2013. 2019. <https://www.e-publicacoes.uerj.br/index.php/enfermaguerj/article/view/10031>

Soares, A.; Porto, F. Neither lady nurse nor nurse: the manager nurse in the hospital setting in Rio de Janeiro (BR. Revista de Pesquisa: Care is essential, Rio de Janeiro, 1(2), 124-131. 2009. [Accessed in 2020. <http://www.seer.unirio.br/index.php/cuidadofundamental/article/view/305/288>

Souza, R.B.D. *et al.* Organization and Leadership in the work of nurses: perception of nurses and nursing technicians. *Journal of Nursing of the Midwest of Minas Gerais, Divinópolis/MG*, 3(2), 687-695. 2013. 2020. <http://www.seer.ufsj.edu.br/index.php/recom/article/view/360>

Vidaurre, E.A. Performance of nursing students in the creation of projects. *Iberoamerican Journal of Education and Research in Nursing, Madrid*, 6(2), 16-28, 2016. <https://www.enfermeria21.com/revistas/aladefe/articulo/199/actuacion-de-estudiantes-de-enfermeria-en-la-creacion-de-proyectos/>

Eu, Denila Bueno Silva, author responsible for the submission of the manuscript entitled "The Insertion of the Nurse in a Project Management Team" and all co-authors present here, we declare that WE HAVE NO personal, commercial, academic, political or financial conflicts of interest in the manuscript.