

In search of a transformative praxis

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The systematized academic nursing knowledge in Brazil is relatively young, considering that its development initiated only half a century ago when in 1963, Gleite de Alcantara, professor at the School of Nursing in Ribeirão Preto, University of São Paulo, defended the first doctoral thesis in Latin America⁽¹⁾. Since then, nursing research has grown considerably and the scientific production that initially had a slow progress has gradually achieved an enviable position. In 2011, 903 research studies were registered in the Center for Nursing Research – CEPEn, 189 doctoral theses and 714 master's dissertations defended in 38 Brazilian universities what represented a 40% increase over the previous year⁽²⁾.

The Brazilian Nursing Association initiated its reflection on nursing science in 1979 when the first National Seminar of Nursing Research [SENPE] took place

in the international context that promoted nursing as a knowledge area and with the creation of master's level nursing education in Brazil. With time, [the SENPE] became one of the most significant events in Brazilian nursing, providing visibility to its scientific production, bringing together national researchers, and articulating the Brazilian Nursing Association, academia and health services, with research as its binding force⁽³⁾.

The discussion regarding nursing scientific production continues in the 17th SENPE held in Natal-RN, June 3 -5, 2013, and the theme *The classical and the emergent: challenges to nursing research*. The event had three thematic perspectives: ethical and bioethical challenges to the production of nursing knowledge; old and new issues of nursing research; the object of nursing research and its reasons: possibilities and boundaries of the research lines and groups. The objectives were: to debate the social responsibility in nursing research and its impact on the production, dissemination and utilization of knowledge; to discuss the implications of nursing knowledge upon public policy in social and health care, the formation of nurse researchers and research networks; to promote the socialization of nursing knowledge produced by national and international research institutions; to reflect on the limits and potentialities of the lines of research and nursing research groups, and their contribution to the transformation of health and nursing practice.

Among other themes related to the production of scientific knowledge, for the first time an intense discussion was undertaken regarding the research work process that produces harmful effects on the quality of life of its researchers. If Marx⁽⁴⁾ is correct when he states that as man transforms reality he also transforms himself, then the transformation of current reality has also produced an undesirable and unnecessary human wastage of the researcher. Undoubtedly, the Seminar theme was prompted by this situation as well as by the observed adverse effects related to the production and diffusion of a quantity of studies that lack the desired praxis, in spite of the recognizable contribution that this production has made to the advancement of nursing science. The science and technology national policy confirms this scenario as it legitimately promotes Brazil as a knowledge producing country internationally while, on the other hand, it enables the construction of questionable evaluation

criteria for programs and researchers. These criteria values quantity and the dispersion of research focus rather than the quality and applicability of the research product.

In addition, the Association resumed the discussion of the ethical principles that guide the production, registry, diffusion, and the utilization of knowledge with the objective to analyze their impact on the producers and the product.

The results were encouraging. The 1.020 participants actively attended the conferences, round table discussions and panel presentations that were conducted by 35 nursing researchers and scientists from other areas. A total of 1.268 papers were presented, of which 476 were coordinated communications and 792 electronic posters, a modality used with great success for the first time in an ABEn event. The evaluation of the participants registered an impressive 88,96% in the combined Excellent and Good categories.

As we dare to critically analyze our academic research and the effects that this work has on the care and educational contexts, we are reaffirming our determination to overcome the theory-practice contradiction and our search for a nursing praxis. Knowledge production will be transformative to the extent that it impacts positively on care, the essence of utopian nursing, brought about by the mixture of Art and Science.

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