




**Nursing students' imaginaries regarding their future professional practice**

**Imaginarios de estudiantes de enfermería hacia el futuro desempeño profesional**

**O imaginário dos estudantes de enfermagem sobre o seu futuro desempenho profissional**

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Dear editor:

Caregiving is grounded in various theories and educational models promoted through each institution's mission and vision, aligning with health science curricula. This practice addresses diverse health-related issues and is impacted by economic, political, social, environmental, and demographic factors. Elements such as peace, housing, education, income, and social justice, among others, are essential for achieving an appropriate state of health. Consequently, health promotion aims to encourage healthy behaviors and lifestyles, as well as to modify or eliminate those that are harmful and pose a threat to individual and community health.<sup>1</sup>

The relevance of ontological and epistemological approaches to support the act of caregiving through various healthcare theories and models is well acknowledged in the university context. These approaches are implemented in diverse settings without compromising its fundamental essence: care.<sup>2</sup>

The connection between higher education, society, and the labor market has influenced the development and management of academic curricula. In turn, this determines the forms, modalities, and content that higher education should adopt to support social, economic, and cultural development more effectively while addressing the needs of clients and patients from a biopsychosocial perspective.<sup>3</sup>

The *being* dimension makes it possible to train professionals with interpersonal skills to interact effectively with patients and collaborate with colleagues. On the other hand, the *doing* dimension refers to the specific or general skills linked to professional duties, which facilitate effective patient



care.<sup>4</sup> Velazco et al.,<sup>5</sup> confirm this by asserting that students exhibit stronger academic performance and competencies in areas such as Community Health Nursing, Reproductive Health Nursing, and Maternal and Child Nursing while showing lower performance in subjects like Research and Epidemiology, Fundamentals of Nursing/Basic Nursing I and II, and Management.

In this regard, we highlight the findings by Fernández-Delgado and Canova-Barrios (published in Volume 6 of this journal). These authors identified seven categories: individual perception, family perception, social perception, academic environment, work environment, and coping strategies. Concerning gender, nursing was associated with feminine attributes; therefore, men choosing this profession faced significant barriers in pursuing their studies and entering the workforce, as their choice was seen as a transgression of traditional gender roles.<sup>6</sup>

Based on this, we can conclude that men aspiring to become nurses encountered deeply entrenched stigma and gender stereotypes, which resulted in societal pressure and conflict within their families. Despite these obstacles, they found support in academic spaces that helped them achieve their goals. Moreover, they developed a range of coping strategies to overcome these challenges.<sup>6</sup>

These findings are particularly relevant as they provide solid tools to raise awareness within higher education. Furthermore, they center such lived experiences and invite a comparison with others that may emerge. While their research focused on male students, this highlights the importance of exploring similar experiences among female students. The results may also apply to other health professions.

The interest in understanding the lived experiences of nursing students during training allows educators to monitor curriculum design and student learning processes in a periodic, flexible, and systematic way. This would provide a better understanding of what students think in anticipation of their future professional roles.

Finally, this letter encourages readers and reviewers to reflect on the future of nursing students, emphasizing the importance of closely monitoring their feelings during training, to benefit their future professional performance.

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