



Editorial

Integrating Global Health Competencies in Nursing Education

The rapid increase in globalization has significant implications for nursing education. As the largest component of the global health workforce, nurses have critical roles to play in promoting achievement of Universal Access to Health Care, Universal Health Coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals (1). In order to adequately prepare nursing graduates to practice in today's globalized environment, it is essential to ensure that students have an awareness of transnational health issues as well as solutions, concepts of interprofessional collaboration, strategies to promote equity and social justice, and resources to address global concerns (2,3). Such a global perspective provides students and new graduates with the ability to address global health issues at the “glocal” level, referring to health issues that are both local and global (4).

Wilson and colleagues proposed a list of 30 global health competencies for nursing students, and conducted three online surveys asking nursing educators in the United States, Canada, Caribbean and African countries to rate the extent to which they agreed that the 30 competencies are essential for undergraduate nursing students (3,5,6). The study findings indicated general agreement that the 30 competencies are important, although qualitative comments made by the respondents (7) suggest a need for further modification and refinement of the instrument. Despite the limitations of the current competency list, it can provide guidance for nursing faculty in reviewing existing curricula to determine the extent to which the competencies are, or are not, being incorporated.

There are many strategies that can be used to integrate global perspectives and global health competencies in nursing education programs. A group of faculty members at the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing used a method of “mapping” of the curriculum to assess the extent to which the 30 competencies were included in courses at the undergraduate, master's, and doctor of nursing practice levels (8). After evaluation and sharing the results with faculty and administrators, a toolbox of resources (articles, websites, case studies and educational videos) was shared with teachers so that they can integrate the missing skills within their courses. Other strategies that might be used to incorporate global health competencies in nursing education programs include offering elective courses in global health, the organization of learning opportunities for global health service learning in local and international sites, promotion of global health case competitions (9), inviting professionals with global perspectives and experiences to share with students (either in person or through platforms online chats), and

promoting collaborations in course work, research, or other projects based on face-to-face collaborations or virtual communication technologies (10).

In order to prepare nursing students to address 21st century global health challenges, nursing faculty are encouraged to explore creative strategies to integrate global perspectives, and address global health competencies in nursing education programs at all levels.

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