



Editorial

Professionalism and ethics in nursing

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Thanks to the project *Professionalism and Ethics in Nursing* (KEGA 008UK-4/2021), I have had the opportunity to deal more deeply with professionalism in nursing in the last two years. In the sociocultural context, I feel there is a lack of reflection on this topic. In practice and in nursing literature, we encounter terms such as professionalism, professional behaviour, professional delivery of nursing care, and professional communication or approach. Still, the content of these terms in literary sources remains unclear and they are often unfulfilled in practice. In my opinion, nurses' professional socialisation and autonomy play an essential role in this area. Let me share a few thoughts with you.

Socialisation in nursing requires developing a commitment to the service that nursing provides to the public, a belief in the dignity and worth of each person, and a desire for education and independence. Professional socialisation begins with formal education aimed at acquiring knowledge and skills. As part of education, future nurses acquire knowledge, skills, and professional and moral standards, form or reshape their attitudes, and develop their professional identity. In addition to education, the shaping of a professional identity occurs when students observe other nurses providing health care in a clinical setting, on which they then model their behaviour. They are confronted with different ways of delivering health care during their professional practice. In contrast, the value system and decision-making method in clinical situations may differ from their own. In this case, it is about influencing professional identity through a form of education known as the hidden curriculum, which can contribute positively and negatively to professional socialisation and identity formation. Nursing faces a challenge in professional training. Educational institutions should respond by innovating the curriculum to meet the population's health needs, reflect new global issues, prepare nurses for effective work in interprofessional teams, provide safe, quality and compassionate care, or strengthen graduates' competence in health technologies, create relevant specialisation programmes, and support the development of master's and doctoral study programmes – which also have a defined role in the health system. We must not forget that professionalisation also emphasises developing a positive attitude.

Another significant topic regarding professionalism is the autonomy of nurses. The primary feature of professional autonomy is an expert's right and freedom to control their ac-

tivities. Although we can say that nursing meets almost all the criteria set for autonomous professions, it still does not have complete autonomy. There are several reasons for this. The most significant is that nurses work in a system where they are hierarchically subordinate to medical authority. The development of nursing in all countries is more or less influenced by the dominance of medicine and the biomedical model of health care, or the lack of nurses' participation in decision-making at all levels of nursing care management. However, autonomy is an essential element of professional identity and a fundamental component of professionalism. It affects the provision of quality and safe nursing care. At the same time, it gives nurses the freedom to act in the patient's best interest. It presents an opportunity to ensure optimised care by allowing nurses to make quick decisions without waiting for another professional to approve or deny a care procedure. Not only does this give nurses more authority and honour their knowledge, but patients can also benefit from a faster decision-making process.

The WHO report, *State of the world's nursing 2020: investing in education, jobs, and leadership*, lists the problematic tasks for nursing in the near future. For their fulfilment, support and examination of professionalism with a focus on the autonomy of nurses and their professional socialisation is essential.

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