

CENTER OF CONTINUING EDUCATION OF NURSES OF PARANÁ: HISTORY AND CONTRIBUTIONS*

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ABSTRACT: The present study aimed to describe the history and contribution in the institutionalization of continuing education in hospital institutions from its beginnings up until the present day. Historical social research based on analysis of sources of the collection of a center of nurses in the state of Paraná, performed between March 2013 and January 2014. The transformations occurred in the referred center, over almost five years, turned it into an effective space for discussing and reflect on the construction of knowledge related to the education processes in hospital institutions. It is concluded that these spaces are suitable for the establishment of a critical view of historical movements until now related to the Proposal of Continuing Health Education; shed light on the current situation and provide a future outlook for the Nursing field.

DESCRIPTORS: Nursing, History of nursing; Continuing education in nursing; Research in nursing management.

NÚCLEO DE ENFERMEIROS DE EDUCAÇÃO PERMANENTE DO PARANÁ: TRAJETÓRIA E CONTRIBUIÇÕES

RESUMO: O objetivo deste estudo foi descrever a trajetória e contribuição na institucionalização da educação permanente nas organizações hospitalares desde sua fundação até os dias atuais. Pesquisa histórico-social, fundamentada na análise das fontes do acervo de um núcleo de enfermeiros do estado do Paraná, realizada entre o período de março de 2013 e janeiro de 2014. As transformações ocorridas nesse núcleo, ao longo de quase cinco anos, consolidaram-no como espaço efetivo para discussão e reflexão na construção de conhecimentos relacionados aos processos de educação nessas organizações hospitalares. Conclui-se que espaços como este possibilitam uma visão crítica dos movimentos históricos até os tempos atuais, que envolvem a Proposta da Educação Permanente em Saúde; auxiliam na compreensão do presente, de forma reflexiva; e, fornecem perspectivas futuras para a área de Enfermagem.

DESCRIPTORIOS: Enfermagem; História da enfermagem; Educação continuada em enfermagem; Pesquisa em administração de enfermagem.

NÚCLEO DE ENFERMEROS DE EDUCACIÓN PERMANENTE DEL PARANÁ: TRAYECTORIA Y CONTRIBUCIONES

RESUMEN: Estudio cuyo objetivo fue describir la trayectoria y la contribución para la institucionalización de la educación permanente en las organizaciones hospitalares de su fundación hasta los días actuales. La investigación histórico social fue fundamentada en el análisis de las fuentes del acervo de un núcleo de enfermeros del estado de Paraná, realizada entre el periodo de marzo de 2013 a enero de 2014. Los cambios ocurridos en ese núcleo, a lo largo de casi cinco años, lo consolidaron como espacio efectivo para discusión y reflexión en la construcción de conocimientos referentes a los procesos de educación en esas organizaciones hospitalares. Se concluye que espacios como este posibilitan una visión crítica de los movimientos históricos hasta los tiempos actuales, los cuales se relacionan a la Propuesta de la Educación Permanente en Salud; ayudan en la comprensión del presente, de forma reflexiva; y, fornecen perspectivas futuras para el área de Enfermería.

DESCRIPTORIOS: Enfermería; Historia de la enfermería; Educación continuada en enfermería; Investigación en administración de enfermería.

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● INTRODUCTION

To ensure that hospital institutions develop their talents, increase competitiveness and achieve better business results, it is necessary to implement organizational systems focused not only on technical knowledge, but also on the development of skills ⁽¹⁾.

Therefore, continuing education in hospital institutions is now perceived as an auxiliary tool to support the training process, as it is based on the following principles: professional expertise, organizational motivation and continuous assessment, which will be reached when health professionals become able to act in a critically reflexive way in their daily activities ⁽²⁾.

The Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) recommends that one nursing professional should be responsible for the operational management of the educational sector or service. There has been a tendency in considering nurses responsible for the educational service, i.e. for providing organizational and administrative support, as well as implementing a culture of quality work in hospitals, which begins with strategic planning of management with the active participation of the health professionals of these organizations ⁽³⁻⁴⁾.

For this purpose, the nursing professionals involved in education must be integrated to the internal and external environments and the current policies. Non-compliance with these recommendations generates conflicts and dissatisfaction among the nurses responsible for the educational service and nursing professionals of other areas, since it results in inappropriate decisions and therefore ineffective continuing education processes ⁽⁴⁻⁵⁾.

Therefore, in line with the recent changes in the educational processes aimed to strengthen the importance of actions based on critical thinking skills, team work and management skills, consistent with the strategic planning and quality goals of hospital institutions, the "Núcleo de Enfermeiro de Educação Permanente do Paraná" - (NEEP/PR (Center of Continuing Education of Nurses of the state of Paraná) was created in 2009, in order to build knowledge in areas of continuing health education, based on scientific discussions, creation and consolidation of a study group.

In view of the aforementioned, the present study aimed to describe the history of the NEEP/PR and its contribution to the institutionalization of permanent health education in hospital institutions from the beginnings until now.

The relevance of this study concerns its contribution to the understanding of the evolution of continuing education in hospital institutions in the city of Curitiba that have representatives in the NEEP/PR.

● METHOD

It is a historical social research that investigates the dimension of a community, in this case a professional group ⁽⁶⁾, conducted from March 2013 to January 2014.

The following documents were the historical sources used in data collection: 56 minutes of meetings, two written internal regulations, one bylaws, and four event assessment reports (Forums) filed in the collection of NEEP/PR since its establishment in September 2009 until January 2014.

The data used in analysis and interpretation were extracted from these sources, and were organized and interpreted according to the objective of the proposed investigation. This step consisted in a process of synthesis and inferences on the information contained in the analyzed documents, which revealed their content ⁽⁷⁾.

Regarding ethical and legal aspects, the present study was approved in November 2012 by the Research Ethics Committee of a university of Southern Brazil under CAAE no 06903612.8.0000.0102.

● HISTORY OF NEEP/PR FROM 2009-2014

The organizational structure of the NEEP/PR is composed by: a President, a Vice-President, a Treasurer, a Secretary and Full Members (nurses working in continuing health education services of health institution, with membership proved by participation in three consecutive meetings, recorded in the minutes⁽⁸⁾.

This structure was more clearly defined after a revision and reorganization of its Internal Regulation, which was approved on January 31, 2013. The Internal Regulation consolidated the NEEP/PR as a nonprofit and independent group of nurses responsible for continuing health education services of hospital institutions of Paraná⁽⁸⁾. Since its foundation, the NEEP/PR has included 42 nurses of the referred services of private, public and philanthropic hospital institutions. Until January 2014 the NEEP/PR had 18 full members.

The historical and social path of the NEEP/PR is based on a new logic in the management of people focused on education and professional development, driven by the Unified Health System, by the establishment of the National Policy on Continuing Education, improvement of educational levels, the National Curriculum Framework, technology innovations and accreditations processes that health organizations participate in, which revealed the need for re-signification of the educational processes involving workers of hospital institutions⁽⁹⁻¹⁰⁾.

Originally named “Núcleo de Enfermeiros de Educação Continuada de Curitiba” NEEC/Curitiba – (Center of Continuing Nursing Education of Curitiba), and later “Núcleo de Enfermeiros de Educação Continuada do Paraná” – NEEP/PR (Center of Continuing Nursing Education of Paraná), the center was created on September 14, 2009. In early 2009, three nurses of different hospital institutions met with the purpose of fostering the exchange of education within the scope of these health organizations in the city of Curitiba. Thus, they proposed to organize and hold a scientific event.

The referred event was held in July 2009 and was named 1st Forum of Continuing Nursing Education of Curitiba”, with the support of a local philanthropic hospital where people mobilized to form a center of continuing educations for nurses.

At first, these forums represented effective strategies to attract nurses and suggest models of continuing health education, providing spaces for discussions, updating, learning teaching methods and other relevant issues.

On November 5, 2009, during the 2nd Forum of Continuing Nursing of Curitiba, under the theme “Levantamento da Necessidade de Treinamentos” (Identification of Training needs”, the event was attended by forty-one people. At that occasion, nurses were encouraged to join the NEEC, as members, with the purpose of creating an independent group of nurses of continuing health education in hospital institutions, in order to address issues related to Continuing Nursing Education and the challenges posed for nurses of this field.

This second Forum also showed the existence of a wide field to be explored by continuing education services and its importance for the training and updating of health professionals. Therefore, the need for broad discussion on the developments in the area of education in hospital institutions to provide a higher quality care emerged in the event.

It should be stressed that the definitions of Continuing Education used and discussed in the second Forum became close to the concept of Continuing Education when the members of the NEEC reported that Continuing Education was not restricted to classroom learning, in formal places, but was also delivered in a critical and reflexive way, based on workplace and daily life situations, in order to obtain a different learning from the one taught in traditional educational settings^(2,9).

In December 2009, the first Bylaw of the then NEEC/Curitiba (Center of Continuing Nursing Education of Curitiba was approved”, establishing the hierarchical structure of the center and the responsibilities of the President, Vice-president, Secretary and other members. Only nurses who worked in continuing education services in the health organizations were eligible for membership. Transverse management is adopted until now.

In 2010, there was an increase in the number of members of the NEEC/Curitiba from 6, in average, to 10 participants. In total, seven ordinary meetings was held in 2010. The discussions occurred during these meetings addressed the third and fourth forums of Continuing Education that had the themes “O papel da educação continuada no processo de acreditação hospitalar” (The role of continuing education in the process of hospital accreditation” and “O papel da educação continuada nas instituições de saúde” (The role of continuing education in health institutions), respectively; as well as the legal responsibility of nurses working in continuing education activities without a multidisciplinary perspective.

Regarding the hospital accreditation process, the discussions were focused on the recommendation of the World Health Organization (WHO), which proposes a type of learning based on the value assigned to the real needs of people and populations, analysis of social and economic determinants, but particularly, on the values and concepts of health professionals. Therefore, continuing education allows the construction of relationships and processes that comprise the teams and institutional practices ⁽¹¹⁾.

Regarding the legal responsibilities of nurses involved in educational activities, the discussions were founded on the PAHO/WHO reference that recommend that a health professional coordinates and be responsible for the sector of education and development of personnel in health services, with exclusive dedication and directly committed to meeting the personal and professional development needs. Nurses are the health professionals responsible for such coordination in these organizations, because they have the necessary skills to take a strategic position in the organization of a management and teaching system consistent with the institutional requirements and demands ⁽³⁾.

Another issue that deserved considerable attention in the ordinary meetings of 2010 were the teaching and learning processes adopted by the educational services of hospital organizations, based on the references of the National Policy on Continuing Education. The need to rethink these processes became evident. The members of the NEEP/PR expressed their dissatisfaction with some actions conducted during the training and development of personnel in some hospital institutions, based on the logic of the school or academic model, centered on updating, usually with a disciplinary focus, in a learning environment, and based on knowledge transmission techniques ⁽⁹⁾.

Thus, the professionals responsible for educational services in health institutions began to realize that Continuing Education investments in personnel training do not necessarily result in changes of human behavior, especially when its methodology is based on the pedagogy of transmission, on the logic of the school model and its results. It is a teaching-learning approach that does not satisfactorily interfere with the quality of production of health services, because it does not transform the reality.

Such questioning resulted in a major renovation of approaches and strategies of training of health personnel, related to Continuing Education⁽⁹⁻¹⁰⁾.

At the end of 2010, changes were made to the bylaw of the NEEC/Curitiba and, in an ordinary meeting held on December 02, the Internal Regulation of NEEC/Curitiba was approved, substituting the bylaw. The Internal Regulation defined the NEEC as a Specialist Advisory Group of the Continuing Education Service of health facilities, with the purpose of unifying continuing education practices, as well as promoting scientific discussion and the strengthening the professional category.

At that time, a monthly schedule of meetings was established, and the periodicity switched from quarterly to annual. The members of the NEEC realized that the monthly meetings provided suitable spaces for discussions and reflections, without conflicts of interest, which favored production of knowledge and exchange of experiences. As for the forums, they were spaces of debate open to the professional and academic community, aimed to the socialization of subjects widely discussed and constructed in monthly ordinary meetings.

There were six ordinary meetings in 2011. The following themes addressed in these meetings and discussed by the members of the NEEC deserve mention: use of quality indicators specific for assessing the effectiveness of training and the performance of nurses as leaders and educators of their teams.

Regarding quality indicators, all the members made presentations and discussed the indicators used in their hospital institutions. Most used the following indicators: number of hours of training

per employee and per sector and assessment of training effectiveness. This demand emerged from the accreditations processes these health organizations participated in most of them in 2010 and 2011.

There was consensus on the use of quality indicators. The referred organizations use these indicators, but it is necessary to implement strategies of analysis of these indicators to ensure their comparability and that they reflect the different contexts of health delivered, to support public health and education policies aimed improve health care quality ⁽¹²⁾.

The other theme, which was also extensively discussed in the meeting, on the activities of the nurse who had the roles of leader and educator culminated in the main issue of the fifth forum of Continuing Education: "O impacto do acompanhamento do líder no desenvolvimento da equipe" (The impact of the monitoring of the leader on team development), since leadership is the most important management skill in the nurses' working process. Based on the discussions of this Forum, it is concluded that in order to be a team leader, the professional must be able to promote his/her development, establish goals and strategies for his/her professional growth, as well as the growth of the team, in order to enhance the potentialities of the group and overcome weaknesses ^(10,12).

In 2012, there eleven ordinary meetings and the number of participants increased to an average of 12 people. The main issues discussed and investigated in these meetings were poor adherence of nurses to education processes in the integration of a new employee and the need for specific training for nurses working in health education in hospital institutions.

Regarding the specific training of nurses working in health education, the need to develop skills that must be mobilized by the professional responsible for the coordination of an education service. The discussions held in the meetings of the NEEC demonstrated the importance and urgency of defining new mechanisms, instruments, modalities and strategies for the improvement of the skills of these nurses responsible for the coordination of education activities, in order to contribute to a more critical thinking attitude, to the introduction of management skills in nursing professional practice and to the development of these professionals in the current working environment ⁽¹³⁾.

The lack of adherence of nurses to education processes in the integration of a new employee was the theme of the sixth Forum of Continuing Education under the title "O papel do enfermeiro diante da integração do novo colaborador" (The role of nurses in the integration of a new employee). The comments made on the assessment instruments completed by the participants indicated that it is essential that nurses discuss and rethink their role of educators, as well as understand continuing education as an asset that will facilitate the integration and permanence of a new employee, as it encourages autonomy, personal and organizational growth ⁽¹⁴⁾.

At the end of 2012 a new president was elected in the NEEC Curitiba, according to the stipulations of its Internal Regulation. The new president and the effective members of the NEEC proposed a review and updating of the regulations and changed the name of the NEEC to NEEC/PR, which was consistent with the latest changes occurred in education in hospital institutions and with the National Policy on Continuing Education. So, education was thereafter understood as an activity entirely connected to the work context ⁽⁹⁾.

The new detailed Internal Regulation was approved during the first meeting held in 2013. The group of the NEEC/PR produces knowledge and contemplates the institutional particularities and the training needs of health professionals, as well as the installed capacity, guiding the scientific discussions related to educational actions targeted to human resources in the health area of hospital institutions ⁽⁸⁾.

These actions are based on the logic of continuing education, which also question, rethink and reinvent the routine of health services, through the use of the Problematization Method and Significant Learning in the processes of education of health workers aimed to improve the quality of services and change health practices ⁽¹¹⁾. It is possible to sensitize the individuals and encourage them to think critically about their environment ⁽¹⁵⁾.

Therefore, 2013 was a year of significant changes: the review and updating of the Internal Regulation, which involved three amendments: (1) to the Organizational Structure, considering the positions of vice-president and treasurer; (2) to the Technical-Administrative Council; and, (3) Detailed description of the responsibilities of this council, and the change on the visual identity of NEEC/PR; the creation

of a website and participation in scientific research. The NEEP/PR was also the setting of a master's dissertation of one of its members. In 2014, these changes strengthened the group, generating a sense of belonging, and at the same time, recognition from NEEP/PR as a space that favors discussion and critical thinking to build knowledge that can transform health care organizations.

● CONTRIBUTIONS OF NEEP/PR TO THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CONTINUING EDUCATION IN HOSPITAL INSTITUTIONS

According to the theoretical references addressed, reflections and discussions that pervaded the topics addressed in the meetings and forums conducted by NEEP/PR over the past four years, it can be affirmed that the members of this center perceive education as a tool for changes and transformations. Social and educational transformations have impact on the ways of producing knowledge, in the different fields, as well as goods and services ⁽²⁾.

The members realized that education is becoming increasingly important in the daily lives of the individuals, in a changing and globalized world with higher degree of participation. Therefore, this rapidly changing world requires continuing and constant updates of knowledge ⁽¹⁶⁻¹⁷⁾.

The NEEP/PR realized that effective hospital institutions must improve their quality. To achieve this, competent professionals trained through continuing education programs are needed to expand and improve the knowledge of the personnel. Thus, Continuing Health Education is a valuable asset that can contribute to change the scenery and ensure that health workers and users play a leading role in health care systems ⁽¹⁸⁾.

In 2013, the need to better understand and broaden the discussions on issues related to continuing health education has become clear, and this is not a current process. Education within the scope of hospital institutions has been changing over the years in the pursuit of higher quality of health services.

The hospital institutions still have to train their professionals through a series of activities generically called structured and sequential trainings. These trainings corroborate the technician of expertise (technical know-how) to the detriment of the skill of "knowing how to be" ⁽⁹⁾.

Thus, continuing education persists in hospital institutions, to prepare individuals to perform assigned tasks and improve the performance of health professional, with emphasis on training, refresher courses, lectures and course, given the technological and scientific advances, the need to meet customers' demands and concern with the institution's image in the community ⁽¹⁹⁾.

However, reflections and production of knowledge at the NEEP/PR indicated a tendency to invest in the training of professionals to improve human behavior and, consequently, the care delivered. Thus, in addition to education in the workplace, focused on training and technical updates, some major transformations are being introduced in the training of health staff in hospital institutions ⁽²⁰⁾. In particular, proposals aimed to bring education and work generated as social practices. These proposals are consistent with the concept of Continuing Education ^(9,17).

Based on these observations, it can be affirmed the members of NEEP/PR realized that Continuing Education investments in personnel training do not necessarily result in changes of human behavior, especially because of the methodology adopted. This teaching-learning approach does not satisfactorily interfere with the quality of the health services delivered, because it does not transform reality ⁽¹⁹⁾.

Continuing education in hospital institutions is now perceived as an essential tool to support the training process, as it is based on the following principles: professional expertise, organizational motivation and continuous assessment, which will be reached when health professionals become able to act in a critically reflexive way in their daily activities ^(11, 16).

Under this perspective, the NEEP/PR has become aware that continuing education services in hospital institutions, in addition to providing organizational and administrative support, implement a culture of quality work in hospitals, which begins with strategic planning of management and active participation of the health professionals of these organizations ⁽²⁰⁾.

The strategic importance of the NEEP/PR, a study group that produces knowledge, has culminated

in the change of its name: it changed from "Serviços de Educação Continuada" (Continuing Education Services) to "Serviços ou Núcleos de Educação Permanente" (Services or Centers of Continuing Education) in most hospital institutions represented by the research participants.

Thus, the approach of continuing education in hospital institutions that have members in the NEEP/PR is no longer operational, and rather strategic, to contemplate comprehensive health and nursing practices, which involve team work, valuing of citizenship and autonomy of the individuals inserted in these organizations.

● FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The NEEP/PR is a privileged space because of its potential to add scientific knowledge, professional development and construction of knowledge. It consists of an independent non-profit group aimed to construct and disseminate knowledge related to Continuing Health Education within the context of hospital institutions.

The present study revealed that it is not only possible, but also essential to invest in these study groups because of their valuable contribution.

The valuation of the historical path, actions and contributions of the NEEP/PR is essential to the educational services of these health organizations. Such spaces favor a critical view of the historical and contemporary movements related to continuing education in health and nursing. They also provide future prospects on the creation of possible and desirable ways to develop studies on this subject.

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