



GUEST EDITORIAL

Navigating Nursing Research Towards Universal Health Care

The Philippine Government has made achieving Universal Health Care (UHC), where all people have access to high-quality healthcare without experiencing excessive financial problems (WHO, 2017), a top political priority by passing Republic Act No. 1122. This law ensures improvement of access to healthcare and better health outcomes, particularly for the vulnerable and marginalized population, in response to the global agenda of health as a human right.

The goal of achieving UHC will require improvement in the health systems, including human resources for health. Nurses hold a crucial role in achieving universal health care through providing accessible, cost-effective, readily available, and high-quality healthcare services that address the health care needs of diverse demographic groups (ICN, 2019). Aside from these, nurses contribute to the transformation of health policies, promotion of health in communities, and patient and family support (Alford, 2019).

Nurses will remain tangible in the achievement of UHC through identifying and addressing health priorities resulting to improved productivity within the health system such as care coordination, enhanced scope of service, improved quality of care and patient outcomes, and improved efficiency and reduced costs to organization (ICN, 2018). Nurses also promote a conducive environment involving patients and families respecting their values and beliefs. Achieving "Health for All" by 2030 requires expanding the scope of UHC implementation to include discussions on good nurse-patient communication, upholding patients' rights, and advancing the right to health (Kwame 2022). Such is clear in involving nurses in generating evidence-based information that will positively affect health outcomes and improve nursing care.

Nursing practice must be grounded in theory and practice. Established best practices can guide nurses in handling issues in clinical settings, in education, and towards enhanced professional practice (Jackson, 2019). Through research, nurses can characterize aspects of a given situation that are not well understood, explain phenomena that need to be considered when planning care, forecast the likely results of specific decisions, prevent the occurrence of undesirable outcomes, and start activities that encourage positive client behavior (Polit & Beck, 2004). Nursing research must be the cornerstone of

comprehensive practice towards delivery of the highest possible quality of care contributing to the attainment of the current policy aspirations of the Philippine healthcare system.

We value all of these. Thus, this issue features articles highlighting the appreciation and development of evidence-based information among nurses to contribute on better-informed decisions and choices towards realization of UHC. This issue will showcase evidence on key domains beneficial to UHC implementation such as (1) *Preparing the workforce: improving skills and knowledge base through nursing education*; (2) *Enhancing the worker performance: improving working conditions*; (3) *Right to health: people-centered health systems*; and (4) *Research innovation and collaboration: strengthening an inclusive and data-driven health planning*.

Preparing the workforce: improving skills and knowledge base through nursing education

Nurses are required to deliver the highest possibility of quality care; so it is likewise critical to develop a well-educated and trained nursing workforce. Education reforms are explored developing nurses who are transformative leaders responding to the health problems and care needs of the country. Cabanes et.al. (2023) measured the quality of nursing education and identified that while the Philippines is known to produce globally competitive nursing graduates, the accreditation rate of nursing programs is only at 3%. This calls for the strengthening and instilling of the relevance of accreditation and further assessment of the factors that may contribute on the improvement of quality assurance in nursing education.

Innovations in learning delivery emerged in this online age, however there remains questions on quality of delivery. De las Armas (2023) identified the correlations between nursing students' readiness for online learning and emotional intelligence, providing academic institutions with an overview of the perceptions and capacities of nursing students, useful as a basis for framework development enhancing online learning.

As the nursing program remains widely demanding, Montegrigo (2023) looked at the content saturation of the nursing education using Roy's Adaptation Model, which is a theoretical lens not commonly used to assess this area. Several

overlaps in the nursing curriculum were identified that may affect student's overall academic performance and eventually delivery of nursing care.

Enhancing the worker performance: improving working conditions

Without investment and focus on nurses and their welfare, retaining nurses in the health workforce will remain a challenge in achieving UHC. Policies must be formulated and enforced to improve working conditions of nurses and achieve work-life balance. The development of scientific knowledge is crucial to further understand the pathways and mechanisms affecting nurses' health and welfare towards ensuring health equity (Llop-Girones, 2021).

As a contribution to the discourse on improving nurse workers' welfare, Cura (2021)'s study probed on the positive attributions of the deployment cap policy as a viable solution to ensure an adequate number of healthcare workers in the Philippines despite the increasing number of Filipino nurses migrating overseas aggravated by the COVID-19 crisis. Lopez et.al (2023) investigated the "glass ceiling" phenomena affecting women minorities in achieving a higher potential in the workplace. Given the observed high stress working environment resulting to burn-out among nurse educators, Apsay (2023) developed a policy communication material advocating the establishment of a self-care culture for nurse educators in the Philippines through the Reflect, Recharge, Revive Program. Finally, Enarciso (2023) presented a concept analysis highlighting the value of friendship among nurses in the workplace to ensure better health, positive well-being, and happiness in both personal and professional career.

Right to health: people-centered health systems

The goal of Universal Health Care is to ensure that the ordinary folk will not have to worry about the expenses incurred in pursuing access to high-quality preventive and treatment services. Achieving this will require people-centered schemes considering the ordeals of varied population groups (Quick, 2014). To guarantee this, a massive information drive is needed. Thus, Quijote et.al. (2023), explored on the experiences of individuals who experienced parental separation and its effects on psychological health. Additionally, Nimako (2023) developed a conceptual analysis and identified that perinatal fathers' adaptability and role attainment is critical for improving the health and well-being of an individual and the family.

Research innovation and collaboration: strengthening an inclusive and data-driven health planning

Given the continuing changes in the nursing field, research facilitates the discovery of best practices for improvement of individual and population care. Riñon-Rodriguez (2023) signified embracing research and appreciation of scientific evidence in one's practice. Masong (2023) underlined the importance of

learning about philosophical foundations in order to ensure that study findings are relevant, appropriately stated, and will aid in making astute decisions. Conversely, Tabin (2023) highlighted the value of reflexivity in research. She accentuated the value of reflection, adaptability, and flexibility to broaden the breadth and impact of research. In addition, Alanazi (2023) underscored how important critical reflexivity is and the value of research to be integrated in healthcare practice. Nurses has a critical role in achieving health equity, which Mangubat (2023) investigated in their study of the critical role of nurses vis-à-vis the transformative international collaboration approach to address global health challenges. Pangan (2023), meanwhile, reflected on two philosophical paradigms commonly used in research, positivism and interpretivism. She contemplated the relevance of both in ensuring rigor in research undertakings.

The goal of achieving UHC will be undermined if evidence generation will not be at the forefront of health systems development. Now more than ever, nursing research needs to be cultivated. As it is from applying our various theories through practice we learn; and it is through research can we, nurses, can further appreciate our profession, and work collectively towards achievement of "Health for All".

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