

FEATURE ARTICLE

From Nightingale to Now: Transforming Global Collaboration in Pandemics

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Abstract

This article aims to investigate the transformative potential of a global pandemic treaty, focusing on the critical role of Filipino nurses in addressing global health challenges and promoting equitable healthcare systems. Inspired by Florence Nightingale's legacy, the article outlines ten steps for transformative international collaboration. It highlights the critical need for improved global cooperation in response to the projected shortage of health workers by 2030. It advocates for a treaty prioritizing healthcare worker protection, equitable resource distribution, and nursing migration solutions. Nurses' valuable insights and perspectives must be considered by actively involving them in treaty development and implementation. The study employs an informed presentation methodology, connecting Nightingale's inspirational words to today's global health challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Key findings highlight the treaty's transformative potential in governance, early warning systems, preparedness and response, research and development, capacity building, ethical considerations, financing, the One Health approach, and climate change. The treaty can strengthen healthcare systems, protect public health, and create a resilient and equitable future in global health by empowering nurses and fostering international collaboration.

Keywords: *nursing, global collaboration, pandemic treaty, transformative leadership, healthcare workers, equitable healthcare systems.*

Introduction

With over 316,000 Filipino nurses working abroad, the Philippines has a significant presence in the global healthcare community, accounting for one-quarter of the external foreign nursing workforce globally (Ramos, 2022). This figure exceeds twice the size of our Philippine Armed Forces and serves as the international face of our country. Nurses are unsung heroes who provide vital healthcare services, often at the bedside. Surprisingly, according to CNN, despite accounting for only 4% of the nursing population in the United States, Filipino nurses accounted for nearly one-third of those who tragically died from COVID-19 (Shoichet, 2020).

I witnessed our country's compassion and dedication while working as a Filipina bedside nurse in a Saudi Arabian military hospital's burn unit for seven years. We are at the forefront of global care, working tirelessly to care for the most vulnerable and save lives. Nurses work on the cutting edge of the tough business

of healthcare, as Florence Nightingale famously said: "Remember my name... you'll be screaming it later." As I study for a Master of Science in Global Health in Geneva, Switzerland, I have become acutely aware of the challenges that our country and the rest of the world face in addressing the issues of equitable opportunity and professional care for Filipino nurses. In turn, we must all be prepared to deal with the unfolding global challenges and calamities that our healthcare workers, both abroad and in our country, will face for the rest of the century.

The World Health Organization predicts a global shortage of ten million health workers by 2030, with most of these needed in low- and lower-middle-income countries (WHO, nd.). There is an urgent need for improved international collaboration and responses, such as developing a competent global pandemic treaty, which is currently being considered by the international

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community. This treaty, or a final instrument of another name, will update the International Health Regulations 2005, which were shown to be insufficient during the COVID pandemic. By providing a more supportive global health management system, the new approach should prioritize healthcare workers' protection and support, promote equitable resource distribution, and address the challenges of nurse migration.

The Philippines also anticipates significant shortages of healthcare workers in the coming decades (Robredeo, et al., 2022). To better support nurses worldwide, our country must take part in reshaping global health governance. By addressing these issues, we can ensure a sustainable and resilient healthcare system locally and globally, thus renewing Florence Nightingale's legacy for the twenty-first century.

We can ensure that valuable insights and perspectives are considered by actively involving nurses in developing and implementing a global pandemic treaty. This inclusive approach will allow the treaty to address the real-world challenges that nurses face while empowering them to provide quality care, protect public health, and strengthen healthcare systems worldwide. This article advances the *International Council of Nurses'* manifesto, "Nurses: A Voice to Lead a Vision for Future Healthcare," which agrees that nurses can be empowered voices for global health solutions (ICN, 2021).

The Need for an Informed Approach

To meet the demands of the global health landscape in the twenty-first century, our community must thoroughly understand the critical emerging global issues that shape the environment in which nurses provide care (Yach & Bettcher, 1998). The experiences and expertise of frontline healthcare workers can be used to gain this understanding. Nurses have seen firsthand the challenges of limited resources, overburdened healthcare systems, and the need for equitable healthcare access.

Let us be inspired by Florence Nightingale, a legendary figure in nursing history. She was a trailblazing nurse who played a critical role during the Crimean War in the mid-nineteenth century. Florence Nightingale, known as the "Lady with the Lamp," tirelessly cared for wounded soldiers and helped to establish nursing as a respected profession. Her tireless efforts saved many lives and laid the groundwork for modern nursing practices. Nurses like Nightingale continued to demonstrate their indispensable role in healthcare during the Crimean War, World War I, and every war since. They faced impossible challenges on the frontlines, tending to the wounded and providing comfort in the midst of war's horrors. Their dedication and fortitude were inspiring.

Importantly, Nightingale pioneered transformative leadership long before the term was coined. Her leadership style has been

compared to a "stairstep" leadership development model. According to this model, every nurse has the potential to be a leader. Nurses gradually gain the necessary skills and competence to excel in leadership roles as they gain experience (Hsiao, 2020).

Let us seize this opportunity to come together, learn from history, and forge a path toward a more resilient and equitable future in global health in the spirit of Florence Nightingale and her unwavering commitment to improving healthcare. In response to our era's pandemic challenges, ten Florence Nightingale quotes can illuminate the path to transformative international collaboration (Haws, nd.).

Connecting History to Global Health Challenges:

Fast forward to the twenty-first century, and we are confronted with global health challenges, none more visible than the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has highlighted the critical role of nurses in public health. They have been at the forefront, risking their lives to care for the sick, educate the public, and administer vaccines. Nurses worldwide are demonstrating the same dedication and resilience that Florence Nightingale and her contemporaries did.

Given the challenges nurses face today, it is becoming increasingly clear that a new approach is required to effectively address global health crises. This is where the debate over a global pandemic treaty comes into play. Nations recognize the importance of working together to collectively create a comprehensive framework for responding to pandemics. A treaty of this type is currently being drafted that could establish guidelines, foster collaboration, and empower healthcare professionals, particularly nurses, to effectively navigate and combat future outbreaks (WHO, 2023).

I. Transforming Global Collaboration for Nurses in Global Health

"Let whoever is in charge keep this simple question in her head (not, how can I always do this right thing myself, but) how can I provide for this right thing to be always done?" -- Florence Nightingale

The proposed global pandemic treaty is vital for nurses providing healthcare in all countries, especially considering the emerging global health challenges (Gostin, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the shortcomings of existing international health regulations, necessitating a transformative pandemic treaty. Understanding the implications of this proposed treaty is critical for nurses who actively participate in healthcare delivery and response efforts. This article aims to energize nurses and provide a roadmap for

transformative global cooperation and advocacy in shaping the draft treaty by advocating for international collaboration.

A comprehensive and inclusive definition of a pandemic is perhaps most important for nurses involved in global health. The treaty's scope should account for emerging challenges and future threats in keeping with the changing nature of healthcare. A dynamic definition of a pandemic becomes relevant to nurses' practice as they witness the complexities of pathogens and their impact on vulnerable populations. Nurses in resource-constrained settings, for example, can contribute their expertise in identifying pandemic threats based on pathogen severity, transmissibility, viral load, and genetic makeup.

II. Governance and Decision-Making: Empowering Nurses' Role

"I attribute my success to this: I never gave or took any excuse." -- Florence Nightingale

Florence Nightingale's poignant assertion is particularly relevant in the context of governance and decision-making within the framework of a transformative pandemic treaty (Frenk, et al., 2014). Effective governance in the face of a global health crisis hinges on inclusive and representative decision-making processes. Nurses, as frontline warriors in healthcare, offer invaluable perspectives that are crucial in shaping responsive and practical strategies. To harness this potential, the pandemic treaty must ensure that nurses have a substantial presence and voice in international governing bodies and decision-making forums. Their inclusion is not just a nod to diversity but a strategic move to integrate real-world insights and frontline experiences into the policymaking process enhancing overall preparedness.

Nurses' participation in these high-level discussions allows for the integration of practical, on-the-ground knowledge with overarching policy objectives. Their contributions can significantly enhance the relevance and effectiveness of pandemic response strategies, ensuring that these strategies are not only theoretically sound but also pragmatically feasible and sensitive to the realities of healthcare delivery. Nurses' involvement can expedite the translation of policies into actionable plans, reducing the time lag between policy formulation and its practical implementation in healthcare settings.

Moreover, empowering nurses in decision-making roles also serves to bridge the often-observed gap between healthcare policy and its implementation. Nurses, by virtue of their day-to-day experiences, are acutely aware of the challenges and limitations of the current healthcare systems. Their insights can inform more realistic and grounded policy decisions, leading to

outcomes that are better aligned with the needs and constraints of frontline healthcare delivery.

In conclusion, amplifying the role of nurses in governance and decision-making processes within the context of a pandemic treaty is imperative. It's a recognition of the critical role that nurses play not just in patient care but in shaping effective healthcare policies. By empowering nurses to have a voice in these crucial decisions, the treaty can foster a more inclusive, responsive, and practical approach to global health governance, truly embodying the no-excuse, action-oriented spirit championed by Florence Nightingale.

III. Early Warning and Surveillance: Enhancing Nurses' Preparedness

*"How very little can be done under the spirit of fear."
-- Florence Nightingale*

Improving early warning and surveillance systems is essential for global health nurses. The key to success is preparedness, which is a learned response. Resilience is primarily the result of repeated exposure to adversity and the ability to catch up or cope with challenges. In as little as 36 hours, the pathogen could spread from a remote village to major cities on all continents (Jonas, 2013). By utilizing advanced surveillance technologies and real-time information sharing, nurses can actively contribute to pathogen detection and containment efforts. For example, nurses working in areas where humans and animals interact can work with surveillance teams to monitor sewage systems and identify potential pathogens. This early warning system enables nurses to respond quickly and effectively, preventing disease spread.

IV. Preparedness and Response: Building Nursing Resilience

"For us who Nurse, our Nursing is a thing, which, unless in it we are making progress every year, every month, every week, take my word for it we are going back. The more experience we gain, the more progress we can make." -- Florence Nightingale

Florence Nightingale's timeless wisdom underscores a fundamental truth in nursing: progress and continuous learning are essential. This philosophy is particularly relevant in times of crisis, such as pandemics, where nursing practice is put to the test. Preparedness and response in such scenarios demand not just dedication but also a commitment to continual learning and adaptation (GPMB, 2019).

To respond effectively to pandemic challenges, nurses require comprehensive support systems. This includes access to a

network of qualified healthcare workers for collaborative care and mentorship, robust communication systems that facilitate timely information sharing and coordination, and efficient logistics to ensure the availability of necessary medical supplies and equipment. Strengthening these areas should be a priority in any pandemic treaty, with a specific focus on healthcare system reinforcement and comprehensive training for healthcare workers.

Nurses, with their wealth of practical experience and insights, are uniquely positioned to contribute to these efforts. By actively participating in policy development and sharing their firsthand experiences, they can ensure that preparedness and response strategies are not only evidence-based but also attuned to the nuanced realities of different local contexts. This local tailoring of strategies is crucial for effective implementation and outcomes.

Moreover, in the realm of public health, nurses play a pivotal role in risk communication and community engagement. Building trust within communities and dispelling myths and misinformation are essential for effective pandemic response. Nurses, often seen as trusted figures, can leverage this position to educate communities, promote evidence-based healthcare practices, and advocate for preventive measures. Their ability to communicate complex medical information in an accessible manner is invaluable in fostering public understanding and compliance with health guidelines.

Enhancing nursing resilience through continuous learning and adaptation is vital for effective pandemic preparedness and response. The pandemic treaty should recognize and support this by prioritizing healthcare system strengthening, healthcare worker training, and community engagement strategies. By doing so, it leverages the unique strengths and experiences of nurses, ensuring that response efforts are not only robust and well-informed but also tailored to meet the specific needs of diverse communities. Nurses, embodying the spirit of Florence Nightingale's teachings, are central to these efforts, driving forward the progress of nursing practice in the face of global health challenges.

V. Research and Development: Empowering Nurses as Innovators

"Ignite the mind's spark to rise the sun in you." -- Florence Nightingale

Collaborative research and development initiatives are critical for global health nurses (Rourke, et al., 2020). Scientific breakthroughs in modern medicine, particularly in critical areas such as diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccine development, are increasingly hinged on the principles of open data sharing and the rapid evolution of technology. This trend underscores

the importance of collaborative efforts in driving innovation and expediting the development of effective healthcare solutions. Nurses, with their unique and invaluable on-the-ground perspectives, are integral to this collaborative research landscape. Their firsthand experiences and observations in clinical settings provide essential insights that bridge the theoretical aspects of research with the practical demands of patient care. By incorporating these real-world perspectives, the development of healthcare solutions becomes more targeted, practical, and ultimately, more effective in addressing the complexities of patient needs.

The role of nurses in this interdisciplinary research is especially crucial during global health crises, such as pandemics. Nurses are often the first line of response, dealing directly with the impacts of health policies and medical interventions. Their involvement in research not only ensures the relevance and applicability of scientific studies but also grounds these studies in the realities of healthcare delivery. This integration of nursing perspectives into research amplifies the potential for meaningful and practical healthcare breakthroughs.

However, realizing the full potential of this interdisciplinary approach necessitates addressing certain challenges, particularly in the realms of privacy and intellectual property rights. The development of a comprehensive pandemic treaty or similar global health agreements should focus on establishing clear, equitable guidelines that facilitate the free exchange of knowledge while safeguarding individual privacy and intellectual property. This balance is critical to prevent exploitation and ensure that the fruits of research and development to the benefit of all.

Integrating nurses into interdisciplinary research, supported by frameworks that address privacy and intellectual property concerns, can significantly enhance the quality and impact of scientific breakthroughs in healthcare. By ensuring that healthcare solutions are not only innovative but also grounded in the practical realities of patient care, we pave the way for a more responsive and effective global health system. Nurses, with their rich insights and experiences, are central to this endeavor, shaping the future of healthcare innovation.

Capacity Building and Education: Empowering Nurses Globally

"May we hope that, when we are all dead and gone, leaders will arise who have been personally experienced in the hard, practical work, the difficulties, and the joys of organizing nursing

reforms, and who will lead far beyond anything we have done!"

-- Florence Nightingale

Capacity building and education are critical for empowering nurses worldwide to respond to pandemics effectively. The pandemic treaty should emphasize the significance of nurses' continuing professional development, knowledge sharing, and skill enhancement. Access to high-quality education and training programs can provide nurses with the skills they need to deal with complex health emergencies. Collaboration among countries and international organizations can facilitate exchange programs, mentorship initiatives, and resource sharing to strengthen nursing capacity worldwide.

According to the *State of the World's Nursing* report, there is a global shortage of six million nurses due to insufficient workforce planning, weak policies, and a lack of political leadership (WHO, 2020). Due to heavy workloads, insufficient resources, burnout, and stress, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated workforce shortages, leading to increased nurse attrition. Investing in nursing and allowing nurses to practice within their full scope of practice are critical to addressing this crisis. The pandemic has also provided an opportunity to reshape the nursing workforce by promoting advanced practice nursing and advocating for full practice authority to improve healthcare delivery. The *State of the World's Nursing* report offers a forward-thinking outlook on the future of healthcare, emphasizing the critical role of nurses in driving transformative change. The report highlights the potential for more people-centered and integrated approaches to healthcare by advocating for nurses to assume influential positions and wield greater power. This shift in emphasis should result in more positive outcomes for the individuals and communities nurses tirelessly serve.

VI. Ethical Considerations: Upholding Nursing Values

"I think one's feelings waste themselves in words; they ought all to be distilled into actions which bring results."

-- Florence Nightingale

The Nightingale Initiative for Global Health (NIGH) and the Nightingale Declaration for a Healthy World

The Nightingale Initiative for Global Health (NIGH), co-founded by Barbara Dossey and Deva-Marie Beck, stands at the forefront of integrating Florence Nightingale's enduring ethical principles with the complex global and humanitarian challenges of the 21st century (Beck and Dossey, 2019). NIGH, inspired by Nightingale's holistic approach to health, advocacy for environmental responsibility, and focus on patient care, advocates for global health equity and empowers nurses and midwives. The organization's efforts align with the *Nightingale*

Declaration, a commitment to global health and peace, reflecting Nightingale's vision. This Declaration, endorsed by nurses and supporters worldwide, seeks to influence international health policy and respond to modern challenges like pandemics, climate change, and health inequities, thus embodying Nightingale's legacy in contemporary healthcare advocacy.

The Nightingale Declaration is as follows:

"We—the nurses and concerned citizens of the global community—hereby dedicate ourselves to achieve a healthy world. We declare our willingness to unite in a program of action, to share information and solutions and improve health conditions for all humanity—locally, nationally, and globally. We further resolve to adopt personal practices and to implement public policies in our communities and nations—making this goal achievable and inevitable—beginning today in our own lives, in the lives of our nations and in the world at large."

Ethical considerations should underpin the pandemic treaty's provisions, reflecting the values and principles of the nursing profession (Burci, et al., 2022). Nurses are held accountable by moral codes that prioritize patient-centered care, human dignity, and social justice. The treaty should uphold these principles and protect the rights and well-being of people and communities affected by pandemics. Nurses can actively participate in developing ethical guidelines and frameworks, promoting equitable access to healthcare, and resolving ethical issues that arise during pandemics.

The pandemic treaty must be evaluated and revised regularly to address emerging challenges and adapt to changing healthcare landscapes. Nurses should participate actively in the evaluation process, providing valuable feedback based on their frontline experiences. Continuous improvement of treaty provisions based on evidence-based practices and lessons learned can strengthen global collaboration and nursing's role in global health.

VII. Financing and Resource Allocation: Ensuring Sustainable Nursing Practices

"The most important practical lesson that can be given to nurses is to teach them what to observe."

-- Florence Nightingale

It is critical for nurses to actively promote the development of national financing mechanisms that allocate recurring funds for health protection. Adequate funding allows for the delivery of essential healthcare services as well as capacity building. Nurses can advocate for equitable resource distribution and stewardship in response to pandemic threats. The pandemic

treaty can help ensure nurses have the tools and support they need to provide quality care in all settings by emphasizing the importance of funding and resource allocation.

To promote compliance with the pandemic treaty, clear, binding, and measurable commitments are required. Nurses should actively encourage and adhere to the treaty's provisions as advocates for patient safety and public health. The treaty should include mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating compliance, emphasizing accountability and transparency. Nurses can play an essential role in monitoring and reporting noncompliance, ensuring that all stakeholders fulfill their obligations.

VIII. One Health Approach and Climate Change: Embracing Planetary Health

"I use the word nursing for want of a better. It has been limited to signify little more than the administration of medicines and the application of poultices. It ought to signify the proper use of fresh air, light, warmth, cleanliness, quiet, and the proper selection and administration of diet—all at the least expense of vital power to the patient." -- Florence Nightingale

In addressing global challenges, the One Health approach recognizes the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health (WHO, n.d.). Unhealthy practices and climate change have impacted ecosystems, resulting in biodiversity loss and increased disease risk. Promoting healthy farming practices and climate-resilient strategies, for example, can protect health, improve biodiversity, and prevent epidemics. Nurses are critical in advocating for these principles, educating communities, and fostering cross-sector collaboration to create a healthier, more sustainable future. For the longest time, humans ignored nature's role. We are so focused on our needs that an eight billion-person population may be too much for nature to sustain. Monoculture, unsustainable agricultural practices, and land conversions have harmed nature's ability to recover from the demands we place on it. Recognizing the importance of the One Health approach entails taking steps to balance and optimize health for all.

The "Environmental Theory" of Florence Nightingale defined nursing as utilizing the patient's environment to aid recovery. It reflects a community healthcare model that considers all aspects of an individual's health (Wayne, 2023). Climate change significantly impacts global health, with rising temperatures and shifting precipitation patterns facilitating disease spread. Hurricanes and heat waves, for example, cause injuries, displacement, and disruptions in healthcare services. Furthermore, climate change impacts food security, leading to malnutrition and associated health issues. Simultaneously, air

pollution worsens, causing respiratory and cardiovascular problems. Climate change-related uncertainty and events harm mental health. Comprehensive strategies such as emissions reduction, adaptation, and strengthening healthcare systems are required to address these challenges.

IX. Conclusion: Engaging Nurses in Global Collaboration for a Transformative Pandemic Treaty

"Nursing is an art: and if it is to be made an art, it requires an exclusive devotion as hard a preparation as any painter's or sculptor's work; for what is the having to do with dead canvas or dead marble, compared with having to do with the living body, the temple of God's spirit? It is one of the Fine Arts: I had almost said, the finest of Fine Arts."

-- Florence Nightingale

Florence Nightingale revolutionized our understanding of infection in hospitals and on the battlefield through her meticulous use of evidence. She made significant advances in healthcare delivery by collecting data, using statistical analysis, and collaborating closely with the British government. Nightingale's evidence-based approach transformed nursing and significantly impacted public health. Her foresight inspired healthcare professionals to prioritize data-driven decision-making and implement evidence-based practices to improve patient care and outcomes.

Nurses play an essential role in global health, particularly in responding to pandemics. Their knowledge, compassion, and dedication are invaluable assets in reducing the impact of infectious diseases. Global collaboration and healthcare systems can be strengthened by actively engaging nurses in developing and implementing a transformative pandemic treaty. This treaty has the potential to transform international cooperation by providing nurses with the necessary support, resources, and empowerment to protect the health and well-being of individuals and communities around the world. Innovative decision-making processes ensure fair representation and prompt response. "Leaders at all levels hold the key," according to the *Global Preparedness Monitoring Board*. They prioritize preparedness with a whole-of-society approach to ensure everyone is involved and protected." (GPMB, 2019).

This commentary has emphasized the critical role of nurses in pandemics and the urgent need for transformative global collaboration. Recognizing Filipino nurses' significant presence in the worldwide healthcare workforce and their challenges, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizes the importance of international cooperation and

developing a global pandemic treaty. We can address critical areas such as governance, early warning and surveillance, preparedness and response, research and development, capacity building and education, ethical considerations, financing and resource allocation, the One Health approach, and climate change by actively involving nurses in shaping and implementing this treaty. Through this transformative treaty, nurses will be empowered to strengthen healthcare systems, protect public health, and ensure the well-being of individuals and communities worldwide. It is time to recognize nurses' invaluable contributions and unite in a shared commitment to their support, allowing them to continue their critical role in mitigating the impact of infectious diseases and fostering a resilient and equitable global health future.

As we embrace transformative collaboration, let Florence Nightingale's trailblazing leadership and "stairstep" model inspire us to unite, learn from history, and create a resilient, equitable future in global health. Her timeless quotes illuminate our path toward effective and inclusive cooperation.

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