

History of Croatia nursing – undiscovered territory

Povijest Sestrinstva u Republici Hrvatskoj-Neotkriveni teritori

Franković Sandra¹, Kralj Zvonimir², Glavaš Tanja³, Jurinec Božica⁴

¹Škola za medicinske sestre Mlinarska, Mlinarska 34, Zagreb

¹Nursing school Mlinarska, Mlinarska 34, Zagreb, Croatia

²Zdravstveno veleučilište Zagreb, Mlinarska 38, Zagreb

²University Hospital Centre Zagreb, Department of Internal Medicine, Kišpatičeva 12, Zagreb, Croatia

³Fachabteilung für Augenheilkunde und Hals-Nasen-Ohren-Heilkunde, Klinik Vincentinum Augsburg gemeinnützige GmbH, Franziskanergasse 12, 86152 Augsburg, Deutschland

⁴Srednja škola Bedekovčina, Gajeva 1, Bedekovčina 49221 High school Bedekovčina, Gajeva 1, Bedekovčina, Croatia

Sažetak

U članku su prikazana dosadašnja nastojanja u proučavanju povijesti hrvatskog sestrinstva i naznačene su točke daljnjih napora u prikupljanju povijesne građe i njene popularizacije.

U Hrvatskoj ne bilježimo značajne napore u sustavnom proučavanju povijesti sestrinstva iako je na našim područjima institucionalizirano 1921. godine. Povijesna građa koja bi trebala činiti okosnicu tog napora je nepoznata ili je razasuta u privatnom posjedu ili nemarom uništena. Sustavno je obrađeno samo nekoliko tema i to povijest ustanova koje obrazuju medicinske sestre i djelomično aktivnosti sestara između dvaju svjetskih ratova. Povijest Hrvatske udruge medicinskih sestara (HUMS) također nije sistematizirana te nije učinjen kritički osvrt na njenu ulogu u profesionalizaciji sestrinstva u Hrvatskoj. U sklopu HUMS-a osnovano je 2013. godine Društvo za povijest sestrinstva. Društvo se u planiranju svojih aktivnosti vodi idejom da se praktična vrijednost poznavanja povijesti sestarske profesije općenito, ali i na nacionalnoj razini ogleda barem u četiri elementa: profesionalnoj socijalizaciji, profesionalnoj valorizaciji, prepoznatljivosti u javnosti i prepoznatljivosti u znanstvenoj zajednici.

Glavne riječi: povijest hrvatskog sestrinstva • profesionalna socijalizacija • znanstvena zajednica • javnost

Kratki naslov: Povijest i sestrinstvo u Hrvatskoj

Abstract

This article shows endeavors that were made in the field of research of Croatian nursing history and we highlighted points of future effort in gathering of historic data and its popularization. Authors had no intention to venture into reasons for low interest in Croatian nursing history but wanted to highlight the advantages of learning about your own profession and which actions are being taken in the field of actualization of themes from Croatian nursing history.

In Croatia, we do not know of any significant efforts in systematic research into nursing history, although nursing was institutionalized in 1921 with the opening of the first nursing school in Zagreb. Historic materials that should make the backbone of this endeavor are either unknown (it was partially detected in the archives for the purposes of writing on topics not directly linked to nursing), in private ownership or were destroyed. Only a couple of topics were systematically researched and those are the history of institutions that educate nurses and to a some degree activities of nurses during the two World wars, while the contribution of religious communities was neglected until 1990. History of Croatian Nurses Association also has not been researched or recorded and no one made a critical assessment of its role in the professionalization of Croatian nursing. On the trail of these facts, in 2013 Croatian Nurses Association founded Association for the History of Nursing. The Association in its planning of future activities is guided by the idea that practical value of knowing history of nursing in general, as well as on the national level, can be seen in at least four elements: professional socialization, professional evaluation, recognition by the public and recognition by the academia. Based on these four elements Association has formed activities described in this article.

Key words: Croatian nursing history • professional socialization • professional evaluation • academic society • public

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Autor za korespondenciju/Corresponding author: Sanda Franković, BSN, mag. educ. soc., Škola za medicinske sestre Mlinarska, Mlinarska 34, Zagreb • Nursing school Mlinarska, Mlinarska 34, Zagreb, Croatia • E-mail: sfrankovic@gmail.com

Introduction

In Croatia, we are unaware of any significant efforts in the systematic study of the nursing history. Historical material that should be the backbone of this effort is unknown (although some have partially been detected in the archives for the purpose of writing reviews on topics that are

not related directly to nursing) or is scattered in private possession or destroyed by negligence. As a result, to this day only few areas have been systematically processed: history of institutions that educate nurses through occasional monographs; Lujza Janović Wagner's biography [1, 2];

nursing journals *Sestrinska riječ* [3] and socio-medical work of nurses between the two wars [4]. The reason why these topics, for the time being, form the backbone of the study of history, probably lies in the fact that the activities of nurses between the two world wars were related to the work of the School of Public Health and the social health movement whose prominent figure was dr. Andrija Štampar. These occurrences, due to their taking place within the institutions of the government, were documented and preserved in the archives, which were in due course poorly processed except for above mentioned works. It should be noted that the study of the contribution of religious communities was neglected until 1990s, which has its cause in the reluctance of the former political system to study activities within the Catholic Church. Only after the Homeland war¹, and the realization of independence of the Republic of Croatia, first efforts were made into elucidating the contribution of religious communities in caring for the sick and needy [5, 6]. The discussion should keep in mind that throughout its history, Croatia was situated in a very sensitive geopolitical area, often exposed to wars and conquests and the destruction of cultural property. This was witnessed in recent war, when the aggressors to a large degree targeted not only hospitals but also the archives.

Topics pertaining to the history of Croatian nursing found in textbooks for all levels of nursing education, with amendments, conceptually and regarding the content, mainly rely on the first textbook on the history of nursing [7]. The work of nurses in historiography is relatively poorly treated, regardless the fact that it is the key to understanding the social and medical concepts, but also the general public health and social system of the inter war era [4].

Croatian Nurses' Association, which was, according to the available data, established in 1927 represents the backbone of the professionalization of nursing, which is reflected in the activities that were directed towards the publishing of professional journals, dedication to the development of education at the university level, the establishment of nursing unions, chambers and many other activities. Its history is neither systematic nor completely described, and it has not yet received the critical review of its role in the professionalization of nursing.

In this paper the authors do not intend to go into the reasons for such lack of interest in studying the history of nursing, but to point out the benefits of knowing the history of one's own profession and what actions are being taken to realize the themes of Croatian nursing history.

The professionalization of nursing in Croatia follows the trends of developed countries with a certain time lag respecting the specific historical, social and economic conditions. So we can see how a systematic interest in the history of nursing in developed countries begins to show in the 1980s. American Association for the History of Nursing was founded in 1978 [8]. Canadian Association for the History of Nursing was founded in 1987 [9] and is part of the Canadian Nurses Association. European Nurses Associations, as part of their professional associations, record activities related to the study of the history of the profession. Founding of this organizations and increasing interest in this area gene-

rally coincides with the centenary of the creation of individual nursing schools and professional associations. This is a period of time after which it becomes clear that the nursing history can no longer be transmitted by narration and memory of specific events, and is also the time in which there is a need for evaluation of the traveled distance.

Croatian nursing is on the verge of celebrating a hundred years since the founding of the first nursing school in Zagreb established in January 1921 [10].

In the wake of the above listed needs, in 2013 Croatian Nurses Association founded The Association for History of Nursing, which as its goals lists the following activities: collecting historical materials from the field of nursing (photos, uniforms, badges, books, records, audiovisual records); archiving the collected data and materials; analysis of nursing magazines; its enrollment in related international organizations; promoting the history of Croatian nursing through exhibitions and lectures (schools, wider community); creation of a nursing calendar; organization of conferences; active participation in conferences of other CNA's professional associations [11].

In planning its activities, the Association is guided by the idea that the practical value of knowledge of the nursing history in general, but also on a national level, is reflected in at least four elements: professional socialization, professional evaluation, public recognition and recognition by the academia.

As part of its efforts to sensitize nurses for historical content Association has in the last four years held several lectures pointing precisely at these four benefits arising from the study and knowledge of the nursing history. At the same time, guided by those premises Association has devised concrete actions.

History and professional socialization

The process by which individuals learn the culture of their society is known as socialization. Primary socialization, probably the most important aspect of the process of socialization, takes place during childhood, usually within the family. In Western culture, other important instances of socialization include educational system, professional group and circle of friends. However, socialization is not limited to childhood [12]. Socialization takes a lifetime; this is the process by which social interactions permanently influence human behaviour. It allows individuals to develop their potential, to learn and adapt [13].

Every nurse should know the social, political and economic forces that shape the profession, and knowledge of this history is an important source of self-awareness, group cohesion, empowerment and pride. Exposing the trends of the past is an important part of research in nursing, which also affects the professional socialization of nurses [14].

History learning offers an opportunity to develop nursing students to be critical and constructive thinkers, and have a positive professional identity [15]. This is illustrated by W. Madsen who claims that teaching history can provide students with sense of identity by expanding their historical consciousness and enabling them to see how the past

has shaped the present and to develop critical thinking. Madsen touches on the theme that is close to the Croatian nursing and the role that nurses play not only in hospitals but also in the work within the wider community. At a time when most of the education is geared towards clinical nursing while the work in primary health care and palliative care is sidelined, the only thing left for nurses is to socialize with images and roles that they are familiar with, namely hospital nurses [16]. This is evident in the recently published book by Ž. Dugac [4] whose subtitle reads: Pictures of social and medical history of Zagreb between the Wars, and which refers to the above mentioned. The book brings valuable insight into social work of nurses between the two World wars.

Davis argues that study of nursing history contributes to a nurse's sense of professionalism [17].

Fairman and D' Antonio think that the overall impression of our social, economic, political and cultural context of treatment, as well as professional socialization are shaped by historical experiences and values [18].

Given that the nursing is considered to be a practice with its own knowledge base, but which also draws on other disciplines to develop and support its own practice [19], we believe that the study and teaching of nursing history is a crucial cohesive factor that can unite them in the picture of today's professional nursing.

And finally, the authors believe that the contents of the national nursing history contributes to: building a professional identity based on positive role models; sheds light on the essential and true contribution in nursing; diminishes the authority attributed solely on the principle of hierarchy or specific functions and development of pride and commitment to hard work.

On this track the Association chose as a partner in this endeavor HUMS Association of nursing teachers and proposed an update of historical content at all levels of nursing education. It was proposed that curriculum concerning nursing history be expanded, particularly the inclusion of content related to the national and the local nursing history.^(20,6)

It should be noted that there is no systematic analysis of the work that nurses did in the two world wars. The contribution of nurses in recent Homeland War and the role they played in wartime medical services is sparingly if not at all presented in textbooks, which would offer a valuable insight into the organization of nursing services in crisis situations. The study of this period could show the way in which nursing adapted to the new situation that is beyond the scope of daily work and that requires tremendous improvisation, resourcefulness and courage, and in some instances raises many ethical dilemmas. Currently, there are efforts to shed light on this part of history through the work of the nurses that shaped that history. Within the national association they formed Association of nurses participants of Homeland war.

Professional valorization

In sociology of professions one of the central topics is the discussion and examination of the elements by which the

profession is different from semi-profession and occupation. The primary reason for this can be explained by the fact that, historically, every modern profession during its development passed the same or a similar path. The former trades (occupations), because of changing economic formation within societies, grew into a profession, differentiating more and more in division of labor, acquiring and defending autonomous spheres of knowledge, and their holders are therefore engaged in the social division of power. Not all professions matured at the same speed nor did their paths of development take place in an ideal way in different social structures. Based on the above, we can say that the analysis of a particular profession must be carried out exhaustively, by the constitutive elements, and processes - by stating the point in development to that profession in specific social circumstances.

Turner and Hodge set the conceptual framework for the comparative analysis of the professions which is also used by Šporer (1990) in her research. According to these authors the professions can be compared by the following dimensions: (1) the level of development of basic theory and techniques that make a systematic whole and are the basis for professional activities; (2) the degree of monopoly on professional expertise; (3) the degree of recognition of the profession by the public; (4) the degree of organization of the profession; (5) the level of development of professional ethics. Based on the aforementioned, classification can be carried out and a comparative analysis within certain professions, as well as the comparison of the development in the same profession in different societies [21].

This indicates that we will find nursing at different stages of development. In terms of professional evaluation, the historical perspective of each of the elements defining a profession is crucial. Analysis of the professionalization of nursing in a particular area contributes to the understanding of certain historical moments, helps define the present and contributes to the creation of the future.

The current state of roles, responsibilities, rights, ethics and the work of nurses, can best be understood in historical perspective, i.e., monitoring changes and accelerated processes of professionalization [22]. Historical research can be used as evidence in order to develop critical thinking and research skills, as well as the setting of nursing practice in the wider social and political context [23].

Recognition by public

The conducted research with the aim to determine in what manner daily newspaper portals represent nursing in Croatia, makes it clear that nursing as a profession is not described by the portals with essential characteristics of the profession: the autonomy of the profession, competence, teamwork and commitment. Competence was negatively assessed, which brings us to the conclusion that the media reports negatively on the skills, knowledge and experience of nurses in their field of work. The research proved that the Croatian daily newspaper portals report sporadically and in an unsatisfactory manner on nursing and that the high level of negative sensationalism is present [24].

Historical data can be used to show the contribution of nursing to prosperity of the wider community through suitable shows, articles, documentaries and constructive cooperation with the media in the creation of appropriate content.

Recognition by academics

In the academic year 2011. – 2012. the first generation of students of the nursing post graduate studies at the University of Zagreb received their degree, a year earlier at the University of Osijek. Competencies acquired after post graduation, according to the Programme of postgraduate study of nursing at the University of Zagreb: - the expansion and upgrading of knowledge of undergraduate study; preparation of students for independent research and teaching. Upon completion of the postgraduate studies students acquire the academic title of Master / Master of Nursing [Eng. Master's degree in nursing] which as a result opens up the possibility of continuing education at the doctoral level [25]. By encouraging postgraduates to choose topics of national history of nursing for their thesis, it increases the processed material, the accumulation of historical insight and a critical review of certain periods and / or segments of nursing activities. Published articles and books contribute to recognition of nursing in the wider scientific community, because the chosen theme, as a rule, concerns the broad description of the socio economic conditions of a certain period and can be of an interest to other scientists. So author Grković-Janović S., Louise's diary we find the following description of the book: ... „Louise's diary is written in the literary style and therefore is an interesting and understandable to the general public, but undoubtedly can be of value to historians as a supplement to the archival sources and literature which deals with the state in Dalmatia and on Brač during the Second World War“ [26].

Activities for popularization of topics in nursing history

Guided by the earlier stated reasons, Association for the History of Nursing is making efforts to systematize archived materials to be used for the purpose of training and further research.

The association encouraged a broad discussion and activities around the collection and systematization of Croatian Nurses Association archives in order to credibly present its role in the professionalization of nursing. This endeavor should ultimately present contribution of nursing community in the development and improvement of the health system and almost ninety years of commitment to professional development of nurses even in circumstances where there was no university. In addition to the study of archives, activities have been organized in order to collect testimonies through recorded interviews. For this purpose we designed a semi-structured interview to collect data from memories related to social conditions, status and public perception of nurses, working conditions and activities of the national association. This material we consider a very valuable witness of time.

Oral history is important starting point for educators in nursing since they emphasize the overlapping of historical knowledge and professional identity, often revealing the predecessors of those who show leadership qualities. For nursing it is important what they did, what we can learn from their struggles, failures and achievements, as similar social forces still operate in our profession. Sensitivity for history helps to locate professional values and beliefs, as well as the beliefs of our clients in their social and historical context, and considering the importance of that context for the entire individual care [23].

Attractiveness and accessibility of designed revue of old uniforms proved to be a good medium through which a wide audience and nurses who are less interested in historical content can learn something about the history of their profession. The revue of religious orders and nurses uniforms use the original uniforms or replicas templated on original uniforms, and uniforms for which there are no templates copies are made according to photographs and written documentation [27, 28].

From the point of interest, notable is the nursing calendar that each month shows one nurse badge that was used in Croatia, bringing information about the period when the badge was used. In the calendar dates that are of historical importance for nursing, with a focus on national history, are marked and explained. The Calendar has caused considerable interest outside the nursing community.

Book Night is an event in which the Association has participated from its founding both in cooperation and in the School of Public Health Andrija Štampar, always with topics from the history of Croatian nursing and appropriate presentation of books that cover the content of the history of nursing [29,30].

We are currently undertaking activities in order to protect the collected archival material that should in the future form the basis for the establishment of nursing museum. Nurses museum would be a place where we could unite all four functions of studying nursing history: socialization through cooperation with institutions that educate nurses; evaluation and recognition in the scientific community by collecting and analyzing historical material; recognition by the public as an institution that is accessible to all citizens and participation in cultural events.

Conclusion

The authors' wish is, that this and other similar works that try to popularize topics concerning the history of nursing, facilitate change in the way that we think about history of nursing encouraging, at the same time, the awareness of the need to preserve and store archives in the future. The value of historical insight is not only cosmetic but forms the basis on which one can evaluate the previous work. History of Croatian nursing is not only the history of a profession but it is an integral part of national history. Every aspect of nursing is deeply connected with the society and changes in it. The attitude of society towards the nurses, nurses toward patients and society towards patients are not immutable but outline the spirit of the time and the knowledge

of the nursing history may serve as a tool to better understand a certain period.

Discovering, studying, archiving and teaching history does not bring prosperity only to the academic component of nursing, but the impact will be felt in everyday nursing practice. Understanding the contribution which the nurses have made to Croatian everyday life in the past decades will provide today's nurses with a sense of value and purpose of their work.

Although Croatian nurses follow, if lagging slightly, changes and developments in the world of nursing, their work is also a reflection of the culture and historical heritage of their own people. This specificity provides a unique perspective on the cultural environment in which nursing acts.

National history of nursing is also important because members of a society personally know and live a particular cultural pattern and that context is to them close and understandable. At the same time they can recognize the specifics of development, and can critically look back on their own development, which in nursing, although it follows global concepts has specifics in each community. From there comes the possibility of another position of questioning, one that is not global but local, taking into account the needs of the specific community.

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