



# How do Journalism Students Perceive the Nursing Profession?

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## Abstract

**Introduction.** The media play a significant role in the perception of nursing profession in the public. Journalists report on nurses according to their observations and personal perceptions, as well as their knowledge of the field they cover and thus generate information. Insufficient information and knowledge of the work of nurses may affect attitudes which can reflect on the dynamics and manner of reporting on nurses.

**Aim.** To evaluate the attitudes of journalism students towards the profession of nurses, their competencies and work, the status of nurses in society, the need for the nursing profession to be represented in the media, and personal experience in the work of nurses.

**Methods.** The research was carried out by an anonymous survey which included 68 undergraduate students of journalism (60 female and 8 male) at the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Zagreb.

**Results.** The results of the research showed that a significant number of journalism students believe that nurses are assistants to doctors and that they are not independent in performing healthcare activities. However, the attitudes of journalism students towards the representation of nurses in the media showed that the majority (80.88%) were open in terms of the importance of the media appearance of nurses. However, at the same time, journalism students do not see a reason or are undecided regarding the claim that the experiences of nurses could be interesting content for the media (82.82%). When it comes to the work of nurses, which is related to the personal experience of journalism students, it is shown that about one half of the students have positive experiences (45.52%), while a significant number have opposing views.

**Conclusion.** The research indicated that there is a significant lack of understanding of the nursing profession and its scope of work among students of future journalism careers.

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## Introduction

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Despite the development of nursing over the decades, progress in education and professionalisation, and contribution to treatment, numerous studies have shown that nurses do not receive adequate recognition from the public for their knowledge and skills. There are many reasons for this, and one of them is related to the typically gendered role of nursing in the healthcare system, where it is predominantly a female profession (1,2). Furthermore, nursing is perceived as subordinated to the medical profession (1) despite the competences they gained to provide health care independently (3). The public perception towards the professional identity of nursing changes with the development of society, but it is often linked to stereotypes derived from the portrayal of nursing through literature and the media (4). Therefore, the image of nurses is subject to various prejudices and stereotypes, usually with a negative connotation. When defining image, a professor of public relations and image expert from the Faculty of Political Sciences in Zagreb, Božo Skoko, states that image is the way others see us or a reflection of our personality, identity and is therefore subject to numerous influences. It is influenced by previous experiences, prejudices, stereotypes, knowledge, misinformation, etc. (5).

Although personal experience plays an exceptional role in creating a perception about someone or something, mass media play an indispensable role in creating public opinion. Through the media, most of the public receives information which shapes their opinions, attitudes and values about different topics and groups of people. Regardless of the fact that the media cannot be attributed direct responsibility for the activities and attitudes of society and the actions of individuals, it is clear that the media has the power to shape both positive and negative opinions and attitudes, as well as to initiate certain activities.

Through the media, most of the public receives information which shapes their opinions, attitudes and values about different topics and groups of people.

Mass media increase the reputation and authority of individuals or groups by legitimizing their status, influencing the acceptance of social norms, and in some cases seem dysfunctional by causing non-

participation and passivity (6). Furthermore, when it comes to the representation of nursing in the media, journalists play a significant role by monitoring the work of nurses in the written media or through guest appearances on television and radio media. However, journalists rarely cover the work of nurses or read their journals, therefore nurses are not recognized as people who could promote their knowledge, innovation or perspective. Furthermore, numerous hospitals and healthcare systems don't have a policy of nurses contacting the media (7).

In that area, a study initiated by the international nursing society Sigma Theta Tau is significant. That study analysed 20,000 articles, among which there were 2,600 articles about healthcare. They were published in 16 US newspapers, magazines and publications. The study results were devastating: nurses rarely write or are rarely cited regarding issues with the healthcare system, guidelines in healthcare and challenges which they face in their profession. Nurses were cited or referred to in only 4% out of 2,600 health-related articles. A nurse is mentioned in less than 1% of articles in *US News & World Report*, *Time*, *Newsweek* and *Business Week* magazines (8).

The George Washington University researchers re-conducted that major US research from 1990s titled Woodhull Study on Nursing and Media. In order to do so, they reviewed a random sample of 537 articles from health-related news in the US in order to determine how often nurses are cited, mentioned or identified in images in popular magazines and newspapers (8).

The Woodhull Study Revisited was conducted in three parts, where the first two have been published in *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* and *American Journal of Nursing* in the past two months. According to the researchers of the new study, the number of nurses cited in the media as credible sources has not changed statistically significantly in 20 years, despite calls for it in the late 1990s (9).

Woodhull study on nursing and the media initiated an important dialogue between nurses and journalists in order to develop more efficient communication channels. Nurses should help journalists get stories about the width and depth of nurses' contributions to present a more comprehensive picture of health and disease, including the critical roles which nurses play in today's healthcare system (8).

With the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic, there are visible changes related to reporting on the work of

nurses in the media. Coronavirus pandemic exposed the nurses' daily job to the public. The research, which was conducted in Croatia on the presentation of the work of nurses in daily printed newspapers, showed that during the pandemic, much more was written about nurses than in the preceding period. During the pandemic, 348 articles about nurses appeared in daily newspapers, while in the preceding period, there were only 57 articles. A total of 88.89% of articles written about nurses during the pandemic cover positive situations and events, compared to only 11.11% in the period before the coronavirus pandemic. There were 64.29% negative articles before the pandemic. All the articles found during the pandemic which refer to nurses featured acknowledgements and descriptions of nurses as professional, responsible, reliable and accurate experts. Furthermore, the results show that the media has significantly increased interest in nurses compared to the previous period. This research showed that during the pandemic, nurses were extremely positively presented to the public through the media (10).

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## Aim

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To examine the attitudes of journalism students towards the profession of nurses, their competencies and work, the status of nurses in society, the need for the nursing profession to be represented in the media, and personal experience in the work of nurses.

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## Methods

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The research was conducted at the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Zagreb in February 2023 among undergraduate journalism students. There were 68 respondents who completed the anonymous questionnaire using the paper and pencil method. This is a random sample of respondents, students attending 3 years of undergraduate studies

in journalism, which is 56.67% of the total number of students in the third year of journalism in this institution. A total of 60 female and 8 male participants aged 21 to 23 took part in the study.

For this research, a questionnaire was constructed based on a review of the literature in this area. The survey was divided into four parts. Each part included statements to which the respondents gave answers on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 - I do not agree at all, to 5 - I completely agree. The first part referred to attitudes about the competencies and work of nurses. The questionnaire consisted of 15 statements. Example of a statement: *In addition to clinical knowledge, nurses should have a high level of communication skills.* The second part of the survey examined the attitudes of journalism students about the status of nurses in society. The questionnaire consisted of 7 statements. Example of a statement: *Nursing is a profession intended for women.* The third part of the survey was about the students' attitudes toward the need for the representation of the nursing profession in the media. The questionnaire consisted of 8 statements. Example of a statement: *Nurses need more education in the field of media usage.* The fourth part explored the students' personal experiences with the work of nurses. The questionnaire consisted of 5 statements. Example of a statement: *My experiences with the work of nurses during the use of healthcare services (personal, family, friends) have been positive.* Descriptive statistical analysis methods were used to analyse the questionnaire. Statistical data processing was carried out using the Microsoft Office Excel tool. For each statement, the mean (M), standard deviation (SD), and coefficient of variation (C) were calculated to determine central tendency and variability.

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## Results

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### Attitudes about the competencies and work of nurses

In the first part of the survey, the attitudes of journalism students about the competencies and work of nurses (Table 1) were investigated. The students

mostly or completely agreed (92.58%) that the work of nurses is both physically and mentally hard. Furthermore, the students mostly or completely agreed that the work of nurses requires calmness and mental stability (94.11%) and a large amount of knowledge (91.17%), but a smaller number of students think that nurses should educate throughout their whole life (61.69%). Although the majority of students didn't agree with the statement that nurses can work only in hospitals, more than 30% of students agreed with that statement. When answering to the statement *The work of nurses and doctors is equally important for successful treatment*, the majority of students were undecided (54.41%), while there was almost equal share of those who agreed (22.5%) and those who didn't agree (23.52%). There are similar results in the attitudes that the nurse is independent in the implementation of healthcare, whereby 41.17% of students were undecided and 32.29% disagreed or mostly disagreed that the nurse is independent in the implementation of healthcare. However, 47.0% of students completely and mostly agreed that nurses are competent in conducting education and public health activities in health promotion, while 41.17% were undecided, and a smaller portion disagreed with the given statement. A total of 76.4% of students believed that nurses should have a high level of education and 63.22% believed that they should have a high level of communication skills. A total of 36.75% respondents believed that nurses are assistants to the doctors, while 25% of students were undecided. When it comes to the statement that nurses are assistants to the patients, 54% of students were undecided, while 23.52% of them agreed with that statement. When it comes to the statement that nurses are poorly educated and have a low level of education, 19.11% of students answered that they completely or mostly agreed with the statement, while 30.88% were undecided. A total of 13.23% of students disagreed with the statement that nurses are an important part of the medical team, while 61.67% of students agreed with that statement.

### Attitudes regarding the status of nurses in the society

One part of the survey included questions about attitudes regarding the status of nurses in the society (Table 2). The majority of journalism students were undecided regarding the statement that nurses

should be involved in the development of healthcare policy (39.7%), while the same number of students disagreed or mostly disagreed with that statement. When it comes to the statement: *Nursing as a profession is highly valued in the society*, 61.76% of students answered negatively and 30.88% were undecided. The majority of respondents (57.34%) disagreed or mostly disagreed with the statement: *Nursing is a profession intended for women*. A total of 5.88% of respondents agreed with the statement *Nurses are highly valued by the doctors*, while 38.23% were undecided and 55.87% mostly disagreed with that statement. More than one half of the participants (57.34%) disagreed or mostly disagreed with the following statement: *All nurses want to become doctors*, while 35.29% were undecided.

The largest number of students (39.70%) were undecided in the assessment (I neither agree nor disagree) that nurses are an invisible part of the society, while the majority (32.35%) of students completely or mostly agreed with that statement. Furthermore, the results show that students (76.46%) disagreed or mostly disagreed with the following statement: *Nurses have good income based on their work*.

### Attitudes about the need to represent the nursing profession in the media

In the third part of the survey, it was examined what journalism students think about the representation of nurses in the media (Table 3).

A significant part of the respondents (73.52%) completely disagreed or mostly disagreed with the statement: *Nurses should not be in the media because their place is exclusively with the patient*. Furthermore, 80.88% of respondents agreed or completely agreed with the following statement: *Nurses are competent interlocutors in the media in the field of health and patient care*. When it comes to the statement: *Nurses need more education in media usage*, 39.7% of respondents disagreed or completely disagreed, while 36.5% of respondents partially or completely agreed with that statement. When it comes to the statement: *Nurses are under-represented in the media*, a large part of respondents (69.11%) answered negatively, that is I completely disagree or I mostly disagree, while only 2.94% partially agreed, and 27.94% were undecided. The largest part of the respondents (50%) were undecided in the assessment of the statement *The knowledge of nurses is*

Table 1. Attitudes about the competencies and work of nurses

Statements	Agreeing with the statement					M	SD	C
	(1 - I completely disagree, 2 - I mostly disagree, 3 - I neither agree nor disagree, 4 - I partially agree, 5 - I completely agree)							
	1	2	3	4	5			
The work of nurses is physically extremely hard	0%	2.94%	4.41%	45.58%	47%	4.37	0.71	0.16
The work of nurses is mentally extremely hard	0%	1.47%	2.94%	51.47%	44.11%	4.38	0.62	0.14
The work of nurses requires calmness and mental stability	0%	0%	5.88%	41.17%	52.94%	4.47	0.61	0.14
Nurses should have a large amount of knowledge	0%	1.47%	7.35%	30.88%	60.29%	4.50	0.70	0.15
Nurses can work only in hospitals	29.4%	35.29%	11.76%	13.23%	10.29%	2.40	1.31	0.55
Nurses should educate throughout their whole life	1.47%	7.35%	29.4%	51.4%	10.29%	3.62	0.82	0.23
The work of nurses and doctors is equally important for successful treatment	13.23%	10.29%	54.41%	11.76%	10.29%	2.96	1.08	0.36
The nurse is independent in the implementation of healthcare	10.29%	22%	41.17%	20.58%	5.88%	2.90	1.03	0.36
The nurse is competent in conducting education and public health activities in health promotion	7.35%	4.41%	41.17%	45.58%	1.47%	3.29	0.88	0.27
Nurses should have a high level of education	0%	2.94%	22%	29.4%	47%	4.19	0.87	0.21
Apart from clinical knowledge, nurses should have a high level of communication skills	0%	2.94%	33.82%	42.64%	20.58%	3.81	0.79	0.21
Nurses are assistants to the doctors	4.41%	19.11%	25%	20.58%	16.17%	3.29	1.16	0.35
Nurses are assistants to the patients	10.29%	11.76%	54.41%	17.64%	5.88%	2.97	0.97	0.33
Nurses are poorly educated and have a low level of education	14.7%	35.29%	30.88%	16.17%	2.94%	2.57	1.02	0.40
Nurses are an important part of the medical team	2.94%	10.29%	25%	33.82%	27.94%	3.74	1.07	0.29

valuable in educating the population through the media, while 45.58% of the respondents completely or partially agreed with that statement. When it comes to the statement: *Nurses appear in the media more than doctors*, 72.05% of the respondents gave a negative answer (I completely disagree / I mostly disagree), while 8.82% partially agreed and 19.11% of the respondents were undecided. The majority of respondents (69.11%) completely or partially agreed

with the following statement: *Nurses are neglected in the media presentation compared to doctors*, while 13.23% of the respondents mostly disagreed and 17.64% were undecided. When it comes to the statement: *The experiences of nurses can be interesting content for the media*, 70.58% of the respondents disagreed or mostly disagreed, while 11.76% of the respondents partially agreed. A total of 17.64% of the respondents were undecided.



Table 2. Attitudes regarding the status of nurses in the society

Statements	Agreeing with the statement					M	SD	C
	(1 - I completely disagree, 2 - I mostly disagree, 3 - I neither agree nor disagree, 4 - I partially agree, 5 - I fully agree)							
	1	2	3	4	5			
Nurses should be involved in the development of healthcare policy	17.64%	22.05%	39.70%	13.23%	7.35%	2.71	1.13	0.42
Nursing as a profession is highly valued in the society	26.47%	35.29%	30.88%	7.35%	0%	2.19	0.91	0.42
Nursing is a profession intended for women	29.41%	41.17%	22.05%	7.35%	0%	2.07	0.90	0.43
Nurses are highly valued by the doctors	19.11%	36.76%	38.23%	5.88%	0%	2.31	0.84	0.37
All nurses want to become doctors	11.76%	45.58%	35.29%	2.94%	4.41%	2.43	0.90	0.37
Nurses are an invisible part of the society	13.23%	14.7%	39.7%	27.94%	4.41%	2.96	1.06	0.36
Nurses have good income based on their work	33.82%	42.64%	19.11%	2.94%	1.47%	1.96	0.88	0.45

Table 3. Attitudes about the need to represent the nursing profession in the media

Statements	Agreeing with the statement					M	SD	C
	(1 - I completely disagree, 2 - I mostly disagree, 3 - I neither agree nor disagree, 4 - I partially agree, 5 - I fully agree)							
	1	2	3	4	5			
Nurses should not be in the media because their place is exclusively with the patient	33.82%	39.7%	17.64%	4.41%	4.41%	2.06	1.04	0.51
Nurses are competent interlocutors in the media in the field of health and patient care	0%	4.41%	14.70%	55.88%	25%	4.01	0.76	0.19
Nurses need more education in media usage	14.70%	25%	23.52%	20.58%	16.17%	2.99	1.30	0.44
Nurses are under-represented in the media	32.35%	36.76%	27.94%	2.94%	0%	2.01	0.85	0.42
The knowledge of nurses is valuable in educating the population through the media	2.94%	1.47%	50%	39.7%	5.88%	3.44	0.76	0.22
Nurses appear in the media more than doctors	42.64%	29.41%	19.11%	8.82%	0%	1.94	0.98	0.51
Nurses are neglected in the media presentation compared to doctors	0%	13.23%	17.64%	41.17%	27.94%	3.84	0.98	0.26
The experiences of nurses can be interesting content for the media	36.76%	33.82%	17.64%	11.76%	0%	2.04	1.01	0.49

## Personal experience regarding the work of nurses

In the final part of the survey, the students were asked about their experience in the work of nurses (Table 4).

When it comes to the statement: *My experiences with the work of nurses during the use of healthcare (personally, family, friends) are positive*, 45.52% of the respondents answered positively (I completely agree / I partially agree), 14.7% of the respondents completely or mostly disagreed, and 38.23% of them were undecided. The statement: *Nurses are nice* had the following answers: 45.52% of the respondents agreed or mostly agreed, 41.17% were undecided, while 13.23% disagreed or mostly disagreed. When it comes to the statement: *Nurses are arrogant and harsh*, the majority (41.17%) of the respondents answered that they disagreed or mostly disagreed, while 36.76% were undecided and 22.05% agreed or completely agreed with that statement. The statement: *Nurses know how to communicate* had the following answers: 54.4% of the respondents agreed, 38.23% were undecided, and 7.35% mostly disagreed. The statement: *Nurses are interested in the patients' problems* had the following answers: 61.7% of the respondents agreed or completely agreed, 36.76% were undecided, while only one respondent (1.47%) mostly disagreed.

## Discussion

The starting point for every political option, economic effect, some other idea in culture, effect in sports, a certain professional group, and even nursing is to present oneself to the public in the best possible light, in the most beautiful edition, and to present one's idea and one's work as best as possible to the public. There is an attempt to achieve recognizability through the media, which also includes nursing. When it comes to nursing, the media often have to correct the distorted image that the public has about nurses. For such purpose, it is important to develop and maintain quality relations and cooperation with the media, through which one should present one's work and ideas to the general public

This research shows that there is still a significant part of ignorance of the nursing profession and the scope of work among students of the future journalism. An insight into the attitudes of journalism students about the competencies of nurses shows that journalism students are familiar with the physical and psychological demands of nurses' work and that nurses need calmness and mental stability, as well as a large amount of knowledge. Similar results were obtained from a study conducted in Croatia on the attitudes of non-healthcare students towards the nursing profession. In the assessment of the characteristics of nurses, a significant number of the students who took the survey agreed with the state-

Table 4. **Personal experience regarding the work of nurses**

Statements	Agreeing with the statement					M	SD	C
	(1 - I completely disagree, 2 - I mostly disagree, 3 - I neither agree nor disagree, 4 - I partially agree, 5 - I fully agree)							
	1	2	3	4	5			
My experiences with the work of nurses during the use of healthcare (personally, family, friends) are positive	1.47%	14.70%	38.23%	23.52%	22%	3.50	1.04	0.30
Nurses are nice	10.29%	2.94%	41.17%	35.29%	10.29%	3.32	1.05	0.32
Nurses are arrogant and harsh	10.29%	30.88%	36.76%	17.64%	4.41%	2.75	1.01	0.37
Nurses know how to communicate	0%	7.35%	38.23%	33.82%	20.58%	3.68	0.88	0.24
Nurses are interested in the patients' problems	0%	1.47%	36.76%	39.7%	22%	3.82	0.78	0.21

ment that the job of a nurse is stressful, demanding and requires a lot of knowledge (11). However, a significant share of students were not sure that nurses need to educate throughout their whole life, while 8.82% didn't believe that nurses should continuously educate. The progress of technology and science poses the need that nurses should educate continuously according to the Nursing Act (12). The research conducted on patients' attitudes towards nursing education showed a correlation between better knowledge of the scope of nurses' work and a more positive attitude towards their education (13).

Furthermore, about one third of journalism students believe that nurses can only work in hospitals. Nurses are employed at all levels of primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare, as well as in social institutions (retirement homes, centres for rehabilitation and education of persons with disabilities) and kindergartens (14). Furthermore, students' attitudes related to the nurses' contribution to the success of treatment are to a lesser extent affirmative. The majority of students were undecided, while some of them didn't believe that the nurses' work is as important as that of doctors for the success of treatment. Furthermore, a high percentage (41.17%) of students were undecided in their attitudes that the nurse is independent in the implementation of healthcare, while 32.29% of students disagreed or mostly disagreed that the nurse is independent in the implementation of healthcare. The given data shows ignorance of the nurses' work because nursing care is exclusively the field of work of nurses and is defined by their competencies (12). However, research has shown that the majority of journalism students think that nurses should have a high level of education. Despite this, one third of the respondents are undecided in their assessment of the current education of nurses, and a certain percentage of them (19.1%) agree with the statement that nurses are poorly educated and have a low level of education. In the research, it can be seen that a significant part of journalism students think that nurses are assistants to doctors, as well as to patients and that they are not an important part of the team. Similar data were obtained in a study conducted among non-healthcare students, where more than one half of them stated that a nurse is a doctor's assistant (11). Nurses are an integral part of the team, which is regulated by the Health Care Act (14) and the Nursing Act (12).

When it comes to the attitudes regarding the status of nurses in society, the majority of journalism students

do not think that nursing as a profession is highly valued in society and that it is an invisible part of society. These attitudes have a basis in reality because nurses are not in the group of 'prestigious' professions such as doctors, lawyers, etc. Furthermore, the majority of students (76.46%) think that nurses aren't adequately paid based on their work. The assumption is that these attitudes were influenced by the monitoring of nurses' speeches in public, which discussed salaries, and the media coverage of strikes and announcements of strikes. The attitudes of journalism students towards the representation of nurses in the media showed that the majority were open in terms of the importance of the media appearance of nurses. Particularly, 80.88% of the respondents agreed or completely agreed with the statement that nurses can be competent interlocutors in the media in the field of health and patient care and they don't think that nurses should be exclusively with the patient and that they should not be present in the media. However, at the same time, journalism students do not see a reason or are undecided regarding the claim that the experiences of nurses could be interesting content for the media. The reason for this attitude can be linked to ignorance of the complexity of the nurses' work, in which a significant proportion of journalism students consider the nursing profession as one which helps doctors, and therefore is not autonomous. But the experiences during the pandemic made visible to a greater extent the competence and autonomy of the nursing profession, which applies the most complex technology and treatment methods in its work and was the most common mediator in the communication between doctors and patients as well as families during isolation. But the fact is that nurses don't have experience in working with the media and that they feel incompetent (15) and afraid of the media (15). For that reason, it is important to educate them about communication in the media. Nurses, even though they are the most numerous in the healthcare system, are under-represented in the media, unless it is some kind of a sensation (16). Nurses can change the way the public perceives them through interventions related to media monitoring, communication and cooperation with the media. Nurses must promote a positive image in public through their own behaviour and activities. One of the ways is to communicate with the media. Effective strategies for this are the joint participation of nurses and people from the media at conferences. In addition, knowledge of the technical aspects of the media industry enables nurses to better perceive the media, i.e. understand their role,



function and purpose. A good communication with the media includes praising the media for presenting a realistic image of nursing (17). When it comes to the nurses' work which is related to the personal experience of journalism students, it is shown that about one half of the students have positive experiences, while a significant number have opposing views. For example, 45.52% of the respondents have positive experiences during healthcare usage in person, with family or friends, while a small share of respondents (14.7%) is dissatisfied. About one half of the respondents believe that nurses are kind, know how to communicate, and are interested in the patient's problems. About one third of the students are undecided in this assessment, while the remaining ones report negative experiences and evaluations. The data on indecision as well as negative answers about dealing with patients represent significant data, which shows the need for continuous evaluation and self-evaluation of the nurses' work, who must be ready for constant expertise in their work and dealing with patients. This information is important for improving the work with patients and their families, but it is also important in creating the image of the profession. Furthermore, this research showed that it is necessary to include more activities which would introduce future journalists to the nursing profession. This is possible in various ways, in which professional nursing associations or regulatory bodies would organize events, public forums and invite journalism students and journalists as guests. In addition, by actively participating in public events, projects and public health campaigns, nurses have the opportunity to show the general public the competence and breadth of their profession. An example of this is the recent corona crisis, which encouraged journalists to "peek" into the world of work of nurses and thus become familiar with their work and competencies, which resulted in the wider public becoming familiar with the work of this profession (10). It is in the interest of the nursing profession that the public is familiar with their work, because in that way, through the reputation of the profession, they will be able to act more effectively for the purpose of education and the common good. On the other hand, it is in the interest of the journalism to be informed and able to competently get to the core of every topic it talks about, to enrich the media world with different topics when it comes both to healthcare and the nursing profession and to contribute to the well-being and health literacy of the population through media reports.

## Study limitations

This research was conducted on a small number of respondents, that is, on one group of journalism students in Zagreb, which represents a limited sample. Nevertheless, the results of the research showed the key critical points which are significant for nurses in the activities of developing the image of their own profession, as well as the critical points of journalism students, i.e. future journalists who need better familiarization with the work of the most numerous profession in the health system to be able to more systematically and realistically cover this area and so that they are not limited in their work due to prejudices which exist due to ignorance of the nursing profession. For this reason, more intensive research and their results could be useful arguments for nursing and journalism professions in articulating activities in the field of education and informing the public about various areas which can be useful for the quality of life and health of the population.

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## Conclusion

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This research has revealed several key points which are significant for the public image of the nursing profession, in which journalists and the media play an important role. Journalism students have demonstrated a positive attitude towards the mental and physical demands of nursing, emphasizing the importance of composure, psychological stability, and extensive knowledge. The research indicated that there is a significant lack of understanding of the nursing profession and its scope of work among students of future journalism careers. The study also revealed that a significant portion of journalism students is unaware of the autonomy of the nursing profession in providing healthcare, its competence in conducting education and public health activities for promoting health, and the need for continuous education. Additionally, a large portion of journalism students believe that nurses are assistants to doctors and patients. Furthermore, most journalism students are undecided regarding the claim that nurses should be involved in developing healthcare policy and whether nursing as a profession is highly

respected in society. Most journalism students disagree with the notion that nursing is a profession meant for women and that nurses are highly valued by doctors, or that they are appropriately compensated in accordance with their work. Most journalism students believe that nurses are competent media interlocutors in the field of health and patient care, and that nurses are underrepresented in media coverage compared to doctors. However, a significant portion of respondents do not believe that nurses' experiences could be interesting content for the media. When it comes to the work of nurses linked to journalism students' personal experiences, about one half of the students have positive experiences, while a significant portion holds opposite views. Furthermore, this research showed that it is necessary to include more activities which would introduce future journalists to the nursing profession. This is possible in various ways, in which professional nursing associations or regulatory bodies would organize events, public forums and invite journalism students and journalists as guests. In addition, by actively participating in public events, projects and public health campaigns, nurses have the opportunity to show the general public the competence and breadth of their profession. An example of this is the recent corona crisis, which encouraged journalists to "peek" into the world of work of nurses and thus become familiar with their work and competencies, which resulted in the wider public becoming familiar with the work of this profession (10). It is in the interest of the nursing profession that the public is familiar with their work, because in that way, through the reputation of the profession, they will be able to act more effectively for the purpose of education and the common good. On the other hand, it is in the interest of journalism to be informed and able to competently get to the core of every topic it talks about, to enrich the media world with different topics when it comes both to healthcare and the nursing profession and to contribute to the well-being and health literacy of the population through media reports.

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## KAKO STUDENTI NOVINARSTVA PERCIPIRAJU PROFESIJU MEDICINSKIH SESTARA?

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### Sažetak

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**Uvod.** Mediji imaju važnu ulogu u percepciji sestrištva u javnosti. Novinari su uključeni u izvješćivanje o medicinskim sestrama u skladu sa svojim opažanjem i osobnom percepcijom, kao i poznavanjem područja koje prate i stvaraju informacije. Nedovoljna informiranost i poznavanje rada medicinskih sestara može utjecati na stavove koji se mogu reflektirati na dinamiku i način izvještavanja o medicinskim sestrama.

**Cilj.** Procijeniti stavove studenata novinarstva o profesiji medicinskih sestara i tehničara, kompetencijama i radu medicinskih sestara, statusu medicinskih sestara u društvu, potrebi zastupljenosti sestrišne profesije u medijima te osobnom iskustvu o radu medicinskih sestara.

**Metode.** Istraživanje je provedeno anonimnom anketom u kojoj je sudjelovalo 68 studenata preddiplomskog studija novinarstva (60 žena i osam muškaraca) na Fakultetu političkih znanosti Sveučilišta u Zagrebu.

**Rezultati.** Rezultati istraživanja pokazali su da znatan dio studenata novinarstva smatra da su medicinske sestre pomoćnice liječnicima te da nisu samostalne u obavljanju zdravstvene njege. No stavovi studenata novinarstva o zastupljenosti medicinskih sestara u medijima pokazali su u većini (80,88 %) otvorenost prema važnosti medijskog istupanja medicinskih sestara. Istodobno, studenti novinarstva ne vide razlog ili su neodlučni u tvrdnji da bi iskustva medicinskih sestara mogla biti interesantan sadržaj

za medije (82,82%). Kad je riječ o radu medicinskih sestara koji je povezan s osobnim iskustvom studenata novinarstva, pokazuje se da otprilike polovica studenata ima pozitivna iskustva (45,52%), dok znatan broj ima suprotna stajališta.

**Zaključak.** Istraživanje je pokazalo da postoji znatno nerazumijevanje sestrišne profesije i njezina djelokruga rada među studentima pred kojima su novinarska zanimanja.