

# Sestrinski glas kao pokretač promjene: važnost pisane riječi i istraživanja u razvoju profesije

## The Nursing Voice as a Driver of Change: The Importance of Writing and Research in the Development of the Profession

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### Abstract

The written word in nursing carries a meaning that extends far beyond documenting procedures or recording observations. It creates a space in which experience, reflection, and professional identity intersect. Through writing and publishing, nurses not only share knowledge but also shape the values of the profession, foster dialogue within the professional community, and contribute to a culture of accountability and meaningful change. In today's digital environment, nursing journals remain valuable platforms for professional exchange and provide intellectual and spiritual connection. They preserve the authenticity of nursing thought, link clinical practice with education and research, and give voice to those who form the backbone of the healthcare system. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance of writing and research as essential elements of professional development, identity, and autonomy in nursing. The paper emphasizes that research and authorship are not privileges reserved for the academic elite, but a right and an opportunity for every nurse who wishes to think critically, reflect, and share her experiences.

**Keywords:** professional identity, nursing communication, written word, research, reflection, education

**Short title:** The Nursing Voice and Professional Development

### Sažetak

Pisana riječ u sestrinstvu ima značenje koje nadilazi puko dokumentiranje postupaka ili bilježenje opažanja. Ona stvara prostor u kojem se isprepliću iskustvo, refleksija i profesionalni identitet. Pisanje i objavljivanjem radova, medicinske sestre ne dijele samo znanje nego i oblikuju vrijednosti struke, potiču dijalog unutar profesionalne zajednice te doprinose izgradnji kulture odgovornosti i smislenih promjena. U suvremenom digitalnom okruženju, sestriški časopisi ostaju dragocjene platforme za profesionalnu razmjenu te pružaju intelektualnu i duhovnu povezanost. Oni čuvaju autentičnost sestriškog promišljanja, povezuju kliničku praksu s obrazovanjem i istraživanjem te daju glas onima koji svakodnevno čine okosnicu zdravstvenog sustava. Svrha ovog rada jest istaknuti važnost pisane riječi i istraživanja kao ključnih elemenata profesionalnog razvoja, identiteta i autonomije u sestrinstvu. U radu se ističe da istraživanje i autorstvo nisu privilegiji rezervirani samo za akademski vrh, nego su pravo i prilika svake medicinske sestre koja želi kritički promišljati, reflektirati i dijeliti svoja iskustva.

**Ključne riječi:** profesionalni identitet, sestriška komunikacija, pisana riječ, istraživanje, refleksija, edukacija

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### Introduction

Writing is an act of mindful presence. It requires time, stillness, and the willingness to translate one's experience into a form that endures. In nursing, where life, suffering, and recovery intersect daily, the written word carries particular significance [1]. Through writing, nurses convey not only expertise but also humanity, understanding, and a deep awareness of the meaning and purpose of the profession. The history of nursing demonstrates how written texts have shaped the development and visibility of the discipline. Florence Nightingale, the author of the renowned *Notes on Nursing*, did not transform the world solely through her dedication at the patient's bedside, but also through the

power of her written reflections, which reshaped society's understanding of care and responsibility [2].

In contemporary Croatian nursing, the importance of writing and research is becoming increasingly evident. The growing number of professional and scientific publications reflects an expanding awareness among nurses of the need for their voices to be recognized not only in academic but also in public spheres, a trend confirmed by analyses showing a marked rise in nursing scholarship over recent decades [3]. Similar developments are noted in international literature, which emphasizes that the advancement of the nursing profession largely depends on the deve-

lopment of research competencies, high-quality scientific writing, and the strengthening of publication standards in nursing journals [4].

Studies also indicate that nurses' and nursing students' reading and publishing habits are strongly influenced by language accessibility, open access availability, and journal indexing in relevant databases, all of which affect the visibility of nursing science and the translation of knowledge into practice [5]. The upward trend in publishing activity demonstrates that Croatian nursing possesses intellectual potential, analytical capacity, and a willingness to engage in dialogue, thus actively contributing to professional and societal advancement. This trend is also recognized by *Sestrinski glasnik*, which for years has promoted professional reflection, scientific curiosity, and solidarity within the nursing community.

In an era of rapid communication and digital platforms, writing remains a vital means of shaping the identity of the profession. Through written expression, nursing affirms its presence in the public sphere and demonstrates its ability to articulate its own values and goals [6, 7]. Writing is no longer reserved solely for those engaged in scientific research. It has become a natural expression of professional maturity and responsibility [8]. Every nurse who documents observations, reflects on her practice, and analyzes the outcomes of her work contributes to the creation of knowledge which, once translated into words and shared with others, becomes a lasting legacy of the profession [9].

This paper aims to encourage nurses to recognize writing and research as essential components of professional practice and identity.

### Writing as a Path to Professional Maturation

Writing by a nurse is not merely an act of recording. It is a process of learning about oneself and others. Every text, regardless of its length or form, reflects thoughtful consideration of the meaning and quality of nursing care [9]. Writing directs attention, encourages analytical thinking, and creates space for inner reflection. When experience is transformed into words, it takes on a form that can inspire, caution, or motivate change.

In this sense, writing represents a form of professional development. It requires clarity of expression, the ability to connect facts, and the courage to present one's own perspective to others. At the moment a nurse shares her experience with colleagues, she moves from the role of observer to the role of creator [10]. Her words become both testimony and encouragement, as every written thought opens the possibility for dialogue [11].

Nursing journals play a key role in preserving this dialogue and in shaping professional identity. Among them are *Sestrinski glasnik*, *Croatian Nursing Journal*, *Journal of Applied Health Sciences*, *Plavi fokus*, *Nursing Evidence and Care* (NEC), and the *European Journal of Health Studies*, along with several other Croatian journals that follow the development of the nursing profession. International collaboration and publishing in foreign journals are equally important, as they promote global visibility of nursing topics, facilitate

the exchange of experiences, and connect Croatian nurses with the wider professional community. Such collaboration strengthens the recognition of Croatian nursing and reinforces its place in the European and global context.

These journals provide more than scientific and professional contributions. They create a space in which the spirit and values of the profession are acknowledged. They reflect the diversity of nursing experiences, from intensive care and anesthesiology to public health, community nursing, pediatrics, geriatrics, mental health, and nursing education. Writing and publishing, therefore, become a bridge connecting practice, knowledge, and identity, making every written word a part of the collective professional consciousness.

### The Culture of Publishing and the Meaning of a Professional Voice

The culture of publishing reflects the level of professional maturity and the degree of social recognition of a profession. In settings where nursing is strongly established, writing and publishing are not regarded as occasional activities but as a continuous part of professional identity [12]. Nurses in such environments regularly engage in preparing practice reports, evaluating clinical protocols, developing case presentations, and leading research projects. In doing so, they contribute to a dynamic learning culture in which knowledge does not remain confined within the boundaries of a single institution but is shared, questioned, and further developed [13]. Publishing thus becomes a tool for collective progress, a way for the experience of one to benefit many.

In Croatia, this culture is steadily expanding. An increasing number of authors are finding their place in professional and scientific publications, which demonstrates the growth of professional awareness and a sincere desire to contribute to the discipline. Nursing journals serve as key platforms that ensure the visibility of nursing knowledge while promoting interdisciplinary dialogue with other healthcare professions. Publishing within these journals confirms that Croatian nursing possesses intellectual, ethical, and research potential and that it can participate equally in international professional and scientific discussions. The growing connection with European and global journals further expands opportunities for knowledge exchange and strengthens the professional self-awareness of nurses.

Writing and publishing create a professional voice. This voice is not only informative but also transformative, as it shapes how the profession is perceived by the public and how it is understood within the healthcare system itself [14]. Through written expression, a nurse speaks not only about procedures and outcomes but also about the values nursing represents, the dignity of the patient, the importance of teamwork, and the centrality of ethics, empathy, and scientific curiosity [15]. Each published text becomes an expression of personal and collective responsibility and evidence that nursing is not only a practice, but also a way of thinking, a set of ideas, and a professional standpoint.

## Research as Part of Everyday Nursing Practice

Research in nursing does not need to begin in a laboratory. It begins in real clinical environments, on hospital wards, in primary care settings, in community nursing services, or in the classroom. Every encounter with a patient, every educational activity, every observation, or uncertainty can represent the starting point of a research question [16]. When a nurse decides to examine the effect of an educational intervention, compare approaches to patient communication, or analyse user satisfaction with a health service, she is already entering the research process [17].

Such studies, although small in scale, hold substantial value. They do not require complex methodologies but rather attentiveness, consistency, and a willingness to learn. It is within these simple yet thoughtful inquiries that the essence of nursing science emerges: understanding the person in their wholeness and recognizing how knowledge is translated into care and how experience leads to change. Writing about these inquiries opens a space for others who face similar challenges and seek confirmation that their observations carry meaning and worth.

Nursing journals play an important role in recognizing and supporting this type of research [18]. By publishing practice reports, microprojects, and qualitative analyses, they provide the foundations for the development of a research culture [19]. In doing so, they challenge the notion that research belongs only to the academic community, emphasizing instead that it is accessible to all who seek to understand, improve, and transform practice. Research is an integral part of the daily work of every nurse, and every written sentence grounded in real experience contributes to the scientific credibility and professional dignity of the discipline [20].

## Education, Mentorship, and the Writing Community

To sustain and advance a culture of writing, education is essential. Many nurses possess valuable experience, yet often lack the confidence and methodological knowledge required to develop a professional or scientific manuscript. Writing workshops, mentorship programs, and collaboration with journal editorial boards can serve as a bridge between an idea and its publication, between personal experience and publicly recognized contribution [21]. Through these processes, nursing gains the ability to articulate its knowledge and experience and becomes more visible within professional and academic settings.

Mentorship holds exceptional value in this process [22]. More experienced nurses who have already written and

published can offer invaluable support to junior colleagues in shaping their manuscripts, defining their objectives, and understanding research methodologies. Such collaboration fosters a sense of belonging, mutual respect, and shared responsibility [23]. Editorial boards and professional organizations, such as the Croatian Nurses Association, can further strengthen this process by organizing consultations, educational sessions, calls for papers, and workshops, thereby creating concrete opportunities for growth and professional connections.

Through these activities, a community of writers emerges, a space of mutual trust, dialogue, and inspiration where learning, sharing, and progress take place. Writing thus becomes more than a professional obligation, transforming into a means of expressing identity, reflecting on practice, and shaping the shared future of the profession [24]. Within such a community, every written sentence has value because it contributes to the collective memory of nursing and to its development as both a humanistic and scientific discipline. Writing becomes a form of legacy that connects generations, with each author becoming a guardian and builder of nursing thought.

## Conclusion

Writing is an act through which nursing affirms its maturity. It demonstrates that the profession lives not only in practice but also in thought, language, and dialogue. Every text that emerges from experience and reflection represents a step toward greater self-awareness and professional autonomy. Through writing, nurses not only share knowledge but also cultivate a community grounded in understanding, respect, and ethical responsibility.

The writing and publication of professional and scientific papers confirm that nursing possesses intellectual strength, critical insight, and the ability to generate new value. Every written word enhances the visibility of the profession, reinforces its identity, and encourages dialogue within the healthcare system and the broader society.

Writing teaches patience and humility, yet it also gives nurses the courage to advocate for what they believe is right. From the first idea to the published manuscript stretches a path of professional growth, along which every nurse leaves a mark through her words and ideas. That mark endures as evidence that nursing is not the quiet background of the healthcare system but its conscience, its thinking voice, and its agent of change.

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