

Growing New Generation of Nurse-Researchers

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Attending two recent international conferences in October 2009 made me take a new look at the new generation of nurse-researchers in Turkey. One of the conferences was held in Thessaloniki, Greece, at the First International Congress on Nursing Education, Research and Practice. The other one was the 12th National /International Congress in Sivas, Turkey. At both of these conferences, the podiums were flooded with new generation of nurse-researchers from Turkey. At the Thessaloniki conference, Turkish nurse-researchers presented 101, or 51% of the 197 oral presentations. Nurse-researchers from Europe, Asia and the Middle East presented the remaining 49%.

What was most remarkable about these Turkish nurse-researchers was that they did not come only from the accustomed well-known schools in big cities like İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir. On the contrary, they came from every corner of Turkey. The representative schools spanned from the Aegean coast (İzmir, Aydın, and Denizli), to the north of the Anatolia (Bolu, Düzce, and Sinop), to the south (Urfa), and the east of Anatolia (Ercincan, Kars and, Erzurum). Schools in the center of the country (Ankara, Kayseri, Tokat, Sivas, Eskişehir), were also well represented. Listening to the presentations of these researchers from such a wide geographic range gave me pause and recognize the high level of scientific activity of Turkish nurse-researchers. Such scientific activity may result from numerous factors; however, most of the credit must go to Turkish nurse-educators. It is obvious that they believe in the scientific potential of nursing as a profession and so have created the curricular and environmental ingredients necessary to achieve that potential.

This bodes well for the future of nursing profession in Turkey as a scientifically based profession. Bunkers (2006) stated that the professional nursing of the 21st century was a call to scholarship. The knowledge base of nursing science, Bunkers said, with its focus on the betterment of humankind, was composed of ideas concerning the person, health, environment, and the nurse. With these four concepts that define nursing is in mind, I wish to make some suggestions to Turkish nurse researchers on how to better respond to this call for scholarship in the 21st century.

In developing the future researchers, I suggest that Turkish nurses keep the focus of their research on the "person". I believe the focus on improving the quality of life of the "person" during health and illness, is one of the best means to produce research useful to the society here and abroad. Therefore, the teachers and the mentors of future nurse-researchers, and the researchers themselves, must exercise the discipline to focus research to the "person". This means before embarking on any inquiry researchers must ask themselves, the questions of "who will benefit from the findings?" or "is it about nursing

care?". Naturally, most investigations in health care research in some way contribute to patient care. However, some research may contribute very little to improving nursing care of the "person" who personifies the family and the communities. A case in point, for example, at the Sivas conference, there were 37 oral research presentations. Of this number, only three (less than 1%) were directly related to the "person", or the patient. These were:

- 1) The impact of music on anxiety during coronary angiography (İşkey & Doğan, 2009),
- 2) Infant death, and emotional response of parents before and after the loss (Yıldız & Cimete, 2009), and
- 3) The impact of an education program on the depression, and family life of mothers with handicapped children (Yıldırım, Hacıhasanoğlu & Karakurt, 2009).

The rest of the research was still focused disappointingly on the traditional favorite subject in nursing research, the nurse. Unfortunately, the focus of research presented at the Thessaloniki conference was strikingly similar.

It has been said that curiosity is the key to inquiry but inquiry without focus has limited benefits. In that sense, in developing the future generation of nurse-researchers in Turkey, the researchers themselves, and those who educate them, must first delineate "nursing research" in terms of its immediate beneficiaries. As I acknowledged above, nurse is one component of the metaparadigm of nursing. However, research endlessly focusing exclusively on the nurse does nothing but widen the gap between clinical care of the person and the nurse.

Therefore, in educating future Turkish nurse-researchers, I suggest increasing the focus on the person. Examples of larger concepts within this research focusing on person may be those investigations that aim to better understand the nature of human suffering, both physical and emotional such as scrutinizing the dimensions of suffering from the losses of limb, breast, lung, or burned faces. Although there are common themes, from the nursing perspective we are aware that physical and emotional suffering is unique to each person, the family and or the community. Clinicians, for example, bear witness to suffering of the persons everyday as they provide nursing care to patients at hospitals (surgery; cancer treatments), clinics (diagnostic tests), home (hospice care), or in the larger community (disaster care). I strongly believe that the Turkish nurse-researchers of the 21st century will contribute to the science of nursing at a greater level if they design research that aims to better understand the health and illness experience of the person and follow-up this understanding with empirically tested interventions to provide better nursing care. It is the quality of the "nursing care" that is ultimately going to make the person see the nurse and value nursing as a profession.

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