

Keeping Nursing Research Afloat

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Dear Editor,

As nurse educators, teaching duties are always a priority as the new semester begins, while research activities fall at the bottom of the list. On top of that, administrative duties can be pretty demanding. This compelled me to reflect and ask whether there is truly a problem of an imbalance in priority between teaching and research. Should research really take a backseat, particularly when teaching is the “core business” of educators? If yes, how can I still preserve quality teaching and concurrently keep my research profile afloat or sustainable? In order to address this, I would like to offer three salient questions and propose possible remedies.

To begin, how can nurse educators strike a balance between their research commitments and teaching responsibilities? Honest reflection and a practicable solution are required in response to this fundamental quest. It is true that educators are predominantly accountable for teaching; however, they are also anticipated to participate in research (1). Therefore, it is considered crucial for educators to set aside a designated period during the week to conduct research, which can be referred to as “Research Day,” irrespective of its nature or size. This may involve using social media platforms as an educational resource in the healthcare workforce (2). One example is using platform X to ensure one is informed about the most recent developments in their research interests. This is often helpful to keep track of developments and identify nursing domains requiring additional scrutiny. It is also immensely helpful to subscribe to email notifications for any health-related journal to receive notifications when new articles are published. Educators could also profit from checking out research-focused websites, such as ResearchGate, where scholars frequently publish their most recent discoveries, thereby

increasing the visibility of research topics of interest.

This is followed by the notion of how to make research education as engaging and enjoyable as possible. Teaching research to undergraduate nursing students can be challenging for nurse educators, as students may find the subject unappealing and monotonous (3). On further reflection, I find it rather intriguing to introduce research to junior students through alternative methods in addition to traditional lectures. For example, students are expected to conduct an “open surgery” on a research article of exceptional quality as part of this practical exercise. This objective is to familiarise students with the research process and concepts, as well as the structure and comprehension of the article’s fundamental contents. Furthermore, the research class is usually attended by several senior students who exchange their research experiences to motivate and inspire students to begin their research projects. Also, the faculty ethics committee’s representative has been invited to conduct a workshop on preparing research ethics applications. The primary objective of each of these is to increase students’ awareness of the pearls and pitfalls inherent in the research activity by incorporating the input of key stakeholders (4).

Lastly, the question arises: How can the quality and value of nursing research be further improved? One approach to accomplishing this is to foster a sense of ownership among research supervisors and students. One typical example is that students frequently need more ownership in their research. This situation is further exacerbated when supervisors, rather than students, are accountable for selecting the research topic. Based on my observations, the student-proposed topic is frequently redundant, deficient in significance, duplicated, or does not contribute to advancing nursing

knowledge. As a result, it is vital that students and supervisors make an effort to establish a shared understanding and harmonise their research interests. In order to foster research ownership, the research supervisor must participate in sufficient supervision sessions to ensure that they continue to offer continual guidance and support throughout the research project. In addition, disseminating research findings may cultivate a sense of ownership. For example, student confidence in their ability to manage research roles is increased when they present their findings as a scientific poster at the university's research event. Such a role also reinforces how they communicate with faculty, peers, and other stakeholders (5).

In summary, the sustainability of nursing research is of the highest priority. To promote sustainability, it is essential that educators are able to balance their teaching responsibilities and research activities, reflect on how they foster students' enthusiasm and appreciation for the research and prioritise research ownership. Additionally, implementing a strengthened strategy that encapsulates an array of partnerships among organisations, with a particular focus on academic institutions and healthcare organisations, might accelerate research progress and continue to keep nursing research afloat.

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