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Artistic and Scientific Components of Nursing: A Review and Evaluation of Evidence

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Introduction: The state of nursing is subjecting to contemporary changes with health care advancements. Nursing is identified as a profession with a broad knowledge base affirming scientific and artistic principles.

Objective: To develop a comprehensive understanding of scientific and artistic components of nursing with relevance to ongoing professional developments.

Methods: The literature was searched from 1977 to June 2021 based on a keyword combination in the databases: Web of Science, PubMed, Science Direct, and Google Scholar. The articles were categorized using a literature matrix and analyzed using content analysis.

Results: Forty-eight studies were identified and categorized into three themes; nursing as an art (35%), science (25%), and both science and art (40%). Nursing as science is supported with determinants; critical thinking, evidence-based practice, reflection, paradigm, academic and professional qualifications. Nursing as art is attested with compassion, effective communication, sympathy, empathy, and holistic care. Nursing presence and the therapeutic relationship are supported with both artistic and scientific components. Articles were subjected to decade-wise analysis in which a drastic change was observed in nursing researchers' perception. Before 1989 (8.34%), research development was viewed as a turning point in the nursing profession. From 1990 to 1999 (35.41%), mild criticism was developed based on increasing trends and interest towards research and theory neglecting patient care prioritization. The importance of counterbalance between research and patient care was highlighted from 2000 to 2009 (43.75%), the decade with the maximum available literature. From 2010 to 2021 (12.5%), criticism was observed to reach a settlement affirming the significance of research for nursing career development.

Conclusions: Findings suggest that nursing is a science with artistic components requiring both research and practice for professional developments. Research evidence highlights the importance of simultaneous application of treatment based on scientific data and patient-centered care which essentially requires an artistic approach.

Keywords: Nursing, Science, Art, Review