EUROPEAN NURSING RESEARCH FOUNDATION (ENRF) STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL RESEARCH PLAN 2021-2024

NURSING RESEARCH IN EUROPE: PROMOTING PEOPLE'S HEALTH AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS

Contents

EUROPEAN NURSING RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The European Nursing Research Foundation (ENRF) was established in 2016 *(Moniteur Belge 29 April 2016)* within the European Federation of Nursing Associations (EFN), as an extension of its activity for the promotion of nursing research.

Mission, vision, and values

Mission
The mission of the ENRF is a) To promote and encourage nursing research as a factor for professional excellence to benefit citizens' health in the EU and in Europe; b) To use nursing research to influence EU policies; and c) To promote evidence-based decision-making.

To fulfil this mission, the ENRF supports and informs clinical and social science research while promoting the training of early-stage researchers in Europe.

Vision
The ENRF's vision is reflected in three main goals: a) Contributing to the improvement of patient safety, the quality of social and healthcare services, and the development of healthcare policies and their implementation in the European Union and in Europe through nursing research; b) Promoting nursing research, supporting and facilitating the creation of a necessary, effective, competent, and motivated nursing workforce; c) Contributing to the sustainability of the healthcare and social ecosystem, including e-health services, to achieve better health outcomes.

Values
Nursing research activities should be based on the following values that guide ENRF researchers:

- Innovation: nursing research as an investment in knowledge to improve health outcomes.
- Quality: commitment and responsibility for quality nursing research that can generate social advances as improvements in the quality of life of the European population.
- Transparency: nursing research as a rigorous, transparent, as well as high-quality activity.
- Humanism: nursing research as a service to society, respecting the freedom and dignity of individuals and their environment.
- Transfer of knowledge: nursing research as a tool to apply knowledge and meet the population's health needs.

- Orientation towards users and professionals: nursing research focused on the individual/user and on professionals.

ENRF strategic goals

The ENRF's strategic goals are:

a) Promoting the quality of nursing research.
b) Promoting education and training programmes that can be developed in the member states as a result of research projects.
c) Obtaining funds and financial aid for research projects, human resources, and infrastructures.
d) Establishing partnerships with Universities, institutions, and public or private organisations.
e) Disseminating science, transferring the results of research projects to society.
f) Collaborating with national and international research centres providing training opportunities.
g) Guaranteeing the principle of lawfulness, as well as the principles of an ethical, professional conduct in research and knowledge management.

To achieve these strategic goals, which combines the SOLP from EFN and SORP from ENRF, the Foundation's research capacity must be developed by creating a network of research collaborating centres in alliance with the EFN member associations, in order to develop synergies and increase the ability to lobby for the design of health policies, policy making, and the allocation of EU funds to projects, as well as regarding the EU H2020 research agenda and beyond.

ENRF PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS

The ENRF Strategic and Operational Research Plan (SORP) presented here is linked to the EFN Strategic and Operational Lobby Plan 2021-2027 (SOLP). Thus, on the basis of the SOLP and the current health research priorities in the European Union, four areas of scientific interest are defined: a) Positive environments for professional nursing practice; b) Improvement of health outcomes in chronic processes, c) Education and training of nurses in Europe – Development APN in the EU; and d) Digitalisation of the Healthcare ecosystem with a specific focus on AI.

In order to achieve these actions, it is key to prioritise them in accordance with potential priorities as established by the EFN General Assembly.

a) Positive practice environments for professional nursing

The establishment of positive environments for professional practice in healthcare is very important to guarantee patient safety and the wellbeing of nurses, and thus achieve workplaces that promote quality healthcare.

According to the Position Statement on "Positive practice environments for healthcare professionals" of the World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA), of which the International Council of Nurses (ICN) is a member, positive practice environments are characterised by: "Occupational health, safety and wellness policies that address workplace hazards, discrimination, physical and psychological violence and issues pertaining to personal security; Fair and manageable workloads and job demands/stress; An organisational climate reflective of effective management and leadership practices, good peer support, worker participation in decision-making, shared values; Work schedules and workloads that permit healthy work-life balance; Equal opportunities and treatment; Opportunities for professional development and career advancement; Professional identity, autonomy and control over practice; Job security; Decent pay and benefits; Safe staffing levels; Support, supervision and mentorship; Open communication and transparency; Recognition programmes; and Access to adequate equipment, supplies and support staff".[1]

Nurses, as healthcare professionals, are often exposed to unhealthy work environments. For this reason, it is crucial to have work environments that promote the provision of quality nursing care, supporting positive outcomes for patients and the wellbeing of each nurse, as well as contributing to the strengthening of the workforce.

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[1] Available at: http://www.whpa.org/PPE_General_information_Sp.pdf

In order to contribute to positive practice environments for nursing professionals in Europe, the ENRF will, as a priority, support projects seeking to address the following areas:

- Establishing the relationship between nurse staffing and healthcare quality and efficiency;

- Developing innovative and sustainable nursing strategies to promote nurses' safety in the workplace (including biosafety);

- Implementing and assessing the impact of advanced and new nursing roles on the European social and healthcare environment.

b) Improvement of health outcomes in chronic processes

Clinical and pharmacological developments, greater access to healthcare services, and lifestyle changes have led to a significant increase in life expectancy over the last decades in Europe. As a result, the number of individuals with chronic diseases increases, with most people with long term conditions having multiple morbidities. Thus, the response to chronic diseases (mainly heart problems, cancer, and dementia, as these are the most prevalent) is currently one of the main healthcare challenges for the European Union. Chronic diseases have a multiple impact: they constitute a significant limitation on the quality of life, productivity, and functionality of the individuals who have them; a heavy burden in terms of morbidity and mortality; and a driver that increases healthcare and social costs, compromising the sustainability of European healthcare systems.

Given the complexity of the health processes and their inherent challenges, it is crucial to develop nursing care and intervention plans that contribute to promote the quality of life of chronic patients, as well as to strengthen their health literacy.

In order to contribute to the challenge of chronic diseases in Europe, the ENRF will, as a priority, support projects in the following areas:

- Preventing and monitoring disease symptoms in various populations and environments, on a lifelong basis;

- Developing, implementing, and assessing innovative interventions (including technologies and devices) to contribute to the understanding, monitoring, health promotion, and health literacy of people with long term conditions and their families;

- Examining the effects of nursing-led interventions to promote health and wellbeing;

- Supporting nursing care coordination to improve care;

- Designing strategies to optimise and improve the transition of people with long term conditions to integrated care, coordinated between care levels.

The ENRF will cooperate closely with EFN to understand the research evidence the EFN needs to underpin EFN political lobby objectives, and as such prioritise ENRF research activities, and generate knowledge and evidence to support the work of EFN.

c) Education and training of nurses in Europe – Development APN

Given the complexity of the healthcare processes and their inherent challenges, the strengthening of nursing education is crucial. In addition to the need to provide equivalent nursing training across EU countries, the workforce must have nursing scientists and research competences that guarantee the future of nursing research to ensure the highest quality healthcare possible.

To this end, the ENRF seeks to improve educational and research capabilities, namely in the development of Advanced Practice Nursing (APN), through supporting projects that seek to:

- Support the work of the EFN WG on APN;
- Collect & analyse existing evidence on APN Competencies;
- Analyse existing curricula in EU Member States & formulate possibilities for an EU APN Curricula;
- Reflect on how to measure APN competencies - Skill needs assessment - skill-mix demanded - coordination of care;
- Impact assessment (health outcomes/economic).

d) Digitalisation of the Healthcare ecosystem with a specific focus on AI.

In Europe, technological health innovation, with advances in data science, devices, and software, plays a key role in the advance of healthcare, as well as in nursing science. The establishment of new nursing interventions incorporating technological advances to benefit the healthy and ill population can promote personalised care and real-time information to patients, families, nurses, and other healthcare professionals. For this reason, the ENRF supports research programmes that, by means of technology and innovation, promote the health of the population, prevent disease, and improve clinical nursing practice.

To this end, the ENRF will support projects in the following areas:

- Designing and assessing technological nursing interventions in collaboration with other professionals (such as engineers and designers) to promote the health and wellbeing of the European population;

- Identifying the key factors in innovative interventions for clinical nursing decision-making;

- Identifying and supporting Big Data as a tool to obtain data that help to improve care by nursing professionals;

- Foster collaboration with relevant EU stakeholders and researchers to analyse the common eSkills for the appropriate use of eHealth services, including AI;

- Analyse how nursing research and the nursing profession can successfully integrate innovative solutions and AI into their discipline to offer interoperable and cost-effective solutions to healthcare ecosystems to boost personalised healthcare.

- Analyse how to better adapt digitalisation to the nursing workforce, making sure that both nurse researchers and nurse practitioners are aiming at the same way forward.