

WORLD NURSING FORUM
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Occupational prestige of nursing in Lithuania

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Background: Nurses play a vital role in facing public health challenges, delivering high quality health services, strengthening health systems on local and global scales.

Problem: The quality of nursing and patient safety are affected by insufficient number of nurses, lack of new job positions, high workloads, low salaries, standardised work, which hinders experience and education, questionable health and safety, and low occupational prestige of nursing. Lithuania is named as one of the EU countries, where a number of nurses is decreasing. It is projected to further reduce, as the average age of nurses is 45 years, and the profession is not popular among high school graduates. Even though graduates choose the nursing specialty for access to employment, nursing care remains low in society. Favourable public opinion is paramount in increasing nursing's recognition, strengthening the professional identity of nurses and motivating them to perform to higher standards, as well as encouraging younger generation to choose this profession

Aim: The aim of this research was to determine how the society perceives nursing in terms of prestige.

Methods: An anonymous questionnaire survey was conducted at Lithuanian university, republic and regional level hospitals as well at universities educating healthcare students in January, February and May 2018. The study enrolled 829 participant (nurses, physicians, patients, and students) who filled in the questionnaire of Nurse image, using 5 points Likert scale. SPSS 21.0 Statistical Package was used for data analysis.

Results: The society perceives the social prestige of nurse profession as average. It is strongly believed that nursing is hard work (range 4.48), an admirable profession (range 4.46), a highly qualified profession (range 4.50), and a profession with great responsibilities (range 4.66). It is agreed that nursing is a calling (range 4.22). Participants do not agree with the statement, that nursing does not require much education (range 2.09), however, they strongly agree that nursing is poorly paid (range 4.74).

Nursing is more positively perceived by younger nurses and health care students. They are more likely to support the statement, that nurses require much education, nursing is a highly qualified profession (range 4.50), and a profession with great responsibilities. In contrast, older nurses are likely to doubt the need for education and are more likely to support the statement that nursing requires physical work.

Conclusions:

- Nursing is more positively perceived by younger respondents. They are more aware of the profession's importance, required competence and education, responsibilities, and are more likely to deem that nursing is prestigious. These factors influence the professionalism of nurses and the public opinion about their profession.
- Older respondents, however, tend to think that nursing does not require much education and are more likely to view nursing as manual, standardised work.
- It was determined that most nursing students as well as nurses themselves think they are assistants to doctors, rather than specialists, who work independently and can assume responsibility.

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Biography

Andzelika Zavackiene is an Academic Reputation Investigator, Partner of Klaipeda University Faculty of Health Sciences in QS Global Employee Survey at QS World University Rankings. She is an Experts' team member as academic/ social partner in International Evaluation assessment project at study programmes. She has completed Nursing bachelor's degree and Advanced Practice Nursing master's degree in Lithuania. Experienced Lecturer with a demonstrated history of working in the hospital & health care industry. She is skilled in Non-profit Organizations, Coaching, Medical Devices, Team Building and Public Speaking. She was awarded Dr. J. Ciplijauskas nobel prize from Vydunas Youth Fund in Chicago, USA for justifying the honorable nurse's name.

Her professional route guided her to Canada where she spent numerous years and developed an experience going from intensive care to community health in remote areas and teaching nursing in Montreal before coming back to France to teach nursing sciences.

Interested in Evidence Based Practice, she aims at developing her own knowledge and transmit her passion for nursing research to second-year nursing program students where she teaches now in Toulouse, France.

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