

Forensic nursing from the perspective of environmental theory

Enfermería forense desde la perspectiva de la teoría ambiental

Enfermagem forense sob a ótica da teoria ambientalista

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Abstract

The aim was to reflect on forensic nursing from the perspective of Florence Nightingale's environmentalist theory. This is a reflective study, descriptive and qualitatively critical analysis. Sexual violence is an action to obtain sex without consent, which can cause physical and psychological problems, therefore, it is considered a public health problem, occurring in both sexes, but the highest prevalence is in females. The majority seek help from health professionals, which is why forensic nursing is a specialty that provides quality care, according to the victim's needs. From this perspective, the great influence of environmentalist theory on forensic nursing is emphasized, with the environment interfering in the individual's health, both in the occurrence of crimes, but also in assistance with a welcoming environment, with individualized and comprehensive care. It is concluded that the environment goes much further than an airy place to better care for the victim, but rather the set of all factors that make it welcoming and comfortable for this patient, including a trained professional, with the necessary knowledge, to offer the best, safest, most individualized assistance that the victim needs.

Descriptors: Forensic Nursing; Sexual Violence; Women; Violence Against Women; Nursing Theories.

Resumén

El objetivo fue reflexionar sobre la enfermería forense desde la perspectiva de la teoría ambientalista de Florence Nightingale. Se trata de un estudio reflexivo, de carácter descriptivo y de análisis cualitativamente crítico. La violencia sexual es una acción para obtener relaciones sexuales sin consentimiento, lo que puede causar problemas físicos y psicológicos, por lo que se considera un problema de salud pública, presentándose en ambos sexos, pero la mayor prevalencia es en el sexo femenino. La mayoría busca ayuda de profesionales de la salud, por lo que la enfermería forense es una especialidad que brinda una atención de calidad, acorde a las necesidades de la víctima. Desde esta perspectiva, se destaca la gran influencia de la teoría ambientalista en la enfermería forense, interfiriendo el ambiente en la salud del individuo, tanto en la ocurrencia de delitos, como también en la asistencia con un ambiente acogedor, con atención individualizada e integral. Se concluye que el ambiente va mucho más allá que un lugar aireado para atender mejor a la víctima, sino el conjunto de todos los factores que lo hacen acogedor y comfortable para este paciente, incluido un profesional capacitado, con los conocimientos necesarios, para ofrecerle la mejor, más segura y más individualizada asistencia que la víctima necesita.

Descriptoros: Enfermería Forense; Violencia Sexual; Mujeres; Violencia Contra las Mujeres; Teorías de Enfermería.

Resumo

Objetivou-se refletir sobre a enfermagem forense sob a ótica da teoria ambientalista de Florence Nightingale. Trata-se de um estudo reflexivo, de caráter descritivo e análise crítica de forma qualitativa. A violência sexual é uma ação para obter sexo sem consentimento, podendo causar problemas físicos e psicológicos, desta forma, é considerado um problema de saúde pública, acontecendo em ambos os sexos, mas a maior prevalência é no gênero feminino. A maioria procura ajuda de profissionais da saúde, por isto, a enfermagem forense é uma especialidade que concede um atendimento de qualidade, de acordo com a necessidade da vítima. Sob esta perspectiva, enfatiza-se a grande influência da teoria ambientalista na enfermagem forense, tendo o ambiente como interferência na saúde do indivíduo, tanto no ocorrido dos crimes, mas também na assistência com um ambiente acolhedor, de cuidados individualizados e integrais. Conclui-se que o ambiente vai muito mais além do que um local arejado para melhor atendimento da vítima, mas sim o conjunto de todos os fatores que tornam-o acolhedor e confortável para esta paciente, incluindo um profissional capacitado, com os devidos conhecimentos, para ofertar a melhor assistência, a mais segura, a mais individualizada, a que a vítima esteja precisando.

Descriptoros: Enfermagem Forense; Violência Sexual; Mulheres; Violência Contra a Mulher; Teorias de Enfermagem.



Introduction

Violence against women is still considered an unnoticed perspective, therefore, society does not have much knowledge about it and professionals do not provide adequate and effective assistance to these victims¹.

The nurse, with his fundamental role in this care, is, in most cases, limited in his care, and one of his biggest problems is the lack of notifications by professionals. Therefore, the Forensic Nursing specialization arises, where the professional is qualified to assist this victim, being able to collect forensic traces and collaborate in criminal investigations. Nurses deal with patients who are victims of violence and perpetrators, using their scientific nursing knowledge with the alignment of forensic sciences. From this perspective, it covers the essential role in the social, psychological, and humanistic care of individuals vulnerable to violence and, not exclusively, clinical/technical, scientific, and legal procedures^{2,3}.

Forensic Nursing focuses on the themes of violence both in assessment and assistance, in prevention and in promoting the health of the individual, in its aspects of medico-legal care of violence and preventive education³.

Given the above, the objective was to reflect on forensic nursing from the perspective of Florence Nightingale's environmentalist theory.

Methodology

This is a reflection study, descriptive with critical analysis in a qualitative way. A search was carried out in the Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Sciences and Health (LILACS) and Google Scholar databases with the Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS): "Forensic Nursing" and "Violence Against Women" with the help of the Boolean operator "AND".

To select the material to compose this study, eligibility criteria were listed. As inclusion criteria: scientific studies published in scientific article format, published between 2020 and 2022, in Portuguese, and indexed in the selected databases. The exclusion criteria were studies published and made available in duplicate in the indexing databases, as well as those that were not available in full-text format and free of charge. The search and selection of studies took place in May 2022.

In total, nine scientific articles, four books, and four institutional and government documents were selected to support this critical-reflective research.

Results and Discussion

History of Forensic Nursing

It is determined that Forensic Nursing with the forensic aspects that are linked to health care, together with scientific investigation into death and trauma treatment of victims and aggressors⁴.

As for authors⁵, forensic science deals with any subject related to the law before the Court of Justice, in which the term forensic took on greater specificity when it was included in areas of professional activity related to health, such as nursing, medicine, and dentistry.

The International Association of Forensic Nursing

(IAFN), says that Forensic Nursing is the realization of the science of Nursing for society and justice, together with its forensic knowledge of health care, the biopsychosocial of the professional within the investigation of crimes, trauma of victims and aggressors, sexual and emotional violence^{5,6}.

During the 1970s, Forensic Nursing had recognition of its importance for other professionals, such as psychiatrists, and psychologists, and with its advancement, other roles were added to the trauma-related areas of responsibility. The standards and principles of a forensic nursing professional were recognized as a new critical role in healthcare in 1990, taking a new perspective on the holistic approach to forensic nursing care, with the definition of body, mind, spirit, and care. to the patient in clinical or community institutions⁷.

The International Association of Forensic Nursing, in 2010, states that there are several assignments where forensic nurse can perform their activities, which are: interpersonal violence, death investigation, catastrophes, forensic mental health, forensic nursing consultancy, public health and safety, Criminal nursing, and emergency/trauma services⁶.

Around 1975, Forensic Nursing had its origins in Alberta Canada, in which nurses served as investigators for medical examiners in the field of death investigation, nurses were valued for their sensitivity in dealing with family members and for their ability to replace the doctor when necessary. Due to the advancement of Forensic Nursing, death investigation was combined to include people who survived crimes of violence, as well as the actors in the criminal acts. It was recognized as a specialty in 1992 by the International Association of Forensic Nursing, which was founded by 72 nurses, who dedicated themselves to forensic examinations of victims of sexual abuse and rape^{5,8}.

Thus, nurses took on the care of victims of sexual violence, and then, the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) emerged, which is a subspecialty of Forensic Nursing, where the professional can provide care to this victim².

"The SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) nurse, with the skills for forensic interview, physical examination and collection of traces, is the intersection between health and justice, objectively using parts of the concepts that make up the forensic nursing specialty²".

The SANE program is highly effective, such as in the psychological recovery of patients, in the institution of early treatment, and the complete recording of forensic remains. In the USA, the results of sexual assault exams carried out by SANE can assist in the process of determining the acquittal or conviction of a suspect due to better collection of traces. Also in the United States, there are other subspecialties, such as Legal Nurse Consultant (LNC) and Nurse Coroner (NC), which may or may not be performed by forensic nurses. LNC is a Nursing consultancy, which works on cases involving medical issues and is made up of nurses and lawyers. The Nurse Coroner, on the other hand, is the forensic nurse, who assists in the cause of death, being able to help the police at the crime scene and identify the victims^{2,9}.



Furthermore, other specialties in Forensic Nursing, which is Clinical Forensic Nursing, where the treatment of victims of crimes takes place from trauma to trial. Thus, they also have Correctional Forensic Nursing, where they work in secure locations, providing treatment, rehabilitation, and health promotion to clients who have been convicted of crimes committed. The field of Forensic Nursing is very broad, having several specializations. Other specialties in which the professional can practice are legal consultant nurse, forensic death investigator nurse, sexual violence examiner nurse, and nurse in general practice⁸.

It is important to include disciplines focused on forensic sciences in the Nursing curriculum, at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as this way Forensic Nursing becomes essential, contributing to research in the area, so that it has more visibility for clinicians and those who practice in the field. your space with the law that has already been regulated. During the first decade of the 21st century, Forensic Nursing began in Brazil, through the teaching staff of the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná (PUC-PR), which involved the university and other higher education institutions in the state of Paraná, for professional training and qualification project on Forensic Nursing^{7,10}.

This specialty is still somewhat explored in Nursing in Brazil, and there is a great need to talk about it in universities, it is a way for Nursing to advance and implement this specialty for qualified care of the population, be it social, cultural, economic, and political. Virginia Lynch's theory touches on the evolution and growth of Forensic Nursing, which is based on theoretical concepts focused on sociocultural, legislative, behavioral, and victim protection issues. This shows positive points in the reformulation of pedagogical projects in Nursing courses, collaborating with the study in which they present satisfactory results for those who receive information and training³.

Forensic Nursing is recognized by the Federal Nursing Council (COFEN), under Resolution No. 389/11, of August 18, 2011. Currently, Resolution No. 581, of July 11, 2018, of the COFEN, which is in force, in which it is cited and approved as a Nursing specialty, among the 48 specified in the resolution under the title of Forensic Nursing¹¹. According to the Federal Nursing Council¹², the Professional Practice Law No. 7,498/1986 in its Article 11, the activities are exclusive to the Nurse, where the Nurse's qualification will be based on technical and scientific criteria. Following the rights of nursing professionals, the following articles can be observed:

"Art. 1 A Forensic Nurse is a bachelor's degree in Nursing, holder of the lato or stricto sensu specialization title in Forensic Nursing issued by a Higher Education Institution (HEI) recognized by the MEC, or granted by Societies, Associations, or Colleges of Specialists, registered within the scope of the Cofen System/Regional Councils, by COFEN Resolution No. 389/2011. Art. 2 The activities covered by this resolution are exclusive to the Nurse, within the scope of Nursing¹²".

The Nursing professional knows the health, social, and legal system, rich in knowledge of forensic sciences and public health, and can contribute to the Judiciary, police agents, and governmental and social entities, in the

interpretation of forensic injuries. Remembering that Forensic Nursing was only established in Brazil in 2012 by nurses from Sergipe, with the help of Forensic Nurse Albino Gomes, which was created due to the high rate of violence and a need to qualify nursing professionals^{12,13}.

Forensic nurses in Brazil can identify violence scenarios, establish contextualized diagnoses, carry out legally supported preventive and therapeutic measures, and evaluate results in the field of trauma and violence. In addition to carrying out the possibility of the professional acting in judicial expert activities is also mentioned, by the provisions of Articles 156 ss. of Law No. 13,105/2015 and Articles 275 et seq.; of Decree-Law No. 3,689/1941^{9,12}.

It is worth mentioning that for the nurse to be a specialist in the area of expertise in Brazil, articulation with the legislative power is essential for the creation of laws that establish the position of the forensic nurse as a criminal expert, and only in the state of Paraná did the area of Nursing for the criminal expert exam⁹.

In 2015, in Brazil, the Forensic Nurse Examiner was held, which is a course that was taught by Virginia Lynch, Albino Gomes, and Jamie Ferrel and was held in the city of Aracaju – SE, to definitively insert Nursing Forensics in Brazil. There is also the Brazilian Forensic Nursing Association, which is an entity legally recognized by COFEN through Opinion No. 31/2015, to help people who are part of a panorama of aggression in Brazil and together with COFEN it regulates the field of activity of Forensic Nursing in the country¹³.

Therefore, the Nursing professional faces social and behavioral problems in their area of service, in particular victims and aggressors. Your role in clinical practice can bring positive transformations in health services, providing quality care for this patient. For this to occur, professionals trained in Forensic Nursing must be trained to meet the current and future needs of this patient³.

Crime and reception

Given what forensic nursing is and its history, it is possible to understand the importance of the environment, which, according to Florence Nightingale, in her Environmentalist Theory, is responsible for influencing an individual's health-disease process, enabling benefits for their well-being. -being, quality of life and even contributing to the process of finitude¹⁴.

Concerning the environment of crimes of violence against women, it is inferred that they occur in workplaces, public places, in leisure spaces, however, the most frequent occurrence is within the victim's own home, which is characterized by an additional factor because it was a trauma that occurred in their space, where it was the place for the victim to feel safest and most comfortable. And, given the trans-pandemic context, in which the Brazilian and global population had to deal with the realities of quarantine, distancing, and even social isolation, these cases were aggravated, with the home being a stage for fears, silence, pain, and suffering¹⁵.

When looking for a health unit, this battered, traumatized, and extremely vulnerable woman needs



Final Considerations

Sexual violence is a public health problem, causing physical and psychological harm, with its greatest target being women. In which it occurs across different age and socioeconomic groups, being one of the main causes of morbidity and mortality. As a result, many of these victims seek help from the health service, and most of the time their first contact is with a Nursing professional, therefore, it is important to train these professionals to provide quality care, for this reason, if need to explore the topic.

Based on the methodology used and the data analysis carried out in this study, it showed the lack of research on the topic of Forensic Nursing in Brazil and the low qualification of Nursing professionals who are on the front line in caring for victims of sexual violence, this is the limitation of the study. Therefore, this theme is justification and acceptable for this theme. When receiving and welcoming a woman victim of violence, the nurse needs to be qualified enough to have promptness, insight, respect, and empathy, otherwise, the patient will feel cornered, and uncomfortable and will not return to the health service, which is a serious decisive for this woman's future.

It is concluded that the environment goes much further than an airy place to better care for the victim, but rather the set of all factors that make it welcoming and comfortable for this patient, including a trained professional, with the necessary knowledge, to offer the best, safest, most individualized assistance that the victim needs.

It is hoped that this study will arouse the interest of nurses in training themselves in caring for these victims and other cases of violence, as, unfortunately, attacks do not reduce their number, on the contrary. And in physical and mental assistance, nurses need to provide health education, which is a great start towards changing the current statistics of femicide.

reception, a peaceful environment, an airy and bright environment, an environment in which she feels as calm as possible. In terms of environment, there is also the professional nurse's attitude towards caring for this victim, as the environment is not just the physical environment, the structure itself goes much further. The health environment intended to receive this victim needs to be a cozy environment, without judgment, without mysterious and confused looks, without shouting and fighting, with a trained professional qualified to work in reception to begin assistance to this woman, who needs help so much.

It is added that the woman after the attack, who seeks a health unit, will not tell exactly what happened in the first moment, therefore, the forensic nurse must have the technical-scientific knowledge to identify the signs and welcome the victim of such so that she feels safe enough to talk about what happened and, thus, the attending professional provides her assistance, as well as informing her about the importance of reporting the aggressor, emphasizing that that does not need to be her reality, even in cases of financial dependence or having children with the aggressor, and refer to other professionals so that the patient can receive complete assistance from the interdisciplinary team¹⁶.

It appears that Florence Nightingale left a legacy of good practices and advanced practices in nursing and that in the Environmentalist Theory, she taught us how to provide individualized assistance and the importance of this for the patient, considering that a "healthy environment" and that stimulates the patient's well-being is not a cake recipe in its entirety. In this way, the forensic nurse needs to have the acumen to diagnose the risk factors, the reality, the aspects that bother, and those that comfort the patient to provide safe assistance¹⁷.

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