

Editorial

Celebrating Scientific Knowledge in Nursing

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Introduction

On May 12, we once again celebrate Nurses worldwide, who are the most valuable resource of any healthcare institution and, by far, one of a nation's most valuable assets. We celebrate them because their daily work is marked by empathy, compassion, and patience, but above all, by scientific knowledge. That is why, to mark this day, we are examining the relevance of a clinical reasoning framework developed for nursing.

An Expanded Classification

For more than five decades, NANDA® International (effective April 2026), INKA (International Nursing Knowledge Association), has advanced the science of nursing by defining and refining the language that represents nurses' clinical judgments. NANDA 360 emerged from the challenges that nurses and healthcare leaders have raised for decades. Our goal has always been clear: to integrate all aspects of the nursing process into a patient-centered, evidence-based model of care grounded in the nurse-patient relationship. Fragmented systems, administrative burdens, and barriers to access revealed a simple truth: nurses needed a unified, evidence-based solution that would strengthen reasoning, support individualized care, and demonstrate the comprehensive value of nursing. With the development of NANDA 360, we are taking the next step in this evolution: supporting not only what nurses diagnose, but also how they reason. At the heart of this initiative is the NANDA 360 Clinical Reasoning Framework, designed for use in education, but also for nurses involved in patient care. This framework is designed to support nursing students and practicing professionals in their transition from data collection to pattern recognition, with the aim of enhancing diagnostic accuracy, which in turn supports an integrated, patient-centered, and assessment-based care plan.

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NANDA 360 Clinical Reasoning Framework

Moving from assessment to diagnosis is an evidence-based cycle that combines technical skills, conceptual knowledge, and collaboration with the patient. Nurses collect data, interpret it through clinical reasoning, and use standardized nursing diagnostic concepts to represent their judgments. The data collected is raw data until nurses apply their conceptual knowledge to interpret it. Data analysis transforms measurements and observations into meaningful information (for example, converting height and weight into BMI and interpreting a BMI of 18.4 as underweight).

This process is supported by:

- Structured assessment frameworks.
- Standardized definitions, etiologies, and manifestations of nursing diagnoses.
- Reliable and valid clinical instruments (when available).
- Continuous reassessment and refinement.

As we interact with nurses around the world, we consistently hear similar concerns. Many struggle to teach and apply clinical and diagnostic reasoning in a consistent manner. Others report inaccurate or overly simplistic use of nursing diagnoses in electronic health records, including the inappropriate linking of nursing diagnoses directly to medical diagnoses. Nurses tell us they struggle to move from data collection to diagnosis—a problem that is often amplified rather than simplified in the electronic health record, due to disconnected screens and duplicate documentation. Students find diagnostic reasoning confusing and note that “every professor teaches it differently”; many feel that diagnostic reasoning and clinical decision-making are “tedious tasks” that are unnecessary for daily patient care.

The NANDA 360 Clinical Reasoning Framework was developed in response to these realities. Its goal is to help nurses make the most of the valuable data they collect. The framework builds on the information routinely documented in medical records, including the clinical history, admission diagnoses, and relevant medical history. It also incorporates the patient’s context, such as situational constraints (e.g., perioperative or palliative care), the focus of care (individual, family, or community), and age- or development-related considerations, and enables rapid identification of critical diagnoses that must be addressed before completing a full assessment. Rather than replacing institutional assessment tools, the framework works alongside standard practice and guides the student or nurse in interpreting existing data through a disciplinary lens, with guidance based on M. Gordon’s (2003) functional patterns of health..



This approach reinforces two essential principles: nursing diagnoses are based on a comprehensive and holistic nursing assessment. Second, NANDA-I diagnoses are not merely documentation labels. They represent professional judgments about human responses to health conditions and life processes. Even if a nurse never enters a term into an electronic system, a conceptual understanding of these diagnoses determines how care is planned and delivered.

The Clinical Reasoning Framework helps nurses systematically ask themselves which human responses are present, which are most clinically significant for this person, and how contextual factors, the patient's values, and available resources influence decision-making. In doing so, it reduces the risk of rephrasing medical diagnoses as nursing diagnoses, automatically assigning predetermined care plans, or selecting interventions without critical thinking. For students, it provides guidelines to stimulate clinical reasoning, which can help prevent premature conclusions (jumping to conclusions) or automatic links between medical and nursing diagnoses without the support of an assessment. For nurses in practice, it provides confirmation of their diagnostic hypotheses or may suggest additional diagnoses they had not considered.

Conclusions

NANDA 360 represents more than just a technological advancement. It reflects a strategic commitment to advancing disciplinary knowledge, strengthening clinical reasoning, and ensuring that nursing care is evidence-based, measurable, and patient-centered. The Clinical Reasoning Framework is the foundation; NANDA 360 is the integrated structure built upon it. Together, they position nursing not only to document care, but to lead with knowledge, clarity, and professional judgment in an increasingly digital healthcare environment. For this and much more, we celebrate the professionalization of nursing, as nurses increasingly incorporate their scientific knowledge into the intentional health care of diverse populations. Let's celebrate together!

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