

Editorial

The Proper Name for our Discipline: Introducing Nursology

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We are honored to have been invited to write this guest editorial of *Cuidado Multidisciplinario de la Salud BUAP*. We would like to take the opportunity to introduce readers to what we maintain is the proper name for our discipline and profession.

Since time immemorial, the name of what nurses think about and do has been called nursing. However, nursing has meanings other than providing services to human beings who cannot completely care for themselves or require education to increase their ability to care for themselves in matters of wellness, illness, or disease. As Falk-Rafael (2018) pointed out, one other meaning of nursing is, of course, breast feeding; and another meaning is “nursing” a drink, that is drinking a liquid slowly. Following the lead of Paterson (1971) and Roper (1976), we are committed to changing nursing to nursology. In particular, we are advocating for nursology as the proper name for our discipline and profession. We base our advocacy on the existing definitions and the political advantage of having a disciplinary name that is the same as the “ology” suffix of other disciplines, such as biology, physiology, psychology, and sociology. Furthermore, when we accept nursology as the proper name for our discipline and profession, we can begin to call ourselves nursologists, just as the members of the discipline of biology are called biologists and the members of the discipline of

psychology are called psychologists, and so on.

What, then, is nursing? A dictionary definition is: “from the Latin, *Nutrix*, nurse; and from the Greek, *Logos*, science” (O’Toole, 2013, p. 1303).

Paterson introduced nursing in the published literature in 1971. She defined nursing as “the study of nursing aimed toward the development of nursing theory” (p. 143). In 1976, Roper maintained that nursing, rather than nursing, should be the name for our discipline, She explained:

It could be that nursing might develop as a discipline without using a word to describe its characteristic mode of thinking, but it will have to make the mode explicit and it will have to have the same meaning for nurses anywhere. Should the nursing profession require to use a word, I propose the word nursing for the study of nursing, so that the logical pattern of derivation of an adverb could be followed. (p. 227)

Speedie (1983) defined nursing as “body of knowledge” (p. 40), and Taylor (1995) explained that nursing is “the special knowledge of nurses; it is not borrowed knowledge from medicine” (p. 257).

The challenge now is to specify what the knowledge of nursing is. One approach to meeting this challenge is to indicate how the term, nursing, is linked with nursing conceptual models and theories. For example, a definition of nursing that emphasizes Meleis’ (2015, 2018; see also <https://nursology.net/nurse-theorists-and-their-work/transitions-framework-transitions-theory/>) Transitions Theory could be:

Nursing is knowledge of the phenomena of interest to nurses, which are how, when, and why nurses collaborate with other human beings to facilitate diverse life transitions of wellness, illness, and disease, within the context of the environment.

Another definition, which emphasizes Orem’s (2001; see also <https://nursology.net/nurse-theorists-and-their-work/orems-self-care/>) Self-Care Framework, could be:

Nursing is knowledge of the phenomena of interest to nurses, which are how, when, and why nurses collaborate with other human beings to promote therapeutic self-care as they experience wellness, illness, and disease, within the context of their environments.

Still another definition, which emphasizes Roy’s Adaptation Model (2009, 2011; see also <https://nursology.net/nurse-theorists-and-their-work/roys-adaptation-model/>), could be:

Nursing is knowledge of the phenomena of interest to nurses, which are how, when, and why nurses collaborate with other human beings to promote adaptation as they experience wellness, illness, and disease, within the context of their environments.

We encourage the administrators at BUAP to consider changing the name of the program that prepares nursologists to nursology and to refer to the faculty, students, and graduates as nursologists. In addition, we encourage the readers of this editorial to refer to our discipline and profession as nursology and to tell everyone else about our proper name. In closing, we hope the readers of this editorial will encourage and facilitate dialogue and debate, at all different organizational levels in Mexico, about this bold proposal and potential implications of using the terms, nursology and nursologist, in Latin American countries.

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