

The strategic role of the nurse for Leprosy control

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In the last two decades the involvement of the nurse with the Leprosy control actions amplified in a considerable manner. And it could not be different, considering that in the expansion of the National Health System this professional category has a fundamental role in the organization of health services in different levels of complexity. In Leprosy, the great impulse came with the implantation of polichemotherapy (PCT) with supervision dosage, in 1986, a activity that demanded a sort of new tasks whose supervision and execution are nursing attributions. In addition, the prevention and treatment actions of physical impairment had inserted in attendance routines a diversity of care actions, most of them assumed by nurses.

This change was initially instrumentalized by the large scale training of professional category (theoretical-practice training modules for nurses composed by 180 hours); by multi-professional and specific trainings (40 hours) for health professionals involved in the "demonstration areas" of PCT; control action modules (multi-professional theoretical-practice modules – 40 hours) for PCT amplification and, the integration in education for physicians and nursing; production of bibliographic material and interaction with the education system (books, slides and video).

All this, without mentioning the actuation of the nurse in the management of the National Health System and his/her managerial actions in the Leprosy Control Program in the three administrative areas. Currently, in most of the federal units the Leprosy control actions coordination in state and municipal areas are performed by nurses. And we could not forget to highlight the work of the nurses Maria Bernardete Moreira and Danusa Benjamin, in the National Leprosy Control Program of the Health Ministry.

The nursing professional has performed an strategic role for integral and humanized care in the National Health System and as for the organization of services on the perspective of the health team, contributing for the development of inter-disciplinary actions in health care.

The decentralization of Leprosy control actions and the coverage increase of the Family Health Strategy is attracting a multitude of nurses and stimulated the opening of new Nursing courses across the country in the last years, with a growing demand of the needs for training and preparedness in Leprosy, among other prevailing appeals in our scenario.

In this direction, the auspicious and unprecedented ABEn's initiative of inserting a Leprosy workshop for nursing faculties in its annual Congress, and also, to launch an edict for the selection of scientific articles in Leprosy aiming a publication of a special issue in REBEn, deserves our applauses. More than comprising its original goal in the diffusion of scientific knowledge produced in Brazil, it is providing a tribute for those professionals, that more than constituting a valuable work for the sustaining of the National Health System, they contribute with knowledge production in Leprosy. The published articles in this special issue demonstrate the dimension of nurses' actuation in care, education and research in Leprosy. The National Leprosy Control Program just can acknowledge the opportunity in participating of this venture.