

# RIASE

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## **PHYSICAL EXAMINATION IN THE FIELD OF NURSING: INTEGRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW**

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## ABSTRACT

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**Objectives:** To identify the scientific considerations about the physical examination in the field of nursing.

**Methodology:** This is an integrative review in the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) database guided by the steps: formulation of the guiding question of the review, search in the literature, categorization, evaluation of included studies; Interpretation of the results and the synthesis of the knowledge evidenced in the articles analyzed.

**Results:** Ten articles were analyzed, which met all established inclusion criteria. The synthesis of knowledge was organized into two categories, entitled: "Diagnosis of scientific production referring to physical examination in nursing care" and "Diagnosis of scientific production referring to physical examination in nursing teaching".

**Conclusion:** In the care, the physical examination performed by nurses was considered in its technical dimension and as part of the initial stage of the nursing process. In addition, he was portrayed in the perspective of complexity integrating knowledge of the social sciences about the body. In teaching, it was observed the use of pedagogical strategies that allow the student of nursing to apprehend the contents that deal with physical examination. Among them are: educational games, virtual learning environments with the help of media resources.

**Keywords:** Nursing; physical examination; nursing care; nursing process.

## INTRODUCTION

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In everyday life, when looking at the most diverse scenarios of care, there is a set of practices performed by the professionals who make up the nursing team with different forms, expressions and meanings.

In a very specific way, what has been perceived in the most varied actions developed by nurses, when they relate to customers in the scenarios of care, concerns a structuring of a knowledge based on the use of human senses, wrapped by elements of subjectivity and the exercise of reading the individual and social signs expressed by the body care.

Certainly, the multiplicity of daily situations of care experienced by nurses, in different perspectives, denotes the complexity of a clinic that is able to provide support for all the needs presented by the customers when they are examined and care in their diversified health conditions.

This is because the customer's body care that is built, especially within the hospital, goes through the undoing of their privacy, family and social relationships, i.e., no longer being the author of their own history to become the object of the medical record. As of this moment, these highlights reflect on the scenarios of care as stages of health, of their deviations and points to contextual problems that affect the speech and the clinical Practice-Propaedeutics adopted by nurses in their daily care<sup>(1)</sup>.

This concern refers to the care customer of only a text presented to the reading and sometimes complicated and confused. Especially in the hospital, the patient is subject to his illness, which means that he is a case; In the clinic, where it is only an example, the patient is the accident of the disease, the transient object that it appropriated by itself<sup>(2)</sup>. Appropriation that can be achieved by nurses in the assistance scenarios by conducting a systematic physical examination with the aim of the diagnosis of nursing and the planning of clinical conducts to care.

This process of extracting information from the body, represented by the action of examining the healthy or sick customer, allows space for dialogues on the practices of care performed by nurses, especially in their clinical domain.

Information that can be obtained from a deductive logic that forwards the nurse's thought to the reduction of the subject to a introductory moment, or otherwise widen the clinical eye and include in the semiology of care, the understanding of the Life's phenomena that are not separated from the client's body examined.

In this perspective, the body examined is of the science of care, understood as minimum space that is human-free, human-active, owner of its own ideas, opinions, values, ambitions and worldview. Historical body, being source and mediation of knowledge and know-how, from memories in it fixed. Place of expression and creation, of meaning and representations, of mythical listening, of cognition, of the production of images. Power and products of subjectivities, instituted and instituting, which makes political movements of change. Real-emotional body (objective and subjective). Body meat-memory, ethics, live, pulsating, flesh-blood, origin and end of culture created<sup>(3)</sup>.

In other words, the body is inserted into a social mesh, subject to a control that is processed in a political, economic and cultural context, and its forms are sophisticated and vary over time. Such a process does not only occur through the repression of natural impulses, but by constructing practices and representations that diffuse in the imaginary by sophisticated and subtle strategies, creating notions about the person<sup>(4)</sup>.

It must be emphasized: in the two conceptual approaches that face the body, what is attested is a complexity of the clinical eye, able to lean on the ways of examining, which set meanings and significance captured by nurses in the expressions of customers.

This challenging reflection, certainly, is yet another affirmative to be explored in the field of clinical nursing. In this way, this study is justified by inserting scientific considerations that talk about physical examination as one of the steps to be taken in the systematization of nursing care.

In such a sense, it seems interesting to invest in this issue-problem, practiced by nurses in different contexts and with this elementary notion, will be mutual resonance between the thematic dimensions, nursing care and physical examination, in a relationship that moves inside the care scenarios.

To answer this question there is no plot, a priori, and it is considered that it is surrounded by several theoretical and contextual contours. As a result, the following objective was defined: to identify the scientific considerations on the physical examination in the field of nursing.

## METODOLOGY

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In order to meet the objective of this study, an integrative review of literature was carried out in order to analyze Brazilian studies that provide support for nurses in decision making. In this way, the pre-existing knowledge on the subject of physical examination was brought together from the following steps: Formulation of the question guiding the revision, search in literature, categorization, evaluation of the studies included, interpretation of Results and the synthesis of the knowledge highlighted in the articles analyzed<sup>(5)</sup>.

Given that the interest of this revision is centered on the physical examination, the following guiding question was defined: what are the scientific considerations concerning the physical examination in the field of nursing?

Guided by this inquiry we resorted to access to the Scientific Electronic *Library Online Database* (SciELO). It should be noted that the search for answers in the literature was guided by isolated descriptors registered in the Descriptors in Health Sciences (DeCS), with definition in Portuguese pertinent to the subject of the study. In this respect, they assisted in the search for the literature the descriptors: "Physical Examination", "Hospital Assistance", "Nursing Process", "Nursing Care" and "Hospital Nursing Service".

For the selection of the manuscripts the following inclusion criteria were defined: In the first step, included articles published in Portuguese language that present in isolation or integrated in the title the words of order: physical examination, care of nursing and hospital. In the second step, articles were selected that present the expressions physical examination or clinical examination in the summary. In the third and fourth stages, articles published in the period from January 2007 to November 2017 and qualified nursing journals such as A1, A2, B1 and B2 were included, taking into account the classification of periodic quadrennium 2013-2016 of Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES).

In the fifth stage, it was effectively read in the full text and included the manuscripts according to the considerations presented by the nurses about physical examination. All these articles had their references reviewed. Therefore, the sixth and final stage were characterized by the search for new articles identified in the references, which obeyed all the criteria previously listed.

The search for studies was carried out separately by two researchers, obeying the aforementioned methodological design and took place in the first week of November 2017. Categorically, the articles included were organized according to the thematic nuclei in a schematic framework and took into account the information pertaining to the principal author of the study, title of the article, year of publication, quality of the journal and its main scientific diagnosis for the domain of nursing.

It should be noted that the evaluation of the studies included in the integrative revision and the interpretation of the results occurred after the exhaustive reading of all material. For data processing, the thematic content analysis method was used<sup>(6)</sup>.

In this analytical modality, were carried out in the pre, floating readings of the selected articles, to establish contact with the main ideas of the authors. Then, in the analysis itself, the thematic nuclei were highlighted by words, phrases and paragraphs, which were frequently presented in the articles. And finally, the categories were created according to the central themes emerging from the studies throughout the analytical process that gave rise to the synthesis of knowledge<sup>(6)</sup>.

# RESULTS

The search for articles on the SciELO basis, followed by the application of the methodology criteria for selection, resulted in a total of eight articles included, of which, after analysis of its references, were added two manuscripts whose origin was the Database of Nursing (BDENF). All the search and selection steps with their respective results can be shown in Figure 1.

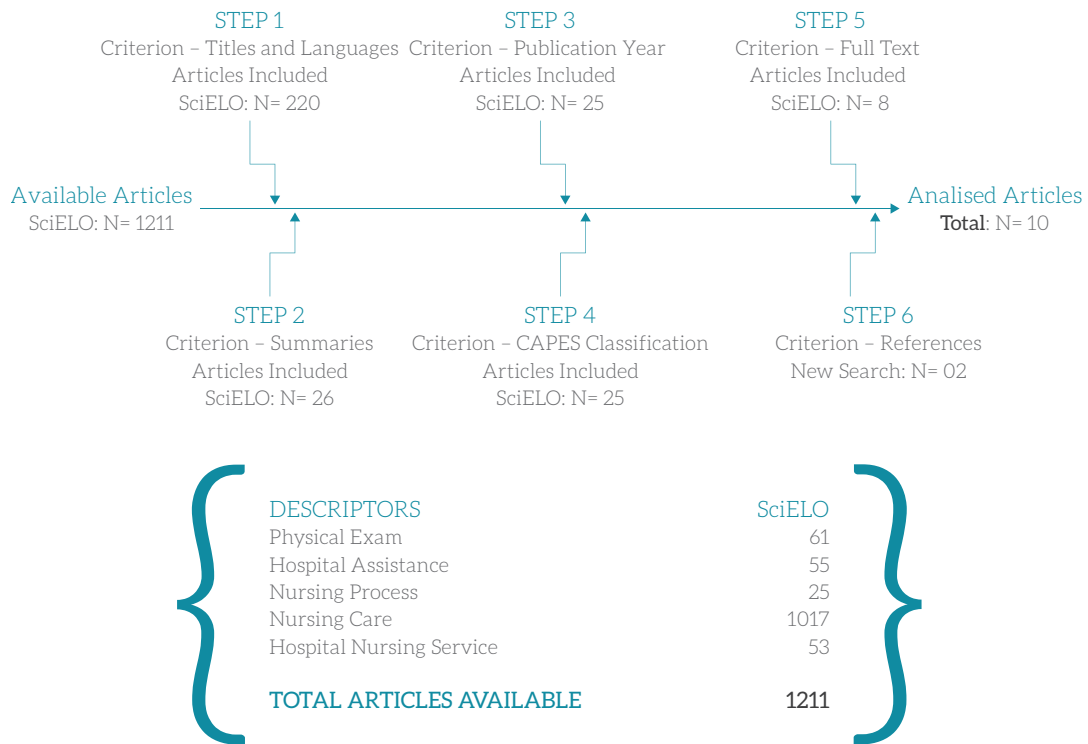


Figure 1 - Stages of search, inclusion and selection of articles for integrative review. SciELO, 2017.

In all, ten articles have been analyzed that meet the established inclusion criteria, four made mention of the physical examination in the care scenarios<sup>(7,8,9,10)</sup> and six teaching practices<sup>(4,11,12,13,14,15)</sup>. Of all, eight were authored by nurses and two were built by nurses in association with medical professionals, psychologists and specialized in computer science.

With regard to the type of journal to which the manuscripts included in this revision were published, all magazines are of the nursing area classified as Qualis Capes A2 five articles, B1 three articles and B2 only two articles. Regarding the type of methodological approach used in the evaluated articles, a report of experience was demonstrated, two critical reviews of the literature, two cross-cutting studies, two product developments and three qualitative studies.

The entire synthesis of knowledge was organized into two categories, entitled: "Diagnosis of scientific production concerning physical examination in nursing care" and "diagnosis of scientific production regarding physical examination in nursing education". In them are found discussions that portray the scientific considerations coming from the daily life of nurses in caring and teaching the physical examination, respectively.

## DISCUSSION

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Specifically in the first category, it is necessary to consider in the manuscripts the messages concerning nursing care when talking about physical examination practiced by nurses. The search for answers to the question made focuses on scientific considerations that add in itself a technical, biological, philosophical and social language of the body examined by the nurses in the care scenarios.

It is a diagnosis of the scientific production in the field of nursing which considers divergent theoretical positions, taking into consideration as a fundamental point the action of examining in the practices of care.

It is known that physical examination, in its nature, is an important step for the care planning of the nurse, because it seeks to evaluate the client through signs and symptoms, looking for abnormalities that may suggest problems in the process of health and disease. This examination must be carried out in a systematic manner, through an evaluation of all segments of the body, using propedêuticas techniques: inspection, palpation, percussion and auscultation.

What is observed in the professional practice is that the physical examination has focused almost exclusively on the development of technical skills and procedural in search of the said biological changes in the body. However, the client must be seen beyond the care object of the nursing team, that is, as a subject who is present in the world and relates to this through his body, his experiences, which enable him to have his own feelings, reactions, interpretations, perceptions regarding the care that is dispensed to you<sup>(7)</sup>.

It is quite a fact that in the biomedical model, the focus solely on the correct realization of the technique of physical examination with the client is emphasized. However, the nurse should not lose sight of the subjective elements of the subject who will always be in the lines of the meeting in care.

In this way, the development of physical examination, according to the perspective of complexity, requires technical and scientific skills, however, integrated with the ethics, aesthetics, objectivity and subjectivity. Thus, the nursing professional is wanted to be critical, sensitive and able to transform reality, considering the deal with the order and disorder of things<sup>(8)</sup>.

The physical examination, as part of the initial stage of the nursing process, has important capacities for its execution and the foundation of the examiner's thinking - which will perform the other phases thus reaffirming its complex character<sup>(8-9)</sup>.

In this way, the physical nursing examination is an essential phase of the systematic assistance that must be carried out in a judicious manner by the nurses professionals, aiming at a scientific professional performance. By doing a systematic follow-up in such an area, it should be valued not only what is being said by the client, but also its non-verbal languages<sup>(9)</sup>.

In this sense, in order for the nurse to understand the "unsaid" during the care performed with the client, the use of the senses is emphasized to decode the elements of the non-verbal communication, conveyed throughout the physical examination. This is because often the client may be feeling some discomfort and not expressing through speech. In this way, the nurse should be attentive to facial expressions and observe how the customer is reacting to his touch.

Based on this, it is essential to value at the time of the examination, subjective, affective, relational components, attitudinal, beyond the strictly technical-scientific knowledge. It is necessary that the nurse, in the scenes of care, have a magnified look in order to perceive in the action of examining, the various dimensions that permeate the individual in his health-sickness-care process.



To achieve this objective, the physical examination by the nurse must use the organs of the sense: vision, hearing, tact and smell. To subsidize the care plan specifically in the nursing process, it is through the history and physical examination that it is possible to know the client, establish bonds of trust, identify biopsychosocial and spiritual changes, pursue defining nursing diagnoses, tracing goals and/or nursing prescriptions, evaluating the patient and conducting records<sup>(9)</sup>.

As important as the physical examination is the registration of the nurse on this information that allows care that are peculiar to the health-disease process, in such a way that they are individualized, resolute and meet the customer in their completeness. Basically what has been observed is a deficit in the quality of the records about the physical examination, to the extent that institutional records do not present this information recorded by nurses<sup>(10)</sup>.

The cipher, abbreviated and that privileges the biomedical knowledge to the detriment of care is a theme-problem that goes through the practice of caring and teaching in nursing. Certainly this category contains units of content understood as fundamental to reflect on the physical examination in nursing care and, at the same time, serves as a bridge to think as it is being considered the teaching of nursing. All this inaugurates the second category of this study.

In such a category, discussions relate to the diagnoses of scientific production regarding the teaching of physical examination. It was identified the vertical form adopted by teachers to teach this theme, considering the scholar as a mere recipient of information. In this way, the appreciation of technical knowledge is evident instead of the technical-scientific conjunction with the subjectivities and transversalities of care, which constitutes the enlarged nursing clinic<sup>(4)</sup>.

In view of the relevance of the physical examination, for a systematic nursing assistance and of the problematic that involves the teaching of physical examination in the undergraduate, it is pointed out that teachers should use methods and teaching techniques that enable more and more dynamic interactions, to the detriment of traditional conservative methodologies that are, in essence, fragmented and reductionist<sup>(11)</sup>.

For this, it is necessary that teachers and students are willing to take risks in venturing into other pedagogical strategies that are able to integrate, unite, associate and dialogue the Semiologic and Semiotecnic knowings with the phenomena of Life.

Yes, it is necessary to consider the student of nursing autonomous in the construction of his knowledge. An active subject capable of realizing the importance of knowing how

to do in physical examination, so that he can understand the relevance of this practice in the context of his professional performance, and thus, can exercise freedom, autonomy in decision-making, and consequently, become able to provide a quality, efficient, resolute and scientifically-based nursing care<sup>(11)</sup>.

It is essential to say that the knowledge acquired during the higher education reflects on the performance of the professional exercise of the future nurse. In this sense, it is necessary to reinforce the teaching of the physical examination for the nursing with different teaching strategies throughout the academic formation<sup>(12)</sup>.

Based on these meanings, instruments have been considered and pedagogical strategies applied by teachers, in the various undergraduate courses in nursing, as a way to teach the physical exam that allows students to seize these curricular contents.

As far as this contents are concerned, for the physical examination in adults and the elderly by undergraduate students in nursing, their goal is to facilitate the realization of the technique in such a way as to contemplate all the anatomical systems and regions of the body with their Possible changes concerning pathological conditions<sup>(13)</sup>.

As for the pedagogical strategies used to teach the physical exam, we highlight the use of video, demonstration and educational game, in order to propose to students an interactive form of teaching/learning, different from the conventional and that lead them to have a meaningful learning and emancipatory<sup>(11)</sup>.

With the advent of the information technologies and the experiences of its application in teaching, they reinforce the intention to associate them to the learning of physical examination in nursing. In this sense, the use of the computational technologies integrated in the undergraduate in such area support the process of teaching and learning the physical exam, optimizing the activities developed intra/directs and maximizing the results of learning in the pedagogical scenario<sup>(14)</sup>.

In this current, it is specifically observed the construction and validation of educational hypermedias to teach the physical nursing examination in prenatal care. The main findings of this proposal aim to promote greater interactivity among students, the teaching platform for the insertion of videos and audio recordings to illustrate different types of sounds contained during the physical abdominal examination<sup>(15)</sup>.

These teaching-learning experiences are aimed at the (micro) of the virtual room and currently, they become more and more central in the discussions on professional practice. In order to focus specifically on the practice of teaching and learning the physical

nursing examination, the firm relates to the concomitant teaching of the elements present in life in an integrated way to the nuclear bases of semiology, anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, among others.

In this way, it is believed that the nursing student will be able to reflect and criticize, by executing the physical examination technique efficiently and to relate it to the discovery of the fields that interact in the production of health and disease, the social and cultural context of the subjects. Thus, the broadening of the focus of understanding on the realization of the examination contributes to putting into practice the new statements and visibility of an emerging paradigm in health that considers the complexity, the transdisciplinarity and the relevance of the actions of nursing in society<sup>(4)</sup>.

## CONCLUSIONS

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The scientific considerations on the physical examination in the field of nursing point to diagnoses in the scientific production in two practical dimensions: caring and teaching. In the care performed by nurses, the same was strongly considered in its technical dimension, procedural and as part of the initial stage of the nursing process. As for nursing records, we noticed a deficit in the quality of the information regarding physical examination.

In addition, the physical examination was considered, in the perspective of the integrating complexity, the technical knowledge with knowing about the body from a perspective of the social sciences. It was also perceived the importance of the use of human senses to identify messages to be extracted from the client in physical examination from non-verbal readings of his body expressed in subjectivity..

In teaching, it was observed the use of pedagogical methods and techniques that enable more and more dynamic and integrated interactions of the contents that are subject to physical examination. The main teaching strategies identified were: Educational games, virtual learning environments with the help of media resources.

Finally, it is expected that this integrative review, based on qualified publications in the area of nursing, will awaken the search for new research problems and assist in the actions of caring and teaching the physical examination.

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