

HEMED AND HEPDAK'S OPINION ON PROBLEMS RELATED TO PRACTICAL EDUCATION HOURS IN NURSING PROGRAMS

When the current nursing education in our country is examined, it is seen that the 4600 hours of nursing education required according to the European Union (EU) directives is 3500-3700 hours in total and 1700-1800 hours are allocated to practical training. In addition, according to EU directives, 2300 hours, which is half of the total training period, must be allocated to practical training and the applications must be carried out in real environments. In the current situation, due to the problems experienced in reaching the desired hours in applied training, it is seen that real practice environments are moved away and different training activities (laboratory, case discussion, in-class learning, etc.) other than clinical/field practices are shown as practice hours. However, it is known that some higher education institutions are working to reduce or reset the ECTS burden of applied training. Another important problem is the missing practical training hours that have arisen due to the increasing demand of our graduates for work opportunities abroad in recent years. Due to missing practical training hours, our graduates are taken to completion programs in the countries they visit and are forced to work with lower status and wages during this period.

Nurses are responsible for protecting public health. As HEMED-HEPDAK, we also have responsibilities to ensure that nursing education is more qualified and to produce graduates who will provide better service to the society. With this perspective, we emphasize that applied vocational courses in nursing programs should be held in real environments, not in laboratories.

The problems regarding applied training are summarized below:

- Inclusion of nursing course laboratories in practice hours.
- Inclusion of laboratory hours in basic sciences courses into practice hours.
- Evaluating the learning activities carried out in the classroom as practice.
- Failure to complete at least 2300 hours of practical training, which is mandatory according to the Bologna framework, in most nursing programs.
- Insufficient health institutions and organizations for applied training in the cities where the programs are located.
- Practice hours cannot be completed because hospitals and provincial health directorates do not deem it appropriate for first-year nursing students, especially, to be in the practice areas.
- There is a tendency to reduce or reset ECTS and local credits for applied training in some programs.
- Most graduates who go abroad to work experience equivalence problems due to lack of practice.

SUGGESTIONS

Our suggestions for solving the problems are listed below:

1. Practice areas and diversity can be expanded by holding meetings in coordination with the administrators of the higher education institution where the program is located with the administrators of the application areas.
2. Programs may provide theoretical and practical training in different semesters, taking into account their own conditions.

3. As some universities do, the academic calendar can be planned as 16 weeks in the fall and spring semesters for senior students (with the approval of the university senate and YÖK).
4. Practices to be carried out during the summer period in well-planned institutions with conditions suitable for the learning environment can be integrated into educational programs.
5. Laboratory hours should not be shown as practice and should be included in theoretical training hours.
6. Skills laboratories should be evaluated in terms of quality.
7. Case discussions, care plan discussions, and in-class learning activities should not be considered practice time.
8. Studies can be carried out to recognize the practical training provided within the scope of the Presidency's internship mobilization.

CONCLUSION

As defined by the "Regulation on Determining the Minimum Education Requirements for Medicine, Nursing, Midwifery, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, Pharmacy and Architecture Education Programs" published by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) on February 2, 2008, half of the total 4600 hours of nursing education must be devoted to practice. The ability of our graduates to acquire the competencies that a nurse should have depends on the practical training being carried out for the required duration and quality. Therefore, reducing practical training for various reasons or stopping it for some grade levels is an unacceptable enforcement for qualified nursing education. In order for our graduates to gain the necessary competencies, national qualifications and international equivalences, at least 2300 hours of practical training in accordance with the Bologna framework is required. For this reason, HEPDAK, which determines accreditation standards based on national and international legislation and criteria, expects this criterion to be met as defined in the programs it evaluates.