

Editorial

We live in extraordinary times. The COVID-19 pandemic has been hitting our lives dramatically and it has brought about changes none of us could have imagined. The World Health Organization has designated 2020 the *Year of the Nurse and the Midwife*, unaware of what wave has been rolling on humanity. Paradoxically, in this case the pandemic “acted” as the most very powerful marketing tool that emphasized the irreplaceable role of nurses in society.

In the practical sphere, caring for patients infected with COVID-19 is a team effort where nurses play a pivotal role. In intensive care units and the so-called COVID departments nurses provide 86 % of the patient's care time, often in close contact with patients (*Tlačová správa*..., 2020). For this reason, these are the nurses who carry the enormous burden of fear from infecting oneself and their loved ones, neglecting the running of one's own household and raising children, from the lack of personal protective equipment, deprivation of their basic needs, and nurses are burdened by recurrent patients' deaths (*Nurses on coronavirus* ..., 2020). Nurses are experiencing unprecedented levels of stress associated with high levels of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic diseases and burnout (*Global nursing body* ..., 2020).

The Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has also been a challenge for us, nurses in academic institutions. In accordance with anti-epidemic measures, we transformed the form of education which takes place in a classroom or an auditorium to online space. The collocation of words “modern education” has thus acquired another dimension, which undoubtedly belongs to a knowledge society. With the integration of information technologies in teaching, we try to provide students with full educational content. However, in professional training of nurses, we have come across a few problems that need resolving such as the irreplaceable importance of direct contact between teachers and students, and patients. To protect health and life, vulnerable groups have been isolated such as seniors, cancer patients, and the chronically ill. These are the groups we often focus on in nursing research. We got stuck in research, especially in the most time-consuming empirical phase. Finding a way to deal with the situation and catch up with the lost is another challenge that we must face in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Be that as it may, 2020, the *Year of the Nurse and Midwife* will forever (or at least until when our historical memory reaches) has a bitter taste of the pandemic. It remains to be believed that this situation will be a sufficient imperative for the competent ones, as it has fully demonstrated how dangerous and short-sighted it is to balance on the edge of a malnourished healthcare system.

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