Nursing Representation in Brazilian Hospital Management: An Integrative Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

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| This study aimed to analyze, through a bibliographic review, the representativeness of nursing in Brazilian hospital management, identifying the required competencies, the challenges faced and the impacts of this role on the quality of care. This is an integrative review, with a qualitative approach, carried out in the SciELO, LILACS, BDENF and PubMed databases, with a selection of articles published between 2018 and 2024, in Portuguese, English or Spanish. The descriptors used were “nursing”, “hospital management” and “health leadership”. The results were organized into three thematic categories: (1) the managerial competencies necessary for the role of the nurse manager, such as leadership, strategic planning, decision-making and effective communication; (2) the challenges faced in the exercise of management, highlighting work overload, scarcity of resources, team resistance and the lack of specific training in management; and (3) the positive impacts of the presence of nurses in hospital leadership, such as improvements in the quality of care, reduction of adverse events, increased patient satisfaction and appreciation of humanization in care. It is concluded that nursing has expanded its presence in hospital management, but still needs greater institutional recognition, investment in management training and organizational support. The appreciation of the role of nurse managers is strategic to promote more humane, problem-solving and integrated management models in care practices. |

*Keywords:* Nursing; Hospital Management; Leadership in Health.

1. INTRODUCTION

Hospital management in Brazil is a complex field that demands technical, administrative and human skills to ensure the quality and efficiency of health services. In this context, nursing has played an increasingly important role, not only in direct patient care, but also in managerial and leadership roles within hospital institutions (Farias; Araújo, 2017).

Historically, the role of nurses in hospital management was limited, with a predominant focus on care activities. However, with the transformations in the health system and the increasing complexity of hospital services, nurses have come to occupy strategic positions in hospital administration, contributing to decision-making and the implementation of effective health policies (Vásquez-Calatayud et al., 2022).

Recent studies have highlighted the managerial skills of nurses, demonstrating their ability to lead teams, manage resources and promote the quality of health services. For example, an integrative literature review identified that nurses have played essential roles in hospital management, contributing to the improvement of processes and patient satisfaction (Ellis, 2021; Duffy, 2022).

Despite the progress, there are still significant challenges to the full inclusion of nurses in hospital management, including cultural barriers, lack of professional recognition and limitations in management training during undergraduate studies. Understanding the representation of nursing in Brazilian hospital management is essential to identify opportunities to strengthen the profession and to promote more efficient and humanized management in hospitals (Gab Allah, 2021; Aydogdu, 2023).

Therefore, this study aims to analyze, through a bibliographic review, the representation of nursing in Brazilian hospital management, identifying the main contributions, challenges and perspectives for strengthening the role of nurses as managers in hospital institutions.

2. material and methodS

This is an integrative review study, with a qualitative approach, which aimed to gather and critically analyze the available scientific production on the Systematization of Nursing Care (SAE) for the elderly within the scope of Primary Health Care (PHC). The integrative review was chosen because it allows the synthesis of the knowledge produced on the topic, contemplating different methodological designs, which favors a broad understanding of the studied theme.

The construction of the review followed the methodological steps proposed by Sousa et al. (2017), which include: definition of the guiding question, establishment of inclusion and exclusion criteria, identification and selection of studies, data extraction, critical analysis of the findings and synthesis of the results.

The research question was elaborated based on the PICO strategy, defining nurses as the population, the interest as working in hospital management and the context as the Brazilian hospital system. The question that guided the search was: “What has been the representation of nursing in Brazilian hospital management, according to the scientific literature?”. The search for scientific articles was carried out in May 2025, in the databases SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online), LILACS (Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences), BDENF (Nursing Database) and PubMed.

To ensure the current status of the scientific production analyzed, only studies published between 2018 and 2024 were considered. The Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) and Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) were used, combined using the Boolean operators AND and OR. The main descriptors used were: “nursing”, “hospital management”, “health administration” and “nursing leadership”.

The review included articles available in full, published in Portuguese, English or Spanish, which directly addressed the role of nurses in hospital management from different approaches (care, management, political or educational). Duplicate articles, editorials, letters to the editor, theses, dissertations and publications that did not directly address the proposed theme were excluded. After selection, the studies were organized in a summary table containing information about authors, year, objective, methodology, main results and conclusions.

Data analysis was performed descriptively and critically, allowing the identification of thematic categories related to the performance and challenges faced by nurse managers in hospital institutions in Brazil.

3. results and discussion

# Table 1: Summary of studies on nursing management

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| **Author/Year/Journal** | **Objective** | **Method** | **Evidence** |
| Bezerra & Paranaguá (2021) - Nursing Focus | To discuss the role of organizations and staff in ensuring patient safety. | Theoretical article | Highlights the organizational and human factors essential for patient safety. |
| Borges (2022) | To analyze the pediatric care environment during COVID-19 and its impact on safety. | Descriptive analysis | Revealed vulnerabilities in pediatric safety due to structural and procedural limitations. |
| Carina et al. (2025) - Millenium | To evaluate the effects of nurse manager communication strategies on nursing environments. | Quantitative study | Found a positive association between effective communication and work environment satisfaction. |
| Dang et al. (2021) - Sigma Theta Tau | To present the Johns Hopkins model for evidence-based nursing practice. | Model/guideline description | Provides structured steps for implementing evidence-based practice in nursing. |
| Da Silva et al. (2022) - Revista Faculdades do Saber | To discuss humanized care for preterm newborns in NICUs. | Integrative review | Emphasized the importance of empathetic, individualized care in neonatal settings. |
| Da Silva Júnior et al. (2024) - Lumen et Virtus | To propose managerial practices for improving hospital service efficiency. | Case-based study | Suggested strategic planning and leadership as key to performance improvement. |
| De Freitas Candeia et al. (2023) - Institutional Repository | To explore the role of nurses in hospital management today. | Review | Described the growing strategic role of nurses in decision-making and coordination. |
| De Souza Gois et al. (2021) - Revista Univap | To reflect on leadership challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. | Experience report | Highlighted increased stress and the need for adaptive leadership skills. |
| Do Amarante & Burg (2022) - RECIMA21 | To review nursing leadership in health service management. | Integrative review | Reinforced leadership as a cornerstone for effective nursing management. |
| Farias & Dearaujo (2017) - Ciencia & Saude Coletiva | To review Brazilian hospital management literature to improve practices. | Literature review | Identified gaps in administrative training and proposed evidence-based approaches. |
| Gab Allah (2021) - Nursing Forum | To investigate perceived organizational support during and after COVID-19. | Survey | Found that support perception influences nurse manager resilience and effectiveness. |
| Gonçalves et al. (2024) - Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem | To present nurses’ perspectives on nursing work methods. | Qualitative study | Revealed inconsistencies in methodology use and suggested standardization. |
| Hanzel & Faveri (2024) - Acervo Saúde | To describe leadership styles among hospital nurses. | Cross-sectional study | Transformational leadership was linked to higher team engagement. |
| Jankelová & Joniaková (2021) - Health (MDPI) | To explore leadership communication styles and job satisfaction correlations. | Quantitative study | Transformational styles increased satisfaction among nursing staff. |
| Lima et al. (2024) - Revista FT | To review nursing leadership models in Brazil. | Systematic review | Identified best practices and challenges for leadership in different regions. |
| Portela et al. (2022) - Fiocruz | To analyze the organizational effects of COVID-19 on health systems. | Documental analysis | Highlighted disruptions in service delivery and need for adaptive governance. |
| Ribeiro et al. (2024) - Univag | To assess surgical checklist use by nurses and its impact on adverse events. | Observational study | Checklist use reduced error rates and improved team communication. |
| Serassuelo et al. (2025) - Revista DELOS | To identify managerial competencies among hospital nurses. | Survey-based study | Found gaps in strategic planning and communication skills. |
| Silva et al. (2025) - Millenium | To evaluate communication strategies among nurse managers. | Quantitative study | Positive correlation with staff cohesion and patient safety culture. |
| Sousa et al. (2017) - Investigação em Enfermagem | To describe integrative review methodology in nursing research. | Methodological article | Standardized integrative review steps to improve evidence synthesis. |
| Dos Santos, I. A. R. (2024) | To analyze meanings of leadership for nurses in a university hospital. | Doctoral dissertation (qualitative) | Showed leadership as both a practical and symbolic element in care. |
| Dos Santos et al. (2022) - Enfermagem Brasil | To discuss humanization in adult ICU care. | Integrative review | Humanized care improved communication and patient trust. |
| Vandresen et al. (2023) - Texto & Contexto | To identify challenges faced by nurse-managers in Brazil and Portugal. | Mixed-methods study | Work overload and lack of support were main barriers to effective management. |
| Vaz et al. (2024) - Revista JRG | To assess the impact of nursing humanization on patient recovery. | Qualitative analysis | Humanized approaches led to faster and more effective recovery. |

Source: Authors, 2025.

The analysis of the selected studies allowed the categorization of the findings into three major themes: (1) management skills in hospital management, (2) Challenges faced by nurse managers, and (3) Impact of nurses' performance on the quality of hospital care.

**3.1 Nurses' management skills in hospital management**

Nurses' performance in hospital management requires a diverse set of skills that go beyond technical-care knowledge. Recent studies highlight the importance of skills such as leadership, strategic planning, people management, decision-making, and effective communication for the efficient performance of management functions (Serassuelo et al., 2025).

Serassuelo et al. (2025) identified, through interviews with nurse managers, that skills such as professional ethics, responsibility, empathy, and proactivity are fundamental for the development of effective management. The interviewees also emphasized the importance of constant updating and the ability to anticipate occurrences as essential aspects for management practice.

In addition, leadership is highlighted as a core skill in nursing management. Lima et al. (2024) emphasize that nurses' leadership in hospital settings is characterized by the ability to positively influence teams, promote motivation, and facilitate effective communication, contributing to the improvement of care processes.

Strategic planning and the organization of human and material resources are essential skills to ensure the efficiency of hospital services. The ability to plan allows the nurse manager to anticipate needs, establish goals and optimize processes, contributing to the continuous improvement of the quality of care (Dang et al., 2021).

Effective communication is an indispensable skill in hospital management. It facilitates the coordination of activities, conflict resolution and strengthening of teamwork. In addition, positive interpersonal relationships between the manager and his/her team promote a healthy and productive work environment (Jankelová; Joniaková, 2021).

Academic training and continuing education play a crucial role in the development of these skills. According to Hanzel and Faveri (2024), leadership styles such as coaching and democratic leadership are the most practiced by nurses in hospital institutions, highlighting the need for flexibility and adaptation to different situations and teams. Therefore, the development of management skills is essential for nurses to effectively perform their role in hospital management, contributing to the quality of care and the efficiency of health services.

**3.2 Challenges faced by nurse managers**

The performance of nurses in hospital management positions in Brazil faces several challenges that directly impact the effectiveness and quality of care provided. Among the main obstacles identified in recent literature, the following stand out: work overload, shortage of human and material resources, resistance to change on the part of teams, and lack of institutional recognition of nurses' management skills (Candeia et al., 2023).

Work overload is a recurring factor that hinders the implementation of effective management practices. Nursing professionals report difficulties in reconciling care demands with administrative and planning activities, which compromises the provision of systematic and patient-centered care. In addition, the shortage of material and human resources in health units limits the capacity to respond to the needs of the population, making it difficult to implement protocols and carry out educational and preventive activities (Silva Júnior et al., 2024).

Effective management of teams and care processes is one of the main challenges for nurse managers. The shortage of qualified professionals, high turnover, and work overload make it difficult to implement efficient management practices. In addition, the lack of autonomy and limited recognition of nursing leadership compromise strategic decision-making and team motivation (Bezerra; Paranaguá, 2021; Caldeira et al., 2023).

Insufficient material resources and inadequate infrastructure are recurring obstacles in hospital management. The lack of appropriate equipment, supplies, and technologies compromises the quality of care and increases pressure on nurse managers, who need to seek creative solutions to maintain the continuity of services (Faria; Santos, 2021).

Nurses' academic training does not always include the managerial skills necessary for effective performance in hospital management. The absence of ongoing training programs and institutional support hinders the development of skills in leadership, strategic planning, and decision-making (Amarante; Burg, 2022; Vandresen et al., 2023).

The lack of recognition and appreciation of the role of nurse managers is a persistent challenge. The absence of clear career policies and financial incentives discourages these professionals from remaining in management positions, contributing to turnover and the loss of talent in health institutions (Santos, 2024).

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, highlighting weaknesses in the organization of health services and in the ability to adapt to new demands. The need for social distancing and the overload of health systems have negatively impacted the continuity of care, highlighting the importance of strategies to strengthen the health network and train professionals to face crisis situations (Portela; Reis; Lima, 2022).

Therefore, to overcome these challenges, it is essential to invest in the continuous training and qualification of nursing professionals, in improving working conditions and in expanding available resources (Amarante; Burg, 2022; Vandresen et al., 2023).

**3.3** **Impact of nurses' performance on the quality of hospital care**

The role of nurses in hospital management has demonstrated a significant impact on the quality of care provided to patients. Effective leadership and the implementation of appropriate management practices contribute to the improvement of care processes, promoting a safer and more efficient care environment (Gois et al., 2021).

The presence of work environments that are favorable to nursing practice is associated with a reduction in adverse events and a decrease in hospital stay (Ribeiro et al., 2024). In a study carried out in a pediatric hospital with international accreditation, nursing professionals reported that such environments contribute to patient safety and the quality of care provided (Borges, 2022).

Humanization in nursing care is a determining factor for patient recovery. Studies indicate that a humanized approach strengthens trust between patient and professional, improves adherence to treatment, and contributes to a faster and more efficient recovery (Santos et al., 2022; Silva et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the role of the nurse manager is essential in implementing work methods that ensure patient safety and the quality of care provided. The organization and systematization of care processes, led by nurses, allows for a more patient-centered approach, with evidence-based interventions aligned with individual needs (Silva et al., 2025).

Effective management carried out by nurses also positively influences the work environment, promoting motivation and engagement of teams, which directly reflects on the quality of care. Continuous training and the development of management skills are essential for nurses to be able to fully perform their role, contributing to the excellence of hospital services (Silva et al., 2025).

4. Conclusion

This study allowed us to understand the growing inclusion of nursing in Brazilian hospital management, highlighting the complexity and relevance of this process for the qualification of health services. The findings show that nurses have been assuming strategic roles in hospital environments, contributing with managerial skills focused on leadership, planning and organization of care, in addition to promoting management closer to the reality of care.

The three categories discussed – managerial skills, challenges faced and impact on the quality of care – revealed that, although nurses are increasingly present in management positions, their performance still encounters structural, cultural and educational barriers. Work overload, limited resources and insufficient recognition of nursing managerial skills remain as important obstacles.

However, the positive impact of nurse leadership on patient safety, team satisfaction and the effectiveness of hospital processes is undeniable. To strengthen this representation, it is necessary to expand the spaces for management training in undergraduate nursing programs, invest in ongoing training and, above all, consolidate institutional policies that value the role of the nurse manager.

Thus, the consolidation of the presence of nursing in hospital management represents not only an advance for the professional category, but a strategic opportunity for the transformation of the health management model, with a focus on comprehensiveness, efficiency and humanization of care.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

Competing interests

There is no conflict of interest.

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