

# PROFILE OF NURSING SPECIALIZATION COURSES IN THE CITY OF SALVADOR, BAHIA, BRAZIL

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## PERFIL DOS CURSOS DE ESPECIALIZAÇÃO EM ENFERMAGEM NO MUNICÍPIO DE SALVADOR, BAHIA, BRASIL

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## PERFIL DE LOS CURSOS DE ESPECIALIZACIÓN EN ENFERMERÍA EN EL MUNICIPIO DE SALVADOR, BAHIA, BRASIL

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**Objective:** to characterize the Nursing Specialization courses in the city of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. **Method:** this is an exploratory-documentary study with descriptive character and quantitative approach. Data collection occurred from January to March 2014 through search in online pages of the organizations that offer the courses. A pre-coded questionnaire with closed questions was used as data collection tool. **Results:** seventy-two specialization courses offered to nurses were found. The majority of the courses are offered in face-to-face modality, with a workload of more than 360 hours, and with occupational health nursing as area of knowledge. **Conclusion:** there is a high number of specialization courses offered to nurses in different modalities and areas of knowledge.

**Descriptors:** Nursing Education. Specialization. Nursing.

*Objetivo:* caracterizar os cursos de Especialização em Enfermagem na cidade de Salvador, Bahia, Brasil. *Método:* trata-se de estudo exploratório-documental de cunho descritivo, com abordagem quantitativa, cuja coleta de dados ocorreu em sites de busca e páginas on-line das organizações que oferecem os cursos, no período de janeiro a março de 2014. Foi utilizado como instrumento para a coleta de dados um questionário pré-codificado com questões fechadas. *Resultados:* foram identificados 72 cursos de especialização oferecidos para enfermeiros. A maioria dos cursos é na modalidade presencial, com carga horária acima de 360 horas, e com a área de conhecimento enfermagem do trabalho. *Conclusão:* há um número expressivo de cursos de especialização para enfermeiros, em diversas modalidades e áreas de conhecimento.

*Descritores:* Educação em Enfermagem. Especialização. Enfermagem.

*Objetivo:* caracterizar los cursos de Especialización en Enfermería en la ciudad de Salvador, Bahia, Brasil. *Método:* se trata de un estudio exploratorio-documental, descriptivo y con enfoque cuantitativo, cuya recolección de datos fue

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*en sites de búsqueda y páginas on-line de las organizaciones que ofrecen los cursos, en el período de enero a marzo de 2014. Fue utilizado como instrumento para la recolección de datos, un cuestionario pre-codificado con preguntas cerradas. Resultados: fueron identificados 72 cursos de especialización ofrecidos para enfermeros. La mayoría de los cursos es en la modalidad presencial, con carga horaria con más de 360 horas, y con el área de conocimiento enfermería del trabajo. Conclusión: hay un número expresivo de cursos de especialización para enfermeros, en diversas modalidades y áreas de conocimiento.*

*Descriptores: Educación en Enfermería. Especialización. Enfermería.*

## Introduction

According to national curricular guidelines, nursing training is generalist and must provide knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet the health needs of people considering the locoregional indicators within the scope of the Unified Health System (SUS) to act in several areas and health services, in a critical, reflexive and ethical manner<sup>(1,2)</sup>.

The demand for specializations is inevitable and has several reasons, among them the need to enter the labor market and improve the technical competence and develop skills inherent to specialized professional practice, since undergraduate nursing training is generalist<sup>(3-5)</sup>.

In this sense, the new tendencies and configurations of the labor market, the technological innovations, the expansion of the health service network, the increased offer of undergraduate nursing courses and a highly competitive labor market have created the need for professionals to qualify and specialize themselves in certain areas of knowledge<sup>(6)</sup>.

This reality is the result of the structural transformations of the globalized world. It requires investment in training and reveals interests related to the competitiveness imposed by globalization, which has impacts on the expansion of the offer of postgraduate courses *Lato sensu*<sup>(7-9)</sup>. Specialization health courses represent a teaching modality that enables qualification by deepening knowledge in a given area in order to meet the technological innovation and the demands of the labor market and of the SUS<sup>(1,10)</sup>.

However, it is important to consider that health and education organs foster the idea that

there is relationship between entering the labor market and having higher levels of professional qualification, although they cannot guarantee that. This has led to a disorderly creation of specialization courses, especially in private institutions, supported by the lack of monitoring and inspection by public agencies.

To minimize this problem, a resolution was published on June 8, 2007 with the aim of regulating these courses. On February 12, 2014, the Ministry of Education published Resolution n. 2 instituting the unique registration of the specialization courses. However, this resolution did not establish any type of monitoring or inspection<sup>(11-12)</sup>. This, in turn, contributes for a fragile pedagogical proposal of these courses that compromises the teaching-learning process and has negative impacts on the interests of the labor world, disregarding the health needs of the population and of the SUS<sup>(13)</sup>.

In view of the foregoing and of the growing number of nursing specialization courses, this study investigated the question: What are the characteristics of the Nursing specialization courses in the city of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil? To answer this question, the study aimed to characterize the Nursing specialization courses offered in the city of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.

## Method

This is an exploratory-documentary study with descriptive character and quantitative approach whose data collection occurred in the period from January to March 2014 through search in online pages of public domain. The keywords

used were “postgraduate nursing courses *lato sensu* in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil”, “nursing specialization courses in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil”, “nursing postgraduation *Lato sensu* in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil” and “nursing postgraduation in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil”.

The collection was carried out in the Information Technology Laboratory of a Public Higher Education Institution and the collection instrument used was a pre-coded questionnaire with closed questions, which included the variables that characterized the courses: teaching modality, type of course, hourly load of the course, and areas of knowledge. The instrument was also included the option “Not informed”, in the case of information not available on the page of the course. The data obtained in this option were excluded from the analysis and considered as sample loss; only the available information was analyzed. The criterion for inclusion in the collection was to be a specialization course

offered exclusively for nurses in the city of Salvador (BA) - Brazil.

At a first moment, an unsystematic online search for institutions and organizations that offer specialization courses for nurses in the municipality was made. At a second moment, the pre-coded questionnaire was applied for the construction of a database in a Microsoft Excel<sup>®</sup> spreadsheet. Data was analyzed through absolute and relative frequencies and graphical representation of the characteristics of the nursing specialization courses.

The study used information of public domain and, therefore, there was no need for submission to the Research Ethics Committee.

## Results

Seventy two nursing specialization courses were identified, in several teaching modalities and areas of knowledge with the characteristics presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

**Table 1** – Modality and types of Nursing Specialization courses. Municipality of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, 2015. (N = 67)

Variables	n	%
<b>Modality</b>		
Face-to-face	47	70
Distance	18	27
Concurrent attendance	2	3
<b>Types of courses</b>		
Theoretical	47	70
Theoretical-practical	10	15
Theoretical-practical with traineeship	10	15

Source: Created by the authors.

**Table 2** – Hourly load of Nursing Specialization courses. Municipality of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, 2015. (N = 72)

Shift	n	%
More than 360 hours	49	68
360 hours	14	19.5
Between 500-1000 hours	5	5.5
Less than 360 hours	4	7.0

Source: Created by the authors.

**Table 3** – Knowledge area of Nursing Specialization courses. Municipality of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, 2015. (N = 72)

Specialization	n	%
Occupational Nursing	13	18.0
Obstetric Nursing	9	12.5
Urgency and Emergency Nursing	9	12.5
Intensive Care Nursing	4	5.5
Cardiology and Hemodynamics Nursing	4	5.5
Oncology Nursing	3	4.2
Neonatal and Pediatric Nursing	3	4.2
Nephrology Nursing	3	4.2
Medical-Surgical Nursing	3	4.2
Public Health Nursing	2	2.8
Dermatology Nursing	2	2.8
Emergency and Intensive Care Nursing	2	2.8
Neonatal and Pediatric Intensive Care Nursing	2	2.8
Others	13	18.0

Source: Created by the authors.

## Discussion

There is a large number of specialization courses offered to nurses in the city of Salvador (BA) - Brazil, what is indicated by the high number of nurses who graduate every year. There are 28,799 nurses in Bahia currently, and they seek to continue their studies in specialization courses.

Among the courses, 30% are offered in the distance or semi-distance modality, due to the incentive and ease of access of the virtual learning field. This teaching-learning modality promotes interaction with professionals from different locations and exchange of experiences. It is a versatile and accessible medium due to the temporal and spatial flexibility, considered facilitating factors in the choice of teaching modality, since they can be adjusted depending on the availability of the student and expand the possibility of access for professionals<sup>(3-5)</sup>.

In Brazil, this teaching modality has been consolidated an effective strategy to meet the social need of the universalization of access to education. The Telehealth Brazil Program, an initiative of the Ministry of Health in this modality of education, has trained 154 Family Health Strategy teams, providing health and education support through health services broadcasted to

80 Brazilian municipalities. Nurses represent the majority of the professionals participating in these courses<sup>(14)</sup>.

However, the expanding distance or semi-distance teaching modality calls for attention to the need for reflection on the training process of specialists who do not have access to practical activities during the course<sup>(15)</sup>. It is important to emphasize that the formation of specialist nurses implies a process that transcends the accumulation of knowledge and cooperates towards the development of professionals who are in contact with the reality of their professional practice, so as to be able to articulate the theory and the practice, the form and the content, the intentionality and the conditions for action. It also involves overcoming the logic of technical rationality and reach levels of consolidation of the professional training of the citizen, supported by solidly acquired and elaborated knowledge<sup>(13)</sup>.

The minimum workload required for a specialization courses is 360 hours, according to Resolution n. 1 of June 8, 2007<sup>(11)</sup>. However, 7% of the courses<sup>(4)</sup> found in this study had a workload below that amount of hours. This happens because of lack of public supervising agencies that to establish quality indicators for the courses offered.

The most frequently offered specialization in the Municipality Occupational Nursing, probably as a consequence of the requirement of occupational medicine services in several organizations that aim to prevent and reduce risks of accidents and diseases in the workplace. The growth of courses in this area has to be understood beyond the space/time of work<sup>(7,16)</sup>. However, we must not question the high number of nursing courses focused on Occupational Nursing to the detriment of other specialties. It is undeniable that this is an essential area in the development of workers' health actions; however, the offer must be adequate to the real needs<sup>(16-17)</sup>.

Specializations in obstetric nursing and in urgency and emergency were in the second position of the rank of courses offered in the city of Salvador. Obstetric nursing reflects the stimulus for the training specialists to meet the demands the public policies of Women's Health. These have brought improvements in the quality of life of women and children assisted by obstetric nurses during childbirth. Reduction of maternal and child mortality rates<sup>(18-20)</sup>. From this perspective, a real demand for specialized training as a result of the need to implement public policies aimed at the health of women and children was confirmed.

The change in the profile of health services has led to the creation of several emergency care units. We can infer that the number of urgency and emergency specialization courses increased the need for training of human resources in this area. As an example, the prehospital care under the Unified Health System (SUS) was implemented in 2003, according to the Decree n. 1.864, establishing the Mobile Emergency Service (SAMU), and Decree n. 1600/2011, establishing the Emergency Care Network in the SUS, of which the Emergency Care Units (ECUs) are part, in order to emergency demands outside the hospital environment<sup>(21-23)</sup>.

Thus, the study brings up a reflection on the formative process of qualified professionals by exclusively theoretical courses, without practical activities, and the damage to the development

of technical skills to efficiently and effectively respond to the demands imposed by the market. There must be also a reflection about the quality and effectiveness of these courses for the nursing area, given the need for professionals gain technical skills for the consolidation of professional knowledge.

## Conclusion

We conclude that there is a large number of institutions that offer several courses of Nursing Specialization in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, with different modalities and flexible to the nurses' availability of time, which allows them to choose the course the best fit their interests, according to their time and availability. Most courses are offered in the face-to-face modality, raising questions about the importance of the hours destined to practice and traineeship of this type of training, as well as about the profile of professionals and their ability to exercise the profession.

The limitations of the present study are due to the absence of a database that provides information about the courses offered, as well as their characteristics. Thus, the absence of a regulated registration may have generated a gap in the study, which consisted in an unsystematic search for these courses.

The study represents a starting point for further research and questioning in this area, since there are still few studies on the theme, despite the fact that nursing presents a changing and dynamic reality.

## Collaborations

1. conception, design, analysis and interpretation of data: Josicélia Dumêt Fernandes, Rosana Maria de Oliveira Silva, Ana Lúcia Arcanjo Oliveira Cordeiro and Ana Carolina Pinto da Silva;

2. writing of the article, relevant critical review of intellectual content: Josicélia Dumêt Fernandes, Rosana Maria de Oliveira Silva, Ana Lúcia Arcanjo Oliveira Cordeiro, Ana Carolina

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3. final approval of the version to be published: Josicélia Dumêt Fernandes and Rosana Maria de Oliveira Silva.

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