

Letter to the Editor

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The Need for a Standardized Disaster Curriculum in Nursing Education

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Dear Editor,

Disasters pose immense challenges to health care systems, requiring well-prepared professionals, particularly nurses, to respond effectively.¹ As frontline responders, nurses are crucial in disaster management, from immediate medical interventions to long-term recovery support.² However, a significant gap remains in standardized disaster education within nursing curricula worldwide.

Examining disaster management education across nursing faculties in Türkiye reveals that only 47.4% (83 universities) offer disaster-related courses, and merely 14 institutions mandate such education. Although these courses cover vital topics, including triage, logistics, ethical decision-making, and psychosocial support, inconsistencies in course offerings highlight an urgent need for a unified disaster nursing curriculum to ensure all nursing graduates possess fundamental disaster management competencies.

The recent earthquake disaster in Türkiye showed several critical deficiencies in current disaster nursing education³ including excessive focus on theory, insufficient hands-on training, and inadequate coverage of critical topics. Practical training is a major shortcoming, lacking simulation exercises, scenario-based learning, and triage skill development. Additionally, essential course topics such as disaster health logistics, mass casualty management, and ethical decision-making require more emphasis. Gaps in psychosocial support, emotional resilience, and crisis management further hinder preparedness. Post-disaster care, including rehabilitation planning and stress management, also needs improvement.

The absence of standardized disaster education raises concerns about nursing graduates' preparedness to handle crises. Nurses trained under varied curricula may lack essential competencies, potentially compromising disaster response efficiency. The need for a cohesive curriculum is evident, ensuring that all nursing students, regardless of institution, receive comprehensive and practical disaster training⁴.

We urge academic institutions, policymakers, and healthcare organizations to collaborate in establishing a standardized disaster curriculum for nursing education. Integrating uniform disaster training across nursing programs can enhance readiness, ultimately improving healthcare system resilience during crises⁵. Addressing this educational gap is paramount to fostering a globally competent nursing workforce capable of managing disasters effectively.

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