


# How Will the COVID-19 Pandemic Reshape Nursing Education Globally?

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## Abstract

The following editorial aims to discuss the transformative impact of COVID-19 on multiple dimensions of nursing education. Nurse educators have a great role in turning the uncertainty into opportunity by adapting to the “new normal” utilizing their expertise to prepare the next generation of nurses and nursing students to face our global health challenges.

## Keywords

Coronavirus Disease 2019, COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2, Nursing Education

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## 1. Introduction

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a newly discovered virus that causes mild to severe respiratory illness which can be detrimental to older people and those with underlying symptoms. The virus has greatly affected the lives of millions of people. Since December 2019 when the virus erupted in China, it has quickly spread globally resulting in more than 28.5 million confirmed cases and more than 900,000 recorded deaths as of September 14, 2020 [1]. Since COVID-19 started, the pandemic has significantly impacted all nurses and healthcare providers across the world, raising numerous critical questions about the current and future of nursing education [2]. The coronavirus pandemic will likely have a transformative impact on multiple dimensions of nursing education. Nurse educators around the globe should prepare to respond quickly.

## 2. Online Training

Education is learner-centered uses an interactive approach to engaging learners and develop their abilities. Educational systems that excel are nimble and always infuse flexibility into teaching and learning. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged educational systems worldwide. When schools and universities are closed because of restrictions on large gatherings, the adaptability of the online teaching-learning method is becoming popular. Nursing education is changing its approach both clinically and academically in light of the pandemic. We have come to learn that being in contact with Nurse educators at any time, and anywhere is feasible for students to acquire skills and knowledge in clinical practice. However, many nurses and nursing students around the world are lacking for the minimum required technology and access to high-speed internet for distance learning.

## 3. Upskilling Nurses

For many years we have been aware of the risk of a global pandemic. However, we now are experiencing this as a reality and are in the phase of the pandemic where quick management actions are necessary. This pandemic has challenged nurse's knowledge, skills, and morals in every way possible. Pandemic preparedness is a major area to upskill nurses in all aspects. Nurses are proved themselves worldwide in performing multiple roles and saving lives. Revising the skills and procedures to address emergencies and pandemic responses is needed in nursing education. The correct and proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) in the context of acute shortage is a management skill that is challenging for nurses.

## 4. Critical Care Support

Are we really prepared for pandemics? The increasing demand for nurses in critical care at the time of pandemic is significant [3]. Also, integrated care with primary health care, community surveillance teams, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a critical approach during pandemics. Establishing critical care teams for pandemic responses will remain a challenge [4]. Expert nurses are needed in the area of respiratory care, ventilator care, critical care, nursing management, and infection control.

## 5. Pandemic of Misinformation

Rumors and false information ranging from unscientific advice to conspiracy theories are significantly impacting the life of every person. Mental health is a major concern during the COVID outbreak due to increased levels of stress, frustration and depression during the lockdown. Emerging pandemics call for unique health communication and education strategies in which public health agencies need to satisfy the public's information needs about possible risks while preventing risk exaggeration and dramatization [5].

Also, the role of social media is not meant to increase the stress level and cause panic in the population. Instead, it should exist as a platform for evidence-based information. Scientific education is key to awareness and prevention in a pandemic.

## **6. Nursing Students Acceleration Program**

Even before COVID-19; nursing shortage poses an immense challenge. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF); 6 million nurses are needed to achieve global health targets. The World Health Organization (WHO) report, State of the World's Nursing, estimates there was a global shortage of 5.9 million nurses in 2018, a slight improvement from the 6.6 million shortage in 2016 [6].

With an increasing emphasis on preparing nurses at the baccalaureate and higher degree level, one innovative approach to nursing education is the accelerated degree program for non-nursing graduates. These programs are built on previous learning experiences and provide a way for individuals with undergraduate degrees in other disciplines to transition into nursing [7].

## **7. Re-Instate Retired Nurses**

Many nursing organizations from different countries are making efforts to bring back and utilize retired nurses to meet the acute nursing shortage during the pandemic. A recent article from Nursing Times, Work underway on emergency coronavirus legislation to reinstate retired nurses importantly addresses this issue [4]. It is important that lapsed licenses be re-instated [8]. Boards of Nursing can play a vital role in reinstating licenses for retired nurses based on their health status and capacity to work, years after retirement, and share the responsibility during the pandemic [9]. Nevertheless, nursing boards and healthcare authorities will be required not to eliminate the obligation they have towards retired nurses who are at serious risk of getting infected with COVID-19.

## **8. Conclusion**

No doubt, COVID-19 has presented serious challenges and uncertainties, especially for the healthcare systems. Nurse educators have a great role in turning the uncertainty into opportunity by adapting to the “new normal” utilizing their expertise to prepare the next generation of nurses and nursing students to face our global health challenges.

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## Conflicts of Interest

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