

REVIEW PAPER

School Nurses and Their Role in Emergency Health Care at Schools in the Last Thirty Years (1982-2011) in Greece: a Systematic Review Based on Greek Legislation Data

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Abstract

Background: School Nursing embraces the pupil communities and school life in many a country across the world. This article focuses on Greek reality and analyses the Nurses' role in emergency health care-related issues from a legal perspective in the last thirty years (1982-2011). Presented are the evolution of School Nursing in Greece, Legal Provisions pertaining to it, Professional Duties, and the work of School Nurses, keeping abreast of existing legal bibliography including the latest Act, which introduces the description of duties vis-à-vis emergency health care.

Aim: This study links Greek School Nurses with Emergency Health Care in the School Environment. It is aimed at updating and raising awareness about further legal regulation of emergency care procedures at Schools and constructing a model to be compared to the current legislation and practice in other countries.

Methods: Systematic review of laws and review of articles published in the last 30 years (1982-2011) in scientific journals, academic databases included in HEAL-LING, SAGE, ELSEVIER, WILSON, SCIENCEDIRECT, MEDLINE, PUBMED, PsycINFO, Cochrane, EMBASE, SCOPUS and CINAHL having as search criteria and key words the terms of Greek language «Σχολική Νοσηλευτική», (“School Nursing” [MeSH]), «Ειδική Αγωγή» (“Special Education” [MeSH]), «Επείγουσα Φροντίδα» (“Emergency Care” [MeSH]), «Νοσηλευτική Νομοθεσία» (“Law and Nursing Ethics” [MeSH]), «Ατομα με Ειδικές Ανάγκες» (“Children with Special Needs” [MeSH]), «Πρώτες Βοήθειες» (“First Aid” [MeSH]).

Discussion: School Nursing in Greece is only limited to Special Education whereas health care procedures are rather unclear from a legal point of view. Further clinical training, wider roles for nurses in emergency care, and the introduction of School Nurses in all Schools and of a legal framework supporting them may be some of the future development prospects for this profession in Greece.

Conclusion: An important finding of this study is the conclusion that in Greece School Nurses in the last third years are solely confined to daily, scheduled care of Children with Special Needs and their Education rather than responding to emergency health needs, their role being marked by the absence of a clear legal framework.

Key-words: School Nursing, Special Education, Emergency Care, Law and Nursing Ethics, Children with Special Needs, First Aid