




## Editorial

### Nursing Inquiry: Like a ‘Box of Chocolates’ -a ‘Flavor’ for All Nurses

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### Nursing Inquiry: Like a “Box of Chocolates” — a “Flavor” for All Nurses

In April 2023, the *Journal of the Academy of Forensic Nursing* was launched. Reflecting on the past two and a half years and this edition, I am reminded of the significant evolution in forensic nursing inquiry and the essential role that nurses’ expert opinions and observations play in advancing our field’s knowledge base. It is notable to consider the historical progression of nursing research and the diverse pathways through which our collective expertise has developed.

In fact, I often liken nursing inquiry to a box of chocolates: it comes in different “sizes” (such as case studies, quality and safety efforts, evidence-based practice, and quantitative, qualitative, and mixed designs; and different “flavors” (such as nurse-led inquiry, participation in interdisciplinary teams, and conducting a scoping review). The history of nursing research is rich and ever-evolving, and my hope is that, for some of you, this editorial will be a walk down memory lane, and that the rest of you will be captivated by the history of nursing and forensic inquiry. Sit back and enjoy your favorite chocolate! I hope you enjoy reading this editorial as much as I enjoyed writing it.

#### Historical Development of Nursing Research

While I cannot give true justice in this editorial to our discipline’s journey in the development of nursing research, my hope was to capture some of the milestones. All nurses recognize that Florence Nightingale was the “Mother of Modern-day Nursing,” committed to compassion, observation, and lifelong learning during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. She is quoted as stating, “Let us never consider ourselves finished, we must be learning all of our lives” (Karimi &

Masoudi, 2015). Her aspirations for the discipline of nursing have endured across the globe ever since.

While there was a lag in nursing efforts set forth by Nightingale, during the 1950s a shift occurred that would set nursing research on a path that continues to soar today. Stolley et al. (2000) postulated in “The Evolution of Nursing Research” that the introduction of nursing theory may have been the catalyst in nursing curriculum framework, introducing such concepts as *person, environment, health, and nursing*. Nursing theorists of this era, Virginia Henderson, Dorothy Johnson, Martha Rogers, Hildegard Peplau, and Sister Callista Roy (who I had the privilege to work with during my studies), pursued conceptual frameworks that sought to capture the art and science of nursing. While there was still little focus on clinical-based research, such research was on the horizon.

Did you know that 125 years ago (in 1900) the *American Journal of Nursing* was founded? Former editor-in-chief of the journal from 2010–2022, Maureen “Shawn” Kennedy, recaps the rich history of the journal (Kennedy, 2023). She states that “the Associated Alumnae of the United States and Canada, later which became the American Nurses Association, developed a plan for a nursing journal in 1899.” The article goes on to cite the “Proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Convention of the Associated Alumnae of Trained Nurses.” This committee “formed a stock company, sold 24 shares to association members and 550 subscriptions at \$2.00 each, enlisted colleagues to edit, write and hired a publisher to produce the first issue in October 1900.” The *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research* began in 1969 at the McGill University, Ingram School of Nursing; subsequently, since 2016, the journal has been published by SAGE Publishing.

In the 1960s, the American Nurses Association developed the Commission on Nursing Research, and in the 1970s the National Center for Nursing Research (currently known as the National Institute of Nursing Research) was established within the National Institutes of Health (Stolley et al., 2000).

Doctoral education emerged in the 1920s (Meleis, 1988). In 2001, the first Doctor of Nursing Practice commenced at the University of Kentucky College of Nursing (Melander et al., 2023) and according to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) more than 73,000 nurses have graduated from a DNP program. Today, the role of nurse scientist has proliferated in healthcare organizations across the United States, aligning institutional priorities that address quality and safety, improving patients’ outcomes, addressing patient and staff satisfaction and costs. The role of nurse scientists is focused on bridging the gap between research and practice, supporting clinical nurses in their scholarly endeavors, preparing for Magnet designation and redesignation, and fostering a culture of inquiry (Birkhoff et al., 2020; Granger et al., 2022).

### **“What about Forensic Nursing Inquiry?”**

Forensic nurses have a long history of evidence-informed practice dating back to the 1970s, with the work of Dr. Ann Burgess and Lynda Holstrom (Burgess & Holstrom, 1979); Dr. Patricia Speck’s work in the 1990s (Speck & Aiken, 1995); Dr. Linda Ledray’s groundbreaking visionary work on the *Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Development & Operation Guide* (Ledray, 1999); Dr. Jacquelyn C. Campbell’s seminal work in violence against women, spanning 40 years with over 300 publications, not including book chapters (Johns Hopkins Univ. School of Nursing, 2025); and notably the work of our pioneering visionary and pathfinder, Virginia Lynch

(Pan, 2024). We honor their early scholarly work and no doubt this edition of the *Journal of the Academy of Forensic Nursing* will be viewed with pride and admiration.

This edition features a study comparing DNA yields from different body areas and another offering guidelines for collecting oral-cavity evidence in sexual assault cases. One study examined challenges in healing after IPV and identified themes relevant to patient care. Another paper used vignettes to analyze how psychological defenses, media, and diagnostic politics may foster false links between mental illness and violence. Finally, another research team examined how nurses manage their duties to patients when those patients' actions create moral conflict.

This edition continues to build on a body of knowledge established more than five decades ago by early leaders in forensic nursing, as well as the contributions of individuals who have helped develop the field of nursing research, including those associated with AFN.

The Editorial Board invites you to submit your innovative research, case studies, and scholarly work to our journal. Whether it is addressing workflows, quality initiatives, education, or documentation, you are all likely to see opportunities that would enhance and improve care. Clinicians guide researchers in forming relevant inquiry, and researchers assist clinicians in demonstrating the importance of their work and outcomes of their care. Nursing inquiry is like a box of chocolates: it comes in different "sizes" and "flavors". We need all the chocolates in the box. Our goal for this journal is to create a space for sharing diverse forms of nursing scholarship.

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