



Title: Advanced practice nursing in Portuguese ICU's? – Lessons from within –

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Background: Delivering safe, effective and timely healthcare services in a context of a complex, dynamic and specific in nature healthcare system, while answering patients demands and cost imperatives, is a challenge that is being globally addressed through the introduction of new healthcare roles along different levels of care.

Sociodemographic changes, along with growing medical knowledge and the advent of technologies, such as mechanical ventilation, has increased costs and the demand for critical care and its providers, thus having an inevitable impact upon patient's management and critical care nurses practice. This led to the implementation of advance practice nursing in acute care settings by nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists in countries such as the UK, USA and Australia.

Although highly recommended by healthcare politicians, advance practice nurse hasn't yet been implemented in the Portuguese healthcare setting. Notwithstanding new advanced roles, such as the Nurse Specialist in Critical Care tend to emerge without apparent added value for the health care system or the professionals.

Objectives: To determine the position of the specialist nurses, practicing in an ICU, in a Portuguese university hospital, regarding the implementation of advance practice nurse in Portugal.

Methods: Descriptive, exploratory, pilot study that included 14 specialist nurses working in an ICU from an academic center hospital in Lisbon, comprehending the applications of a self-administered questionnaire regarding the acceptability of Advanced Nursing practice by Specialist Nurses. Content validity was judged by a panel of specialist nurses.



Results: Analysis of descriptive statistics revealed that specialist nurses working at this ICU were available to perform advance practice nurse, admitting that this would increase job satisfaction, but about 80% assumed the need of additional training to develop some specific tasks. They have also outlined the need for role clarification, stakeholder's acceptability and the need of health politics involvement. All nurses claim to perform tasks that fit in the advanced practice international definition.

Conclusions: It seems to be consensual, among this sample of nurse specialists, that the implementation of APN in Portugal its relevant and feasible, although it will require curricular adjustments, political and other healthcare professionals support and involvement.