ABSTRACT

Objective: to review scientific literature in graduate nursing related to chronic wounds. Method: this is a documentary nature study, held in the database of the Center of Studies and Research in Nursing, the Brazilian Association of Nursing. The data collection instrument and the form inclusion criteria studies of dissertations or have, published between the years 2001 to 2010 were used. The sample consisted of 43 studies.

Results: the highest publication year was 2008, with 23.2% of publications and the lowest was 2001, with only 2.3%. The site with the highest number of searches was the state of São Paulo with 20.9%. The injury was the most studied pressure ulcers with 42% of the studies.

Conclusion: it was noticed growing interest of nursing with respect to chronic wounds, but the approach still focuses on the curative aspect.

Descriptors: Wounds and Injuries; Nursing; Research.

RESUMO

Objetivo: analisar a produção científica na pós-graduação de Enfermagem relacionada às feridas crônicas. Método: pesquisa de natureza documental, realizada no banco de dados do Centro de Estudos e Pesquisa em Enfermagem, da Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem. Se utilizou como instrumento de coleta de dados um formulário e como critérios de inclusão estudos de dissertação ou de teses, publicados entre os anos de 2001 a 2010. A amostra foi de 43 estudos. Resultados: o ano de maior publicação foi 2008, com 23,2% publicações e o de menor foi 2001, com apenas 2,3%. O local com maior número de pesquisas foi o Estado de São Paulo, com 20,9%. A lesão mais estudada foi a úlcera por pressão, com 42% dos estudos. Conclusão: percebeu-se um interesse crescente da Enfermagem no que concerne às feridas crônicas, porém, o enfoque ainda se centra no aspecto curativo. Descritores: Ferimentos e Lesões; Enfermagem; Pesquisa.
INTRODUCTION

Wound Care is a dynamic process, complex, and that requires special attention especially when it concerns a chronic injury. It should take into account that the chronic wounds develop rapidly and are refractory to various types of treatments and are predisposed conditions that preclude normal healing. 

A wound is represented by the interruption of the continuity of a body tissue, in greater or lesser extent, caused by any type of physical trauma, chemical, mechanical or triggered by a clinical condition, which activates the organic defense fronts of for the counter attack. 

In the context of public health, chronic wounds are a frequent problem. Despite the growing demand of people with these injuries in virtually all the country's health care services, the records relating to the care of these patients are scarce, as well as studies on the economic impact caused by these diseases are isolated. 

In Brazil, currently, the treatment of wounds receives special attention from health professionals, highlighting the performance of nurses, who have contributed much to the progress and success of the treatment of people with chronic injuries. Searching to be a global service, aiming to cure or heal, the improvement of clinical and social status of patients, rationalization and efficiency of procedures targeted to treat skin wounds, with the subsequent optimization of care 

However, it is important to point out that the incidence and prevalence of injuries has been growing as a result of the change in the profile of the Brazilian population with the increase in longevity, accompanied by unsuitable life habits, which generate high rates of chronic diseases such as diabetes mellitus, vascular diseases, among other. 

Chronic ulcers, currently called complex wounds, are considered a public health problem. They contribute to the increase in the number of early retirements, causing a loss of active labor. 

Considering the above, the research on treatment of wounds receives great emphasis in nursing publications, demonstrating that the responsibility for the treatment and prevention of these being attributed to the nurse; they should evaluate the injury and prescribe the most appropriate treatment, in addition to guiding and supervising the nursing team on the implementation of the dressing. It is necessary that the nurse may perceive that these skills are intrinsic to their daily routine. 

The practice of care for people with wounds is a specialty within the nursing field, recognized by the Brazilian Society of Nursing in Dermatology (SOBEND) and the Brazilian Association of Stomatherapy (SOBEST) and at the same time is a challenge that requires specific knowledge, skill and a holistic approach. Nursing care for wounds requires special attention on the part of health professionals, emphasizing the role of the nurse, who seeks new knowledge to base their practice. 

Before the need to link the scientific production of nursing in improving topic wound care practice, this work is justified by presenting research that seeks to reflect something of the reality of the problem in different scenarios and, thus, submit to managers, health professionals and researchers, information that can support the proposition of new studies by filling gaps in distinct contexts, as well as strategies and themes that contribute to the improvement in the quality of care, consistent with the reality experienced by each one. 

Considering the above raises the following questions: What is the scientific production of nursing in relation to chronic wounds? What are the focuses of nursing production in the constructing knowledge regarding chronic wounds? 

Faced with these questions, the research aimed to: to analyze the scientific Nursing production related to chronic wounds during the period from 2001 to 2010, available from the database of the Center for Studies and Research in Nursing (CEPEN) of the Brazilian Nursing Association (ABEn); investigate the approaches of the Nursing production in the construction of knowledge relating to chronic wounds; categorize the prospects of the Nursing production, pondering year of publication, place, institution, type of wound addressed and topic.

METHOD

Study nature documentary, which had as its data source abstracts of dissertations and theses about nursing research in relation to chronic wounds during the period of 2001 to 2010, made available in the database of CEPEN and ABEn which includes dissertations and theses. 

At the end of selection of the articles an instrument for data collection was completed, containing the year of publication, title of work, type of wound addressed and topic. For
the exploration of the text, the second part of the instrument was completed with the categories and subcategories, according to the focuses given by the authors. Therefore, to achieve the proposed objectives, the topic content analysis technique is elected, following the pre-analysis steps, which constitutes the initial reading, the classification and categorization, with subcategories, data analysis and interpretation.

The criteria for selection of the sample were an approach to topic issue to be investigated and inclusion in the information abstracts relating to the proposed objectives. The data collection period occurred in the month of June 2012. The study population consists of 4,281 publications indexed in the CEPEN/ABEn databases. After the first selection stage 65 theses and dissertations were found involving the topic. During the pre-analysis 22 publications were excluded, making the sample a total of 43 studies to be analyzed.

As presented in chart 01, the first year of greater publication was 2008, with ten (23.2%) publications and the lowest was 2001, with only one (2.3%) summary. The majority of the studies were a result of theses, with 37 (86%) work composing the sample. The place with the greatest number of researches was the State of São Paulo, with nine (20.9%), University of São Paulo.

When one adopts as the approach to the division of time line in two poles (2001-2005 and 2006-2010), it is observed that the prevalence of work with the topic has grown, put that in the first five years fourteen studies were published (32.5%), whereas this...
number more than doubles in five years later with 29 (67.5 %) surveys.

As for as the types of injuries, figure 02 shows the variables.

![Figure 2. Types of wounds addressed in the sample. Research Data, 2012.](image)

Observing the above graphic, it displays that the type of injury most studied is the pressure ulcer with 42% of the studies. The lesion of lesser interest in research was the oncologic wound, with only one study (2 %). There have been studies that did not specify the type of wound (28 %) and other which included wounds chronic and acute as topic investigated (2 %), therefore they were also included in this study’s sample. The chronic wounds that were specified in the research included pressure ulcer, neuropathic ulcers, diabetes, leprosy vascular and oncological ulcer wounds, which accounted for 70% of the sample.

Figure 3 shows the points raised in the studies analyzed.

![Figure 3. Issues addressed in the studies. Research Data, 2012.](image)

Figure 3 shows that the authors converge to a focus still centered in the curative aspect, in the detriment of the preventive, approaching the theme treatment of wounds in fifteen (29 %) studies. The other aspects investigated were: prevention with eleven (21 %); risk factors in six (12 %); incidence in five (10 %), prevalence in three (6 %). Some studies, that compose a quantitative very small sample, addressed other issues such as: complications; health education; quality of life; assessment; and, the team’s feelings facing the patients.

DISCUSSION

Nursing is an applied science that acquires knowledge and uses scientific procedures to employ and test the basic methods or its principles in the practice. It involves two major areas of knowledge - science and art - that seek to fully articulate, forming a mix of knowledge and practices that culminate within human care. Nursing has undergone a series of transformations in its practices and this has occurred in the face of changing times in education and modern society, which
now requires these professional skills that are beyond technical rationality.12

With the technological advances in the area of patient wound care, ascension with respect to products and methods used was obtained. In nursing there is the search for better technical scientific preparation consistent with the new trends and perspectives, in part due to the ascension of the nurse’s functions and the specialized activities of this professional in wound care.1,7

These aspects justify the increasing numbers of scientific papers, theses and dissertations, addressing this issue.

Wound care is a daily life activity of nurses, and at the same time, a challenge that requires specific knowledge, skill and a holistic approach.

The need for greater knowledge in the performance of wound care seems to awaken professionals in the care area for the research. Perhaps the study of this subject meets the needs of nurses working in care, in evaluating their wound care practices.12

The wound topic addresses various aspects, classifications and different types of injuries, where each one has its specificity within the whole. Thus, it is necessary to identify the characteristics of each wound, approaching the patient in a holistic way, in different scenarios to which they are inserted, in order to understand the peculiarities of each context and adequately plan the care to be developed.

It is also noteworthy that the largest number of studies was conducted in large urban centers located in the southeastern region of the country. This is justified since the implementation of specialty stomatherapy that occurred in Brazil in 1990, in the State of São Paulo, in the School of Nursing at the University of São Paulo (USP), by a professor within the institution. Since then, other universities, mainly located in this state and neighboring states, began to offer masters and doctoral courses and research involving this issue, especially since 2005 with the approval of the rules for obtaining the title of the stomatherapist nurse by SOBEST. Thus, the quantity of teaching centers for post-graduate or even of specialized services in this area still concentrated in this region of the country.13

This evidence points to the urgent need for expansion of research in the cities in the Northern and Northeast regions, which confirms the need for wound research incentives in these localities.

With regard to Figure 1, it lists the types of wounds that stood out among the studies which comprise the sample, although the wounds are classified within a specified group “chronic wounds” as well as those within the group ‘wound’.

Pressure ulcers (PU) are characterized as localized lesions on the skin and/or in tissue or underlying structure, usually on a bone protuberance, resulting from pressure or isolated pressure combined with friction and/or shear.14-5 Studies show that the greater tissue damage, the greater the ulcer development stage and the cost of its treatment.15-4 In Brazil representing a serious problem in terms of personal suffering and economic and a challenge to the interdisciplinary team, since they consume exorbitant resources from the healthcare system17, which might explain the higher rate of research focused on this type of wound (Fig. 2).

As for leprosy, it is know that today it is still a serious health problem, especially due to its high incapacitating ability. Among the secondary injuries from leprosy are palmar and plantar ulcers as the most common and these caused by peripheral neuropathy. The incidence of plantar ulcers in leprosy patients varies between 20% and 70%18, revealing a current and comprehensive issue, which supports the development of research that seek its resolution, although one may consider an index still incipient.

Regarding the leg ulcer, this can be defined as the loss of the skin that affects the lower limbs, caused by vascular system dysfunction19, reaching 0.1 to 0.3 % of the world’s population. Among the leg ulcers, 75% to 80% are venous caused.20 Better understanding of this health problem represents a starting point for proper actions of the multidisciplinary team both in primary care and in the levels of secondary and tertiary care for this patient approach and the development of public health policies.

Regarding the diabetic neuropathic ulcers, these are caused when diabetic neuropathy increases or protective sensitivity cause loss of the feet, making this segment more vulnerable to trauma, and may even lead to partial or total amputation of the lower limbs (MWII). The healing process of these lesions, in Brazil, takes around ninety days, therefore representing a problem with great medical, social and economic impact.21

The growing number of people with difficult to heal wounds is a situation that has attracted the attention of some of the healthcare sector administrators and...
researchers in the area, due to the hospital costs and the impact of these injuries in the lives of these people.  

As for the aspects most discussed among the theses and dissertations analyzed, it was found that they interact and complement each other, as discussed in the following paragraphs.

Concern for the treatment of wounds is old and many studies on the subject have been developed, which led to a major advance in understanding the different types of injuries, as well as contributed to health professionals involved in this care, where they could revise concepts and practices.

Treatments costs for diseases related to scar disabilities increase the importance of studies in search of drugs and dressings capable of interacting with the damaged tissue to accelerate the process, which justifies the nursing interest in seeking scientific evidence to solve complex healthcare practice problems.

However, the best way to avoid high treatment costs of injuries, resides in the prevention process of them. Therefore, nursing can only operate properly in injury prevention for conditions presented by detecting the patient’s predisposing risk factors and if there is recognition of the damage to the patient and health institution.

The epidemiological indicators show the incidence and prevalence of the events studied. Studies on prevalence and incidence of wounds provide valuable information about the frequency and impact of this problem in the quality of health services and enable monitoring it continuously, and provide subsidies to prevention programs.

Given the above and the importance of the issue for nursing professionals who provide care, the production of knowledge in the subject area of the wounds benefits not only the patient, but the institution and public health in a context, which enables cost-cutting and a higher degree in the quality of service provided.

**CONCLUSION**

The research showed results that corroborate the increased interest of researchers on the wounds topic, especially regarding treatment. However, the study identified some gaps that need to be filled, the example of the need for education, prevention and the expansion of graduate programs in stoma therapy and services specializing in care for people with injuries.

In the prevention of chronic wounds, the production of theses and dissertations through Nursing it shows incipient contributing with the planning of public health policies that address this problem, which, sometimes, emerges as a complication of chronic conditions, such as systemic hypertension, diabetes mellitus and leprosy that favor the emergence of wounds, leaving gaps to be filled with regard to prevention strategies.

In this context, there are many aspects that need to be revised in order to take care of patients with chronic wounds, including the physical, psychological, socioeconomic, and cultural conditions of service and training professionals that serve this clientele. These people suffer from interference in their quality of life, due to the chronicity of suffering imposed by the disease, which goes unnoticed by health professionals, caregivers and family members.

It is, therefore, the proposal and the challenge to professionals and researchers who want to contribute in this aspect, in the understanding and resolution of the needs encountered during this care.

**REFERENCES**


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