

History of Nursing: Teaching and Research in the Salus Infirmorum School of Nursing. New Challenges

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Abstract

This article aims to present new challenges for those teaching the History of nursing course in our center in Cádiz (Spain). As part of the school curriculum, we work with our students on the evolution of midwives and nurses following a chronological sequence that allows us to verify how nursing care has affected the well-being of the Spanish population.

We teach our students the importance of care and caregivers from prehistory to the 21st century. We highlight the work of Catholic orders such as the Hospitallers of Saint John of God or the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent of Paul.

Of-course we highlight the importance of the new nursing methods of the Lady with the Lamp, Florence Nightingale, without forgetting the principles that we found in her books.

We must not forget the importance of such important figures in the History of Nursing as the Jamaican Mary Seacole (a contemporary of Florence Nightingale), also remembering nurses such as Linda Richard in the United States in the second half of the 19th century or Virginia Henderson.

Keywords: *History; Nursing; Salus Infirmorum; Doctoral Level; Education*



Photography 1: Lady founder María de Madariaga (1905-2001).

Source: AHSIC, Lady Founder section [1].

Methodology

Methodologically, we carry out an epistemological analysis of the unpublished sources and a quality bibliography that we offer our students to understand the subject.

To select the bibliography we use databases (and we teach our students to use) such as Dialnet, Google Scholar and CINDOC of the CSIC (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas).

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this work is to reflect the importance of history in the epistemological development of the Nursing History subject, with the purpose of explaining the historical-anthropological approaches and methods as the most suitable. To study and analyze care in all its complexity.

The beginnings of Salus Infirmorum after The Spanish Civil War

The first Salus Infirmorum Nursing School was established in Madrid in 1943. Before, during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), María de Madariaga, the Lady founder, had worked under the guidance of Mercedes Milá in military hospitals.

In our classes we attempt to show the evolution of Salus Infirmorum. We teach students about the lady founder, Miss María de Madariaga y Alonso (1905-2001). In 2008 we published a book about Ms. Madariaga and we talked about the opening of new schools across Spain and even Morocco¹.

An article on Salus Infirmorum in Morocco by Professor Concepcion Mata [3] has recently been published. We recommend your consultation and the works published by Professor Isabel Lepiani [4] on the former Rector María Abaurrea, as well as different Works about the History of Salus Infirmorum in Cádiz that was carried out thanks to the impulse of the last Presidents Mrs. Isabel Resille, Mrs Concepción Mejías [5] and Dra. Isabel Lepiani.

As stated in the school documents, the Nursing School of Salus Infirmorum seeks to cover the education needs of a very special moment and far from extinguishing later on the school adapts itself to the social reality of the present time. Since its very foundation, the Nursing School of Salus Infirmorum has been faithful to its main objective: to provide students with technical, human, scientific, ethical and Christian education².



Figure

¹Conde Mora, F.G.: (2008) D^a María de Madariaga y Alonso (1905-2001). Fundadora de Salus Infirmorum. Cádiz [2].

²You can see: Siles, J., Solano-Ruiz, Fernández De Freitas, G., Oguisso, T. (2010) "Political Systems and the perspective on Nursing Education during the Spanish Transition (from the Franco Regime to Democracy). A contribution based on Nursing History". En Aquichán.vol. 10, n^o 3, Bogotá Sept/Dec.

Nursing history: State of research in Spain

Research on the history of nursing in Spain has a high level. We recognize the work of Mrs Francisca J Hernández Martín [6] in the development of nursing historical research in Spain.

Also, it is essential to mention José Siles, Francisco Ventosa [7], Teresa Miralles María Luisa Martínez [8] and Elena Chamorro [9]. The last decade saw the emergence of a number of high quality doctoral theses written at Spanish universities and devoted to the History of Nursing. Nowadays, many new avenues of research have been opened up in History of Nursing³.

There is also a prestigious review, *Hiades*, where you can find many articles about the History of Nursing. This journal appeared in 1994 thank to Antonio Claret and Manuel J. García Martínez [13]. Also we have *Cultura de los Cuidados* in Alicante University and *EGLE: Revista de Historia de los Cuidadores Profesionales y de las Ciencias de la Salud* directed by Francisco Javier Castro.

Of course we can't forget *Archivo Hospitalario* of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God and *Index Foundation* of Manuel Amezcua [14] and his academic contribution to nursing.

We must appoint other researchers in others Spanish universities as Ramón del Gallego Lastra of the Seminary for Research into Nursing History in the Complutense University of Madrid, Francisco Herrera in Cádiz [15-17], Juana Hernández Conesa, in Murcia, María Luz Fernández in Cantabria [18], Concha Germán Bes in University of Zaragoza [19], Carmen González in Almería [20], Manuel Cabrera in Jaén [21] and Manuel Solórzano in Basque Country.

At last, for a better understanding of midwives in Spain, we recommend reading Dolores Ruiz Berdún⁴.

Nowadays, in Cadiz, in Salus Infirmorum, we have a multidisciplinary research group coordinated by Dr. Anna Bochinno where we analyze the past and present of Nursing in Spain.

Methodology of research in nursing history

The sources we always use are, in the first place, bibliographical revisions. We also search periodical publications and original documents, as well as personal interviews given by veteran nurses, that are available in the Salus Infirmorum School archives.

Salus Infirmorum Journal: *Firmes*

It is also possible to analyze the evolution of Salus Infirmorum Nursing School in Spain through the cover pages of the journal *Firmes, Revista de las Sanitarias Españolas (Journal of Spanish Healthcare Workers)*, published by the Salus Infirmorum Brotherhood, between 1953 and 1965.

³We suggest these books: Siles González, J. (2008) "Fuentes etnográficas e Historia de la Enfermería" En *Hiades, Revista de Historia de la Enfermería*, nº 10, 1, (Ejemplar dedicado a Tradición y Modernidad. Las fuentes para el estudio de Historia de la Enfermería, pp. 111-137 [10]. Dra Miralles we recommend to read Miralles Sangro, M^a. T. et al.:(1997) "Historia de la Escuela de Enfermeras Salus Infirmorum en Madrid". En *Cultura de los Cuidados. Revista de Enfermería y Humanidades*, nº 1 y 2. Seminario de Historia y Antropología de los Cuidados Enfermeros. Universidad de Alicante. Alicante, 1997 [11] and to study Salus Infirmorum Lady founder you must read: Chamorro Rebollo, E. (2016). *La influencia de María de Madariaga y de Salus Infirmorum en la Enfermería española en la última mitad del siglo XX* [12] and Conde Mora, F. G. (2008). *D^a María de Madariaga y Alonso (1905-2001)* [2].

⁴Ruiz-Berdún, D. (2020). *Las matronas, pioneras en la universidad desde 1845*. *ResearchGate*, 8(2), 1-19 [22].

Another inspirational source of information constitute the interviews with veteran nurses who worked at our School. For these interviews we use the method of interviewing analyzing of course the context with historical nursing research.

We additionally look for other relevant documents in other library catalogues. In *Vatican Apostolic Archives*, for instance, there are many documents that are suited to our purpose. Years ago we took part in the 7th International Congress of Nursing History in Alicante. During this academic event, teachers affiliated with Salus Infirmorum presented three papers. One of the papers analyzed the relation between our Nursing School and the Spanish and Moroccan Royal Households.

Salus infirmorum at doctoral level

We think that the History of Salus Infirmorum should be integrated into undergraduate and master’s degree programmes. At the doctoral level, it is required that the history of nursing course should be based on the scholarship generated by nurse historians.

For example, currently we may observe a sharp increase in tuberculosis in many countries. By familiarizing our students with the history of nursing history, we also can explain the sense of professional heritage and identity.

It is basic to know the origins of your profession to know the historical sources that allow you to contextualize your health profession in a historical era. As George Santayana [23] said “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”.

Our teaching is not limited to theoretical teaching, but we visit Historical Archives, Museums and archaeological sites where they can learn about the importance of nursing, synonymous with excellence in patient care.



Photography 2: Students in salus infirmorum nursing school.

In each of our classes, we offer our students tools to delve into each historical moment of the development of Nursing and we analyze it.

In conclusion, what do we offer our students?

Through our classes we teach historical research methodology, highlighting the typology of sources, highlighting the importance of consulting a quality bibliography as well as the use of primary and unpublished sources.

In this context, it is apposite to recall the conference Responsibility, presence and integrity of the Nurse in the modern world held in 1982 in Melbourne (Australia) and devoted to the life and work of Maria de Madariaga [24,25].

Conclusion

In conclusion, historical research, as a type of scholarly inquiry, requires attention to methodology to uncover and interpret findings in the field of nursing. In our classes, we acquaint students with different methods of historical research through substantive guidelines for library and archival research, and definitions of primary and secondary sources. The school also offers our students the best innovation in our research, providing them with education based on Christian ethics.

Knowing the past and history of Salus Infirmorum, we are led to believe that we can offer our students a better future, at the same time being faithful to the principles laid out by María de Madariaga y Alonso. By being familiar with the history of our educational institution, our students have the opportunity to look to the future with new challenges as nurses.

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