

*This editorial is dedicated to the
WHO Assembly 2020
Year of the Nurse and Midwife*

The year 2020 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale. She remains, undoubtedly, a role model and leader for nursing, and much of her teachings and practices are as pertinent today as they were in the 1800s. In the 1870s, she wrote in her personal diary that ‘it would take 100 to 150 years to see the kind of nursing she envisioned’, a truly remarkable statement in this year, 2020 [1870 + 150 = 2020].

Her writings sparked worldwide health care reform, and in 1860 she established St. Thomas’ Hospital and the Nightingale Training School for Nurses. She advocated for whole health care systems where the focus was not only on the disease, but also on the individual. She was one of the first to recognise the importance of hand washing to prevent the transmission of infection, a factor that is of critical importance today in preventing the transmission of COVID-19. She was an excellent data journalist and developed, among other things, the visual presentation of data, including the pie chart.

So, where is nursing in 2020? According to the WHO [<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/nursing-and-midwifery>], nurses and midwives account for 50% of the global health workforce. They are the largest sector of the health care workforce; they play a critical role in health promotion, disease prevention and delivering primary and community care, but worryingly, from a global perspective, we will need an additional 9 million nurses and midwives by 2030 to achieve the WHO’s Sustainable Development Goals and to continue to deliver and provide health care.

Nurses play a key role in the field of wound management. They provide the majority of wound care to patients, mainly in the community setting, and this can account for up to 68% of their time.¹ Recently, we have shown the significant role that nurses play as research leaders in wound care, particularly in areas of research that inform clinical practice guidelines and thus clinical practice. It is time, therefore, to recognise this important group in 2020.¹

Nurses do not work in isolation; indeed, optimal patient care requires a multidisciplinary approach. However, nursing and the recognition of nursing as a profession – while universally admired – is not universally acknowledged or recognised. Variations exist in levels of education and working practices, thus part of acknowledging 2020 as WHO’s Year of the Nurse and Midwife is to advocate for our colleagues around the globe, to support initiatives for further education and to promote leadership in nursing.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has put a spotlight on the various roles that nurses play, not only in health care in general, but also on the front line in the management of this disease. Nurses have demonstrated professionalism, innovation, leadership and a commitment to the lives of those they serve. We thank them, one and all.

EWMA plays a key role in supporting multidisciplinary and, year on year, recognises nurses through their leadership of specific committees, working groups, documents and in senior executive positions. ►

JOURNAL EDITORIAL

We look forward to continuing this into the future and advancing the roles not only of nurses but of all professions.

This issue of the Journal of EWMA marks the first issue in our new format and, with a slight change in our title, and includes eight original manuscripts. They include amongst others an overview of wounds present in Belgium residential care centres and a test of the surgical site infection-related serviceability of a novel silver-based dressing material for acute wound management. A case report from Italy illustrates the care of a non-HIV-positive patient who contemporaneously suffered from Kaposi's sarcoma and bullous pemphigoid. Additionally, we present a manuscript where the efficacy of proactive screening of patients at risk of developing a diabetic foot ulcer was measured. One article for clinical practice discusses key components of a valid consent to treatment, as well as different forms of consent. Finally, a methodological study illustrates the translation and cross-cultural adaptation of an original tool from English into Swiss French.

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