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Abstract

Factors Impeding Professional Nurse-Led Entrepreneurship: A Scoping Review †

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Introduction: Innovation in healthcare is increasingly vital, yet nursing entrepreneurship remains underutilized globally, with only 0.5–1% of nurses engaging in entrepreneurial ventures. In the South African context, professional nurses face a unique set of challenges that limit their involvement in entrepreneurship. These impediments not only restrict nurses' potential to contribute innovative solutions but also impact the overall responsiveness of the healthcare system to evolving needs.

Objectives: The aim of this review was to explore and map the existing evidence on factors impeding professional nurses from venturing into entrepreneurship.

Methods: A comprehensive scoping review was conducted across four major academic databases, yielding an initial total of 2240 articles. After removing duplicates and screening for relevance based on strict inclusion and exclusion criteria, 15 high-quality peer-reviewed articles published between 2016 and 2024 were included in the final analysis. A total of 440 articles were excluded due to paywall restrictions (n = 200), limited access (n = 100), and duplication (n = 140). Data were charted and thematically analyzed to identify common impediments and proposed interventions.

Results: The review identified four dominant categories of factors impeding professional nurses from pursuing entrepreneurship: (1) lack of education and training in entrepreneurial skills, (2) financial constraints and limited access to funding, (3) institutional and policy-related impediments, including lack of structural support, and (4) societal attitudes and perceptions, which often undermine nurses' entrepreneurial potential. Collectively, these factors limit the entrepreneurial potential of professional nurses and highlight the need for structural, educational, and policy-level interventions to support and encourage entrepreneurship in the nursing profession.

Conclusions: This scoping review contributes to the limited body of knowledge on nursing entrepreneurship by systematically identifying the key impediments preventing professional nurses from pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities. The findings reveal a significant gap between the potential and actual engagement of professional nurses in entrepreneurship. Addressing these impediments through targeted education, policy reform, and institutional support can empower nurses to become agents of innovation and transformation within the healthcare sector.

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