

**COMPETENCE CHARACTERISTICS OF A NURSE IN SWITZERLAND:
PROFESSIONAL, ETHICAL, LEGAL PRACTICE**

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The article highlights the competence characteristics of a nurse in Switzerland, in particular in the field of professional, ethical and legal practice. The analysis of scientific, pedagogical and medical literature has been carried out covering theoretical and methodological foundations of the medical practitioners' vocational training and its peculiarities, the ethical component in nurses' professional activities, etc.

The aim of the article is to analyze the competencies of the nurse in the Swiss labor market, which involves the study of international and national documents, as well as the needs of the labor market of the research country.

The theoretical research methods were used in the process of investigation (an analysis and synthesis, systematization and generalization).

It is determined that a licensed practical nurse in Switzerland is a specialist who has successfully completed training in the relevant educational and professional program and meets the requirements for beginners and is ready to perform professional functions. The features of the Framework of Competencies for the Nurse Specialist, elaborated by the International Council of Nursing, including professional, ethical and legal practice; care provision and management; professional, personal and quality development have been studied.

Knowledge, skills and abilities of a licensed practical nurse in Switzerland, which are necessary for the organization and implementation of patient care in the professional, ethical and legal contexts, have been reflected. The necessity of mastering both professional and soft skills is noted.

Presented conclusions state that professional care provided by nursing staff in Switzerland involves the provision of independent care and support provided by nurses independently or in collaboration with other professionals, other persons who are related or in partnership with the patient, social communities in different life situations.

The prospects for further research have been identified, which are to study the possibilities and features of ensuring continuous professional development of nurses in Switzerland.

Keywords: *ethical practice; competence; a nurse; professional practice; legal practice; framework of competencies; Switzerland.*

Fig. 1. Ref. 15.

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**КОМПЕТЕНТНІСНА ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА МЕДИЧНОЇ СЕСТРИ У ШВЕЙЦАРІЇ:
ПРОФЕСІЙНА, ЕТИЧНА, ПРАВОВА ПРАКТИКА**

У статті висвітлено компетентнісну характеристику медичної сестри у Швейцарії, зокрема у сфері професійної, етичної та правової практики. Виконано аналіз науково-педагогічної та медичної літератури, що висвітлює окремі аспекти проблеми дослідження. Досліджено особливості Рамки компетентностей медсестринства, розробленої Міжнародною радою медичних сестер. Відображено знання, вміння і навички ліцензованої практикуючої медичної сестри у Швейцарії, що необхідні для організації та реалізації догляду за пацієнтами з урахуванням професійного, етичного та правового контекстів. Наголошено на необхідності оволодіння як фаховими, так і соціальними навичками. Представлено висновки, сформовані на основі дослідження досвіду Швейцарії. Визначено перспективи подальших досліджень.

Ключові слова: *етична практика; компетентність; медична сестра; професійна практика; правова практика; рамка компетентностей; Швейцарія.*

Introduction. At the beginning of the XXI century, the system of training medical personnel for the needs of the country is characterized by the introduction of changes aimed at increasing the level of readiness of graduates to effectively perform professional functions, ensuring the *relevance* of training programs with labor market needs and society. As N. Mukan and A. Blavt point

out, "an important component of any educational system is higher medical education aimed at the qualitative replication of workforce capacity in the field of health care, public health protection and promotion" [6, 140]. In this context, it should be noted that legally binding and non-legally binding documents are used in the international space, which determine the scope of knowledge, skills and abilities that a

specialist working in the field of health care must possess.

Switzerland has a developed system of professional training for nurses, based on documents elaborated by the International Council of Nurses, and therefore aims to build competencies, ensuring professionals to be ready to perform their professional duties effectively. As modern scientists justly notice, nowadays “it is necessary to work intentionally and systemically with future nurses to develop new forms of behaviour and purposefully organize their educational process by introducing competence-based, learner-centered and praxeological approaches” [7, 149].

Analysis of relevant research and publications.

It is worth mentioning that the problem of nurses' professional training in the international space is the subject of scientific discussions of numerous scholars who are representatives of both pedagogical and medical fields. Namely, the issue of the theoretical and methodological bases of the medical workers training (N. Mukan, A. Blavt [6], N. Mukan, Y. Kozlovskiy, M. Kryshchanovych, [7], K. Pikon [8], V. Pituley [9]); specifics of the nursing training (M. Vovk and U. Bezkorovaina [1], S. Hordiichuk [2], M. Shegedyn [10]); ethical component in the professional activities of nurses (V. Zhovneruk and M. Holumbavska [3], A. Kravchenko [4], V. Mudritska [5]) etc. are analyzed.

The aim of the article is to analyze the competencies of a nurse in the Swiss labor market, which involves the study of international and national documents, as well as the needs of the labor market of the research country.

Research methods. Theoretical research methods were used in the process of investigation (analysis and synthesis – to study legally *binding and non-legally binding documents* of the International Council of Nurses; systematization – to shape complex characteristics of a nurse in Switzerland; generalization – to draw the conclusions).

Results. In Nursing Care Continuum Framework and Competencies, all competencies are divided into three headings: professional, ethical and legal practice; care provision and management; professional, personal and quality development (see Figure 1) [13]. It is advisable to focus on the professional competencies of a *licensed practical nurse*, since our research involves studying the experience of Switzerland and highlighting those constructive ideas, which could be implemented into national practice of training nursing personnel.

A *licensed practical nurse* is a specialist who has successfully completed *training in the relevant educational and professional program and meets*

the requirements for beginners and is ready to perform professional functions. It is worth considering the definition proposed by S. Hordiichuk that competencies should be understood as “a dynamic combination of knowledge, practical skills and abilities, thinking paradigms, professional, philosophical and social qualities, moral and ethical values, which determine person's ability to successfully carry out professional and further activities and is the result of studying at a certain level of higher education” [2, 100].

Regarding the competencies related to professional, ethical and legal practice, a *licensed practical nurse* is responsible for own professional judgements and decisions, actions, outcomes of providing professional patient care in accordance with the Swiss legal framework; demonstrates knowledge, skills and abilities for professional activity in accordance with the Code of Ethics for Nurses, elaborated by the International Council of Nurses, as well as the code of conduct developed by the employer; engages in decision-making, performs duties, establishes cooperation with other employees taking into account ethical norms; ensures confidentiality of information about the patient in written, oral, electronic presentation, obtained in the course of professional duties; respects the right of patients to confidentiality and preservation of human dignity, the right to receive comprehensive information about own health, the choice and self-determination in health care services etc. [13].

K. Pikon underlines: “a nurse is the first contact person and, in particular, exactly knows “the whole picture” of patient's health, makes main injections, monitors changes in health, directly communicates with the patient and his relatives” [8, 314]. It is worth agreeing with A. Kravchenko's opinion that the concept of “professional ethics of nurses” incorporates elements as “medical ethics, which studies moral consciousness, moral and ethical aspects of professional activity, moral principles and values that govern moral relations between a nurse and a patient, patient's family, other members of the medical community and citizens” [4, 9].

In Switzerland, in the field of legal practice, a *licensed practical nurse* fulfils her own activities in the context of relevant civil legislation and regulations, jurisdictional and national/cantonal policy, as well as in accordance with procedural guidelines; understands the limits of their own professional powers in accordance with current legislation, professional code of ethics / conduct / practice [13]. It should be emphasized that this issue is the subject of scientific debate. In particular, V. Mudritska notes that “the job of a nurse in any healthcare setting requires strict

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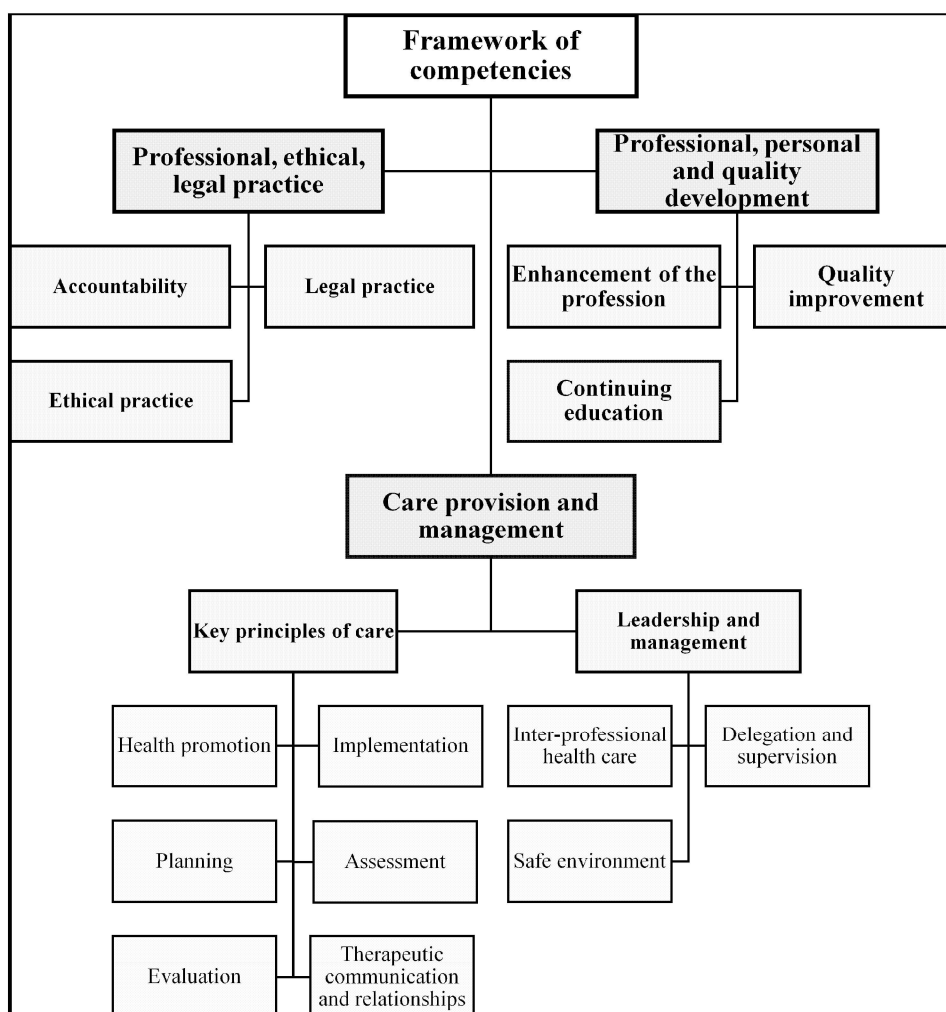


Figure 1. Framework of Competencies for the Nurse Specialist [13]

discipline; a nurse must adhere to subordination and strictly follow the doctor's instructions, i.e., there should be official subordination of low-ranking to high-ranking workers" [5, 34]. V. Zhovneruk and M. Holubevska investigate the problem of maintaining medical secrecy, that is, confidentiality of information about a patient [3]. M. Shegedyn stresses out that not only professional competencies but also personal qualities of a nurse are of particular importance in nursing: moral – compassion, kindness, self-sacrifice, honesty, patience, courtesy, attentiveness, gentleness, optimism, courage, modesty, integrity, self-esteem; aesthetic – precision, tidiness, ability to create a comfortable environment for patients; intellectual – professional erudition, observation, comprehension of phenomena, the ability to plan care for the patient, based on a logical understanding of his problems and needs; the ability to scientifically substantiate own actions" [10, 204].

In the context of our study, special attention should be paid to the fact that nowadays nursing workforce

not only directly performs functions related to the provision of medical assistance and patient care. Currently, job responsibilities require junior medical personnel to have knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform a number of management functions, ranging from consulting to performing functions related to personnel management, material and financial resources management, as well as the realization of administrative know-how.

In a number of publications one can find the information and characteristics of the management model used by hospitals in organizing nursing posts in Switzerland. This model assumes a vertical that covers four levels:

- highest level – a head nurse of a healthcare setting, who is a member of the executive board in hospital;
- higher level – a head nurse of the hospital (general hospital, psychiatric hospital, rehabilitation clinic or specialty clinic);
- middle level – a head nurse of the hospital department;

- lower level – a registered nurse who is directly responsible for patient care.

It is also necessary to distinguish between the model at the horizontal level of management, which provides for the unification of several health professionals into one team: the head of the department, whose powers include solving operational issues and organizing supplies; a doctor who is in charge of a medical case; a clinical nurse who is directly practicing.

It should be noted that the problem of standardization of professional activities of junior medical staff is relevant in many countries. According to declared principles, it is expected that a licensed practical nurse in Switzerland can substantiate the grounds for providing medical care; use contemporary knowledge based on the best practices; apply problem-solving skills and abilities in practice; inform patients about their rights in the healthcare system; be aware of the access to and use of resources to assist patients in case of changes in health, disability and death; facilitate the implementation of the curriculum developed by a registered nurse; provide feedback to the patient and supervisor on learning outcomes [13]. M. Vovk and U. Bezkorovaina study this issue and claim that nurses “must provide highly qualified patient care at a modern level, master basic methods of resuscitation, emergency medical care, perfectly know and apply local protocols, standards for performing basic nursing procedures and manipulations, control and management methods, and make independent decisions” [1, 78].

A registered nurse applies modern knowledge, mastered through the use of various sources, and the evidence base for making balanced professional decisions and practice; applies the skills and abilities of critical thinking and a systematic approach to problem solving, decision-making in various professional and medical contexts; acts as a defender of the rights of patients unable to represent themselves; acts as informational and educational resource for patients seeking to improve lifestyle, accept illness / injury, cope with changes in health, disability, death; identifies opportunities and provides recommendations for the education of individuals, families, communities, aimed at preventing disease and maintaining a healthy lifestyle; selects teaching strategies appropriate to the needs and characteristics of the individual or group; evaluates learning outcomes and adjusts approaches and makes changes to the content of teaching / learning; demonstrates awareness of major developments and potential applications of modern communication / medical technologies in health care [13].

Junior medical staff is required to provide

professional care in accordance with professional and organisational standards, policies, protocols and procedures; identification of culturally sensitive needs of patients and appropriate adaptation of their own activities; providing instructions on the development / maintenance of skills necessary for a lifestyle independent of others [13]. It is noteworthy that the problem of multicultural training of health care workers is actively being discussed by representatives of various fields of scientific knowledge: teachers, psychologists and specialists in the field of public administration. Thus, V. Pituley, exploring the problem of introducing a competency-based approach into the educational process of a medical educational institution, states: “important components of a student’s life competence, being subject to targeted pedagogical formation, are: an appropriate system of knowledge, skills and abilities, value orientation, openness and tolerance to other personalities and other cultures; the ability to learn positive experience of other cultures and their inherent productive patterns of behaviour; skills as a means of individual assimilation of cultural values and experience, samples and methods of activity and vital functions” [9, 95].

Conclusions and prospects for further research. So, as the analysis of the research problem shows, *professional care provided by nursing staff in Switzerland involves the provision of independent care and support provided by nurses independently or in collaboration with other professionals, other persons who are related or in partnership with the patient, social communities in different life situations.* In this context, supervision is understood as measures aimed at promoting health, preventing diseases, providing assistance and support to the sick, persons with special needs, and dying. Other key tasks of nurses are perception of interests and needs, promotion of a safe environment for the caregiver, research, participation in health policy development, health management, and education. Essentially, the professional assistance of junior medical staff is to promote and maintain health, prevent harm to health and provide support to individuals in the treatment and combat consequences of diseases, their therapy [14]. Such professional care is implemented in order to achieve the best results in the treatment and care of patients, as well as a high level of

living standards throughout human life.

The conducted study does not cover all aspects of the research problem. Prospects for further studies include the analysis of possibilities and features of ensuring the continuous professional development of nurses in Switzerland.

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“Свої здібності людина може пізнати, лише спробувавши їх використати”.

*Сенека
давньоримський філософ*

“У тому, що стосується майбутнього, я повторюю одне: за що б ви не взялися, головне – будьте віддані своїй справі до кінця. Не обов'язково досягати якогось зоряного успіху, але бути чесним перед самим собою в обраній професії – обов'язково”.

*Роберт де Ніро
американський кіноактор, режисер, продюсер*

“Роби так, щоб ти завжди ставився до людства і в своїй особі, і в особі всякого іншого так само, як до мети, і ніколи не ставився б до нього тільки як до засобу”.

*Іммануїл Кант
німецький філософ*

